

ANGELICALS REVIEWED

IZAK BOTHA



About Angelicals Reviewed

Angelicals Reviewed explores the idea that the soul, like our physicality, might be an integral component of human nature, and rather than a God given gift, is subject to the laws of evolution.

Belief in the immortality of the soul has engaged humanity for thousands of years. Yet, there is no evidence to support its existence. Living on Earth does not require a soul. The soul is only essential when life pushes to extend its animation beyond its native planet.

To colonize the Milky Way, scientists are contemplating genetically adapting humans. Space flight beyond our solar system may sound impressive, but projecting mass that far is not feasible. The body would have to be disposed of first. Hence the significance of an evolving soul. In the face of Earthly catastrophe, the soul may be nature's way of ensuring long term survival.

Does the soul exist and is it an overlooked evolutionary trait? Incredible as it seems, a triune nature of body, mind, and soul constitutes a new species. I call such a soul-empowered human, *Homo angelicansis*.

Angelicals Reviewed

By Izak Botha

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Religions build theories about the world and then prevent them from being tested. Religions provide nice, appealing, and comforting ideas, and cloak them in a mask of “truth, beauty, and goodness.” The theories can then thrive despite being untrue, ugly, or cruel. In the end, there is no ultimate truth to be found and locked up forever, but there are truthful theories and better or worse predictions. I do defend the idea that science, at its best, is more truthful than religion.

Suzan Blackmore

Introduction

Many live their lives as if they have a soul. Yet, there is no evidence the soul exists. Neither is there consensus regarding the definition of soul. Customarily, the soul has been regarded as the spiritual counterpart of the human—a manifestation called spirituality. If so, the soul is a vehicle for human consciousness. But what if the soul is not breathed into man by God, as suggested in faiths?

Sadly, religions stagnate due to their precepts being frozen in time. Yet, their dogma thrives on untruth, ugliness, or cruelty behind the mask. There is no ultimate truth to be discovered and preserved forever, but there are sound theories and predictions that have proven reliable as they unfold. I, too, defend the idea that science, at its best, is more honest than religion. And although incomplete, hypotheses such as the big-bang and evolutionary theories remain compelling. The same should apply to the soul: despite scrutiny, the evidence supporting it must be credible.

For the greater part of history, evolution has gone unnoticed. After 13.8 billion light years of cosmic expansion and nearly 4 billion years of life on Earth, it is only over the past two centuries that the biological change of species over generations has found its way into our understanding. Knowledge of the process, however, does not mean everything is understood about evolution. As enlightened as we are as humans, we have yet to characterize *spiritual* evolution.

The purpose of this book is to posit that the soul has become part of human nature through eons of evolution. Rather than God bestowing a soul on man, life through

evolution is achieving this feat by its own momentum. Spirituality is therefore a destiny, not a doctrine or belief.

Homo sapiens, until now, has personified the zenith of life. But is that the case? Allow me to show how *Homo sapiens* has been superseded by *Homo angelicansis*: the hybrid of two beings—the cross between physical and spiritual natures.

To discover how I reached this conclusion, read on . . .

Chapter 1

The Soul—Before Christ

The earliest evidence of the soul being regarded as the vehicle to immortality is found in the culture of ancient Egypt. For this civilization, the soul was *ka*, or breath. At death, a person's final breath represented the departing soul. For the Israelites two thousand years later, it was only after God had created man in His image that humans acquired a soul. *Genesis* records how, "... *the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed in his nostrils the breath of life; and man, became a living soul.*"

Adam received a soul, and that soul was synonymous with an immaterial life-giving force. Although Adam was not the first human, the Torah and Old Testament pinpoint him as the first human to receive a soul when God breathed life into him. This text implies that God, in a singular act, created man. God *breathed* spirit into man and man became a living soul. From the text, however, it is not clear whether man was biologically alive before the breath, and even then, whether he was alive before becoming a living soul.

The interpretation of soul and spirit at that time is similar. In the original Hebrew text, soul is *nephesh*. Derived from *nâphash*, its meaning is to breathe or be breathed upon. *Nephesh* can represent a breathing creature, but in the abstract form it denotes vitality. Spirit is *rûwach*: to blow as in breath or to smell. It can also be *neshâmâh*, which is derived from *nâsham*: to blow away, a puff of wind or a vital

breath, or divine inspiration, intellect, inspiration, soul, or spirit.

Describing the coming of the Messiah, Old Testament Ezekiel thinks even bones can be resurrected by spirit. The prophet's vision of the valley of the dry bones describes the Lord as a Being from whom emanates Spirit as the bestower of life. Dating around 600 BC, it is perhaps, for its time, the most insightful view of the issues of life and death. Ezekiel 37: 1 *"The hand of the Lord was upon me and carried me out in the Spirit [rûwach] of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, 2 and caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. 3 And he said unto me. Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest. 4 Again he said unto me. Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. 5 Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath [rûwach] to enter into you, and ye shall live, 6 and I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath [rûwach] in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord. 7 So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. 8 And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath [rûwach] in them. 9 Then said he unto me. Prophecy unto the wind, prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind. Thus, saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath [rûwach], and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. 10 So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath [rûwach] came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. 11 Then*

he said unto me. Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say. Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: humans are cut off for our parts. 12 Therefore prophesy and say unto them, thus saith the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. 13 And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, 14 and shall put my Spirit [rûwach] in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed, saith the Lord.”

Giving life to bones requires breath, and therefore spirit (Spirit of the Lord). Yet, the soul is not mentioned. Either both the spirit and the soul are conceived as being the same, or else the soul is not seen as the life-giving force. As far as Ezekiel is concerned, it is not the soul that is breathed into a body to have biological life, but the spirit. The soul, then, must be something else. From this viewpoint, the soul does not give life, but like the biological organism, it seeks life.

The Greek writer Homer, credited with the ninth century epic poems *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, distinguishes between the soul and the body, but he is doubtful that the soul exists on its own. Once severed from the body, the soul is much like a shadow, and though the soul has the power to survive death, it cannot sustain life. The early writings do not include the non-material soul of later Greek and Christian thought, but rather equates soul with a faded, semi-material shade or ghost, whose life in the underworld is dull, destitute, and almost functionless.

Around 500 BC, in what is today Nepal, the teachings of Buddha emerged. Buddhism is unique in its teachings that the individual soul does not exist, but is an illusion produced

by various psychological and physiological influences. Buddhism is the only religion without a God: a form of agnosticism, since it does not acknowledge or deny the existence of gods. For Buddhists, the constitution of humankind consists of five parts, known as *skandhas*—the material body, feelings, perceptions, karmic dispositions, and consciousness, which are all subject to continual change. None of the elements is permanent and therefore cannot be regarded as a blueprint for the soul, known in Buddhism as *atman*. It seems strange to deny the soul and yet have a name and rank for it. Buddhism teaches that belief in an individual and immortal soul leads to egoism and its resultant suffering. Buddha taught the doctrine of *anatman*—the denial of an immortal soul—and rejects the existence of *atman*; there is no belief in a concept of a soul or of a self that survives death. The Buddhist view of reincarnation is unclear and seen simply as a chain of consequences, but the subtlety seems lost in translation since adherents to Buddhist practice regard the dead as transmigrating souls.

The meaning of karma—the sum of the consequences of one's actions, both good or bad—is also contradictory. Karma is believed to be attached to the soul, especially regarding transmigration and reincarnation—the creation of each new body is then determined by the karma of previous lifetimes. The consequence of karma can be rebirth in a form other than human, such as animals, ghosts, denizens of hell, and, in fact, any form of life. Enlightenment is achieved through continual spiritual exercise and proper living, and only then can one shed the burden of karma and constant reincarnation. Enlightenment is only reached through a cycle of reincarnation through which individuals must pass to transcend human desire and suffering. Purification through

reincarnation comes through opportunities to learn from the lessons of life.

If this is how enlightenment is achieved, then a record of each lifetime must be kept. One would imagine the soul to be the ideal vehicle for this information, yet the Buddhist has no belief in the soul. The paradox seems not to lie in the belief system itself, but rather that the philosophy is not consummated. The problem of an immortal soul in Buddhism persists and prevails in the doctrine to this day.

Philosophers from around 500 BC, and typically the scientists of the time as well, saw the soul as more than just mere breath. This prompted the idea that the soul is the prime motivator behind the mind—and perhaps even is the mind itself. Pythagoras, the sixth century Greek philosopher and mathematician, fused ancient mythology with the growing discipline of science. Known as Pythagoreanism, his philosophy combined ethics, supernature, and mathematics into a unified view of life, wherein the soul is a prisoner of the body.

Underpinning one of the earliest concepts of transmigration and reincarnation, Pythagoras believed the soul was released at death and—depending on the degree of virtue achieved—the soul moved on to a higher or lower form. In other words, the soul would undergo a series of rebirths in other bodies. The human, to purify the soul, was required to cultivate intellectual virtues, refrain from sensual pleasures, and practice religious rituals. Between death and rebirth, the soul would rest and undergo purification in the underworld. A series of rebirths would eventually enable the soul to become sufficiently purified to escape the cycle of life and death and to become eternally free.

Anaxagoras, the fifth century BC Greek philosopher, introduced the notion of *nous*, which is mind or reason. For

him, the cause of beauty and order is the mind. Animals have a soul (the moving cause of things), but mind as intelligence appears not to exist in animals—and, indeed, not even in all humans. Although he distinguishes between the soul and the mind, in practice, Anaxagoras treats the two as a single entity.

Heraclitus, another fifth century BC philosopher, described the soul as cosmic ether or fire—the subtlest of the elements and a nourishing flame imparting heat, life, sense, and intelligence to all things, in several degrees and kinds. The spherical atoms of fire are identified with the soul, with both having similar qualities of universal permeation and the ability to set other atoms in motion by their own movement. His view implies that the soul is the informant of movement in humans.

At the turn of the fourth century BC, Greek philosopher Democritus expounded the atomic theory. Promulgated initially by his mentor, Democritus's view is that everything stems from minute, invisible, indestructible particles of pure matter (*atoma*), which constantly moved about in infinite empty space (*kenon* or *the void*). For him, therefore, atoms are the stuff of the soul.

Socrates, one of the greatest philosophers, connected the soul and the mind. Everyone has access to full knowledge of ultimate truth through the soul and only requires awakening to become sufficiently conscious to experience knowing. Plato describes the soul as the prisoner in the material body, with the body being the prison, tomb, or even the hell of the soul. His concept of the soul changes over time. In *The Timaeus*, he describes a world soul, created according to mathematical laws and musical harmony, which incorporates two elements: sameness (*tauton*) and otherness (*thateron*). In *The Republic*, his longest and most complex

work, he describes three elements within the unity of the single soul: a rational soul situated in the head, a passionate soul in the breast, and an appetitive soul in the stomach.

The idea of a freestanding soul is the focal point of discussion throughout the history of philosophy. Sharing Pythagoras's belief, Plato considers the soul pre-existent, eternal, and entirely spiritual. Once it enters the body, it becomes contaminated by association with bodily passions, and congruent with the doctrine of karma, it retains knowledge of former existences. Both Pythagoras and Plato believed in the transmigration of souls from one species to another, or from one body to another, after death. Plato suspected the soul was released from the body after it had passed through a series of transmigrations. A soul of integrity, forged over several existences, would return to a state of pure being. A soul that had deteriorated during transmigrations ended in a place of eternal damnation.

Aristotle, Plato's most renowned student, was critical of the idea of the soul separating from the body and maintained that the soul is contained within the body as the form or actuality of the body itself. Nature is an organic system with different species, purposes, and modes of development. Humans have a rational soul that is higher than terrestrial species and only superseded by the higher order of nature—the heavenly bodies consisting of an imperishable substance, ether, which moves eternally through the cosmos.

Aristotle's definition of the soul as the first entelechy of a physical, organized body that potentially possesses life, or the forming principle of a body that has the potential to give life, emphasizes the union of the soul and the body. The challenge, though, is to determine how distinct the body is from soul. The soul of a living being is its capability to be a part of the activities that are characteristic of its own natural

makeup: self-nourishment, growth, decay, movement, and, importantly, perception and intellect. Aristotle describes an organism with the ability to nourish itself, to grow, to move about on its own, to perceive, think, and be alive, and when death comes, to decay. The capacity of the organism to execute these activities constitutes its soul. The soul is the cause of the animate behavior of living organisms and is not separable from the body, for its very nature is capacity, not the organism. For Aristotle, the exception exists where the soul can separate from the body, and that is when it becomes pure thought that has rid itself of the trappings of personality.

Aristotle rejected transmigration or the reincarnation souls. The soul does not exist without a body, and though it is immaterial, it is not, in itself, a body. And although not a body, it belongs to a body and exists in a body of a specific kind. The soul is therefore spiritual substance encased in matter. He imagined a hierarchy of soul functions, such as the nutritive soul (plants), the sensitive soul (all animals), and the rational soul (human beings). The soul has little to do with personal identity and individuality, and he did not differentiate between individual human souls. This led him to believe there is only a singular soul, not souls. People only appear to have different souls, because they are different people. Despite slightly different bodies, all still have the same set of capabilities determined by the same soul.

Aristotle's view of the soul is the most comprehensive for its time. The competing views of his time appear limp by comparison. After Aristotle, though, Stoicism—a philosophy founded in ancient Greece and one of three leading movements contributing to the culture and civilization known as Hellenism—rekindled the earlier idea of *pneuma*, or breath, and despite its simplicity, greatly

influenced the Empiric courts of Rome, and hence, Christianity.

In Stoicism, *pneuma* gives unity and identity to the individual. In lifeless objects, this unifying characteristic is state (*hexis*) and in plants, nature (*physis*). The latter are bodies and as such have causal usefulness. All reality is material, but matter is passive and distinguished from the life-giving or active principle, *logos*, which is both divine reason and a finer kind of material entity—an all-pervading breath or fire. Living with nature and reason is living in harmony with the divine order of the universe. All existence is material, and the soul is breath pervading the body. The soul consists of the finest grained atoms in the universe, even finer than the wind and heat they resemble, hence the fluency of the soul's movements in thought and sensation. However, soul atoms themselves cannot function if not kept together by the body. If the body is destroyed, the atoms escape and life is dissolved. If the body is injured, part of the soul is lost, but enough is retained to maintain life. Ironically, the soul is the center of the cognitive and emotional life, its seat—the heart.

Stoicism, by advocating the brotherhood of humanity and the natural equality of all humans, equates with altruism. All people are manifestations of the one universal spirit, and all should live in brotherly love and help one another with good grace. External differences, such as rank and wealth, are of no importance in social relationships. Although preached, this part is obviously ignored by the Holy See—the government of the Holy Roman Catholic Church. Somewhat paradoxically, Stoics see all sins as equal, the sage as good, and everyone else as evil. The sage's actions resemble proper function with a distinct character of right action. Acting purely from right reason, the sage is

distinguished by the ability to avoid passion. The average person has morally wrong impulses and passions, which are intellectual errors stemming from an inability to distinguish between good and bad. By contrast, the sage possesses wisdom, which is always right. Only sages are truly happy and free, capable of living in perfect harmony with the divine plan.

Chapter 2

The Soul—After Christ

The first century AD exposed one of the world's greatest intrigues when Saul, the Turk from Tarsus, persecuted Jews known as the Nazarenes but then later, nearly singlehandedly, founded Christianity based on the faith of the very people he had persecuted. Popular belief would have it that Christianity originated in Judea, the Jews were Christianized, and Saul persecuted Christians. This, however, is not true. From recorded history, Christianity had its foundation in Antioch, Turkey, where the interloper Saul (later Paul) appropriated the emergent Judeo-Nazarene faith led by Apostle Peter, proceeding then to convert Roman gentiles to a much-altered version of the faith.

Saul, by his own admission, persecuted Jesus. In *Acts of the Apostles*, he writes that Christ said to him: “*Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?*” He also persecuted the followers of Jesus, the Nazarenes, in Judea. Despite his life-changing experience en route to Damascus, in which he was struck blind for three days, Saul never announces a conversion to the Nazarene faith. Nevertheless, nearly a decade later, he coerces Antiochenes into accepting his version of the new religion. Saul had earlier attempted to preach to the Jews, but when they questioned his right and responded by stoning him, he turned instead to the gentiles. When Apostle Peter disapproved of his ministry, Saul summoned this rival for a debate. Known as “*the incident of Antioch*,” the outcome of this impasse is unknown. Clearly,

however, Saul changed his name to Paul before continuing his ministry exclusively to the gentiles. The outcome is that Apostle Peter's trail grows cold, and apart from Vatican "holy traditions" proclaiming that Peter was crucified upside down in Rome, that Apostle is never seen or heard of again. Thus, amid considerable controversy, Saul, now Paul, established Christianity for the gentiles in Antioch.

With Paul as the founder of Christianity, one should at least take the time to see what the man says about the soul. Paul's letters to his churches describe the perfect human (*teleios*) as a tripartite being with body, soul, and spirit. Known in Catholic circles as trichotomy, this concept remains even today the official view of the Holy Roman Catholic Church. However, although the Holy See underwrites Paul's doctrine, it differs from Jesus's teachings, as recorded decades later in the *Gospel of Matthew*. There, the author of the first Gospel attributes the first great commandment per Jesus as "you shall love the Lord your God with all your *heart*, with all your *soul*, and with your entire *mind*." In this context, it appears that the *mind* is more of an attribute than the spirit. At no time does the Gospel equate the spirit with the mind.

Who to believe, then—Jesus or Paul?

For Paul, immortality of the soul and a place in heaven comes at a price. In *Romans 10: 8-10*, he suggests a twofold condition: oral *confession* that Jesus is God and *faith* that God raised Him from the dead. For salvation, believers must confess with the mouth and believe in the heart that these precepts are true. The content of the expected confession and belief, however, is astonishing. First, the convert is exhorted to believe that a human is God and then that this person was raised from the dead and now sits on the right hand of the

Father. Yet, Paul, who wrote this, had apparently never met Jesus and was stoned by the very people who had.

Pauline doctrine is contrary to any established views of the time. Claiming that human nature is trichotomous, and not dualistic as promulgated by his peers, places him in opposition to great philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, and Jesus. None of Paul's teachings are original. His interpretation equates with mythology dating as far back as the Sumerians. He then combines it with Greek and Greco-Roman thought from the preceding six centuries, and with hint of occult originating in the Orient, he regards the spirit as the highest and indestructible reincarnating component of the human constitution.

Paul's doctrine is illustrated in his letter to the Corinthians, where the soul merges with the body at the beginning of an individual's life, only to be superseded by the spirit at the end. *1 Corinthians 15: 42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. ... 44 it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body [pneumatikos]. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. 45 And so it is written, the first man Adam, was made a living soul [psuchē] as the last Adam was made a quickening spirit [pneuma]. 46 Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. 47 The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. 48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. 49 And as humans have borne the image of the earthy, humans shall also bear the image of the heavenly, so Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but humans shall all be changed, 52 in a moment,*

*in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and humans shall be changed.*⁶ 53 *For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.* 54 *So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.* 55 *O death, where is thy sting? Oh grave, where is thy victory?* 56 *The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.* 57 *But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

A study of the meaning of these words in the New Testament shows that *psuchē*, derives from *psuchō*, which means to breathe voluntarily but gently. It differs from *pnēō*, meaning to breathe hard or blow, and *aēr*, which is to breathe unconsciously or to blow, referring to an inanimate breeze. *Psuchē*, by implication, suggests spirit. This is distinguished from *pnēuma*, meaning *spirit*, or *rational or immortal soul*, and *zōē*, meaning life force or vitality, even of plants. *Pnēuma* and *zōē* correspond, respectively, with the Hebrew *nephesh* and *rûwach* of the Old Testament. Spirit, when mentioned in the New Testament, is nearly always *pnēuma*, a current of air, like breath or breeze; by analogy, it can also mean a spirit (in a human), the rational soul, the vital principle, mental disposition, or even superhuman and angelic, a daemon or God.

Paul's intertwining of nature and supernature is staggering. In one swoop, he rehashes the supernaturalism of the myths, ritual, and magic of the preceding two thousand years. His use of *pneumatikos* re-introduces a supernatural element to spirituality. He also breaks from a dualistic interpretation, which excludes soul and spirit, yet introduces the mind. His reduction of the brain to a pumping believing

heart and his rejection of the mind in favor of the spirit bears no logic. Despite its lack of credibility, Pauline doctrine was ratified by Emperor Constantine in the fourth century when the emperor established Christianity as the official religion of Rome. To this day, the dogma has been cast in stone as the unchallenged “Word of God.”

Christianity has never successfully adopted the idea of transmigration. Initially, the Gnostics and the Manicheans believed in transmigration, but early Christians who adopted the doctrine were declared heretics by the Church. Yet, the resurrection and second coming of Christ corroborates this belief—transmigration and reincarnation, in and out of the spirit realm. The same reasoning applies to the second physical body, which saved souls are to receive on judgement day. These beliefs relate to reincarnation from one realm to another and to movement from one physical body to another.

The next principal architect of Western theology was Augustine of Hippo, who lived around the turn of the fourth century. His literary efforts, more than any other, shaped the Christian faith. Augustine, who formulated the doctrine of original sin, also brought a systematic method of philosophy to Christian theology. Human nature is in a state of sin due to Adam’s disobedience, which renders humans powerless to change. As per his theology, believers are saved only by the gift of divine grace. Like Aristotle, he claims the soul to be the causal origin of the body. As God is the good of the soul, so the soul is the good of the body. Augustine also expounded the doctrine of emanation, in which God, as the *primeval* or *eternal one*, emanates the faculty mentioned above known as *nous*. From this intelligence springs the psyche or the mind, which is also the soul.

The sixth century saw the initiation of Islam. For Muslims, the pure monotheism of Allah (God) has been revealed through many prophets since time immemorial. Resembling much of Judaism and Christianity, Islam also teaches that God breathed the soul into the first humans, who are brought close to God at death, and that the coming judgment will see a resurrection of the dead, together with everlasting punishments and rewards. Angels and spirits are integral to Islam cosmology. Angels have roles, such as the transmission of God's revelation to the prophets, while spirits, known as *jinni*, inhabit our world, effecting influences on humanity. The angels neither eat nor drink and are free from sin. They are asexual and usually invisible, except to animals, although they occasionally appear in human form. The principal angel is Gabriel, the guardian and messenger of God's revelation to humankind. Michael is the protector of humankind, while Azrail, the angel of death, has the responsibility of receiving human's souls when they die. Israfil is the angel of the Resurrection. All humans rise from the dead and surrender to the universal judgment. The Resurrection will extend to all creatures from humans to angels. After death, each human will be judged and will either receive salvation or be irrevocably condemned to eternal damnation.

Neo-Platonism, which sees the soul imprisoned in a material body, prevailed in Christian thought until the thirteenth century, when Thomas Aquinas accepted Aristotle's analysis of the soul and body as two conceptually discernible elements of a single substance. Arguably the most important figure in Catholic theology, Aquinas debates the soul at length and in lofty philosophical lyric. The rational soul has a sensitive and biological component or body and is the form (informant) of such a body. The soul is

an incomplete substance, in that it must exist in the physical or vegetative body, completing the substantial unity of human nature. Although attached to the body, the soul is still seen as spiritual. It is not actually immersed in matter, and its higher operations are independent of the material or vegetative being. The rational soul is produced by special creation when the human is sufficiently advanced to receive it. In the first stage, when the embryo is developed, it has vegetative powers, after which a sensitive or sensory soul comes into being. Later still, this soul is replaced by a rational soul, immaterial and implied to arise as the result of a special creative act.

Descartes, the seventeenth century French philosopher, sought to explain how the soul-mind or immaterial directs matter to execute commands. If they two are separate, at which point do they connect and interact? In Cartesian dualism, he introduces the idea of the mind as part of, or perhaps intrinsically the same as, the soul. The trichotomy of the body, soul, and spirit is rejected in favor of a dualistic view of the body and mind. Accordingly, the mind and body must contain the soul. If the two components are separate, then it follows that the mental and physical models must be discrete. Although this soul-mind can direct matter, it is separate from the body it directs. Of the numerous theories posed by Cartesian dualism, none defines how the mind/body connection works. How does the mind know about the body, and can it influence the physical? And how does the body affect the mind?

In "*Cognito, ergo sum*" (I think, therefore I am), Descartes regards self-awareness as sufficient evidence for the mind to stand independent of the body. God created two substances that compose reality: the soul, a thinking, conscious substance located in the pineal gland, and the

body, an extended substance with characteristics extending into a defined area of space. While extended substances act in accordance with the laws of physics, thinking substances act in accordance with the laws of thinking. The mind is not the brain; it exists without the need for spatial location and continues to exist after the death and destruction of our bodies. But what is it, then, that connects the mind and the brain? How can a non-physical mind cause a body to move? How can information about the external world make its way to our senses and cross the line that separates physical and mental, enabling perception from outside? Descartes's answer is that the states of mind causally interact with the states of brain. The aches and pains that cause us to moan and complain are the result of a brain state, which in turn triggers the physical reactions. Desires and intentions cause actions, which in turn give rise to brain states causing bodies to move, thus influencing the physical world. When the perception of physical senses takes place that involves causal transactions from the physical to the mental, this generates a two-way psycho-physical causal interaction. Taking place from the mental to the physical, it is an action; from the physical to the mental, a perception.

Cartesian dualism also assumes free will—a faculty akin to the soul. The supposition of free will is contentious among philosophers. Opposing factions see the mind as physical and a product of the brain, and they argue that since all subjectivity arises from outer world objective impulses, free will cannot exist. Scholars who found Descartes's ideas difficult to accept considered mind and matter incapable of affecting one another. Any interaction between the two is caused by God, who, on a physical change, produces a corresponding mental change, and vice versa. Others abandoned dualism in favor of monism, which maintains

that ultimate reality comprises one substance; this, for most, is matter.

Two seventeenth century philosophers, Gottfried Leibniz and Nicolas de Malebranche, battled to resolve the difficulties left by Descartes's mental causation, abandoning the idea of free will and settling on the preservation of mind-body dualism. Both philosophers tried to separate dualism, characterizing humanity as both mental and physical, with the concession that the realms interact.

Malebranche, the formulator of occasionalism, denies that matter can interact with the mind, arguing that since knowledge is only possible through the interaction between the human and God, the mind and body cannot interact; it is God who makes it appear as if they do. Occasionalists identify force with the will of God. In its most extreme form, occasionalism promulgates that all mortals are devoid of fundamental worth and that God is the only true redemptive agent. Bodies cannot affect other bodies or minds, and minds have no causal effect in bodies of any kind, or even upon themselves. Only God is responsible for engendering phenomena, rendering both the mind and body causally ineffective. God is the one true cause.

Leibniz believed that God creates a blueprint that synchronizes a person's mind and body. His idea of pre-established harmony does not admit an inter-causal relation between the mind and body. Known as psychophysical parallelism, it teaches that God has a master plan, with the non-physical and physical running parallel to one another. Parallelism accepts that mental events correlate with physical and that mind and body exist in a pre-established harmony, ordered by God from the moment of creation.

Baruch Spinoza, another seventeenth century philosopher, taught that material and spiritual phenomena

are attributes of the one underlying and infinite substance. The soul and body are a form of expression of divine essence. Since substance is self-sufficient and only God is self-sufficient, it follows that God is the only substance. In other words, God is all—the universal essence of everything that exists. As in Monism, ultimate reality consists of a single substance. To retain the notion of God as the one true cause, but without sacrificing the idea of cause and effect in the mental and physical domains, Spinoza abandoned Descartes's view of two components in favor of the double aspect theory, which sees the mental and physical as simply different aspects of one substance.

The quest to merge the soul with the mind, thereby establishing the soul as the informing agent, appears impossible. Association between the mind and matter, as far as philosophy is concerned, reaches a dead end. From now, physical reality is a component of mind. The role of the soul as an informant of the mind is rejected. Without verification of non-material phenomena interacting with a material body and causing it to respond through command, more knowledge of the nature of the soul-mind and body is needed. Without empirical knowledge, the discussion leads nowhere.

George Berkley, the early eighteenth century immaterialist, held that all material things are aggregates of mental ideas. He denies the existence of material substance without it first being perceived in the mind. A mind/body distinction cannot exist, because the body is merely a perception of the mind. The German philosopher, Immanuel Kant, believed the soul was only the subject of the processes of consciousness and not a separate entity, meaning that the brain is accustomed to classifying phenomena, which it later

perceives as reality, but this reality is the outcome of its own activity.

In the end, neither Dualism nor Trichotomy proves the existence of the soul. Both fail to establish the soul: whether it exists, is separate from the body, or is the mind itself, which is the informant thereof. Millennia of intense philosophical and religious debate have failed to resolve the constitution and function of the soul.

The search for the soul continues.