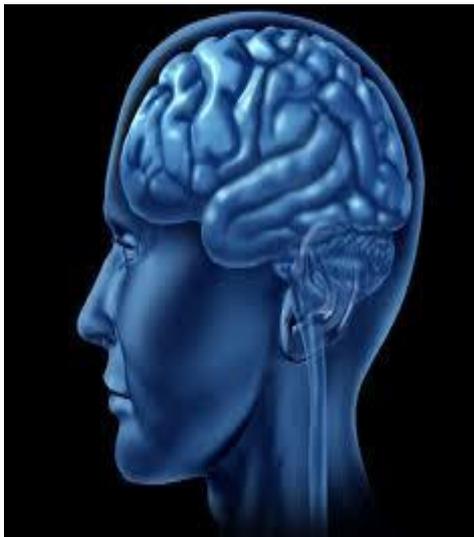


The mystery of consciousness

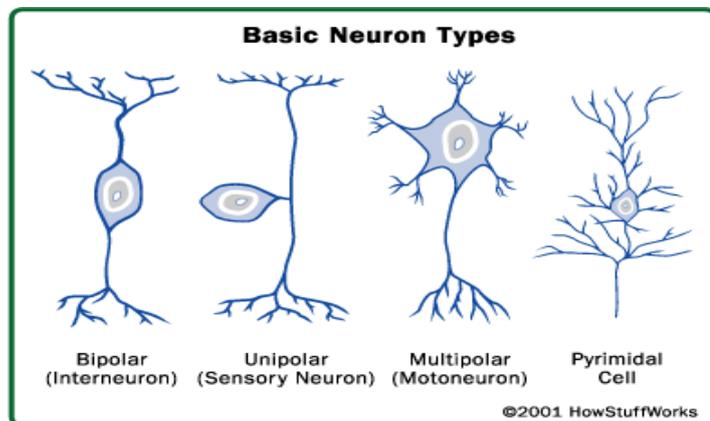
Dr Michael Jarvis

In scientific literature, such as several recent articles in New Scientist Journal we read:
'The human brain is the most astoundingly complex structure in the known universe (1)

The great mystery remains, however: How do the intricate, superfast, vastly complex interactions of the brain's billions of neurons through trillions of synapses give rise to mind? (2).



The brain is made up of billions of cells called neurons and these come in various types.



Here are some characteristics of the average human brain:

1. In adults the brain has about 100 billion neurons (brain cells), each connected to its neighbours by 5000 synapses or so. A brain can make and break a million new connections each second.
2. It can store information for more than a century if you live that long, automatically cataloguing re-filing and editing as needed.
3. It can reconstruct our surroundings using a range of sensors that sample vibration, electromagnetic radiation such as light, chemicals and pressure, and prioritise in milliseconds what might be of interest or concern.
4. It coordinates at least 640 muscles and looks after the essentials of energy generation, reproduction and survival with little thought, freeing our minds to socialise, ponder the meaning of our existence and learn from our experiences and those of people who we may never even have met (3).



This diagram illustrates the complexity of connections. The bright dots illustrate the fact that electrical impulses are constantly moving across the billions of connections between our brain neurons.

If you stretched out all the nerve fibres in the brain, they would wrap four times around the world! (4).

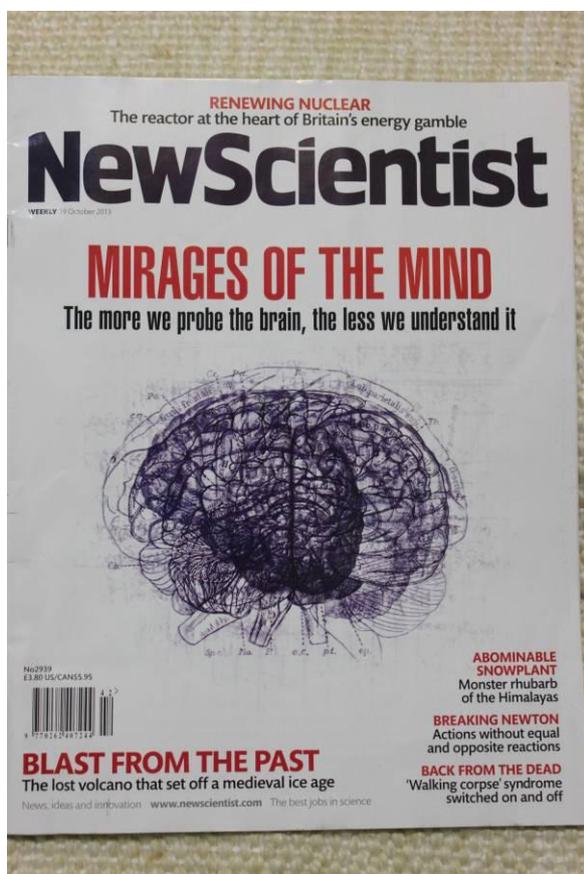
2.

Our brains form a million new connections for every second of our lives. It is a mind-blowing statistic, and one that highlights the amazing flexibility of our most enigmatic organ (5).

A special issue of New Scientist Journal on 'consciousness' begins with this statement ***'There are a lot of hard problems in the world, but one of them gets to call itself "The hard problem". And that is the problem of consciousness – how a kilogram or so of nerve cells conjures up the seamless kaleidoscope of sensations, thoughts, memories and emotions that occupy every waking moment'*** (6).

Is there more to consciousness than merely electrical impulses in the brain?

Science knows that self-awareness and other high-level cognitive functions probably do not relate to the brain in a simple way.



The complexity of the brain is highlighted in scientific writings, such as shown by this cover on New Scientist Journal. Note the sub-title that says, 'The more we probe the brain, the less we understand it'.



Recently and article by Mark Buchanan (7) notes a possible link between quantum physics and our brain. Both seem to have similar characteristics. In my previous 'Update articles' I have pointed out that the world we experience is built up from atoms that are in turn built up from 'particles' that seem to behave in timeless ways. They can be in more than one place at once and interactions between them seem to be instantaneous, even if separated by vast distances. They seem to be operating in a Timeless Dimension!

3.

The article points out that *'The fuzziness and weird logic of the way quantum particles behave applies surprisingly well to how humans think.* We can ask ourselves whether the functioning of our brains may depend on quantum realities. Since quantum 'particles' seem to behave in ways that suggest they are outside of time, could our brains in some way be linked to realities in the Timeless Dimension?

Can our brains be our link to the Timeless Dimension?

Einstein shook the world with his theories of Relativity. Amongst other conclusion were that matter can never be accelerated to the speed of light. As you approach that speed you and all matter (mass) gets heavier and heavier and at the speed of light you would become infinitely heavy! At the speed of light time ceases to exist!



We face the reality that we are made from the matter of this universe and so cannot reach a state of timelessness by accelerating to the speed of light, namely 299,792,458 meters each second! Matter seems doomed to remain locked into time.

However, does consciousness or mind have mass?

Our consciousness is linked to the functioning of our brains and the electrical impulses that rush back and forth. **However, although our brains are made of matter and have mass, consciousness and thought seem to be in a form of associated energy without mass.**

If our consciousness and thought are a form of associated energy without mass then this raises the possibility that our minds are in some mysterious way in contact with the Timeless Dimension that is being revealed through studies of quantum mechanics.



If our minds depend in some way upon the Timeless Dimension in order to create consciousness, this may help us understand why our brains seem to function in similar ways to sub-atomic realities being studied by physicists.

It might also help explain some of the revelations given to us in the Bible. For instance:

1. Prayer can be the communication of human minds with the Mind of God: a sort of cosmic 'telepathy'.

4.

2. Jesus said that all our words and actions are recorded and will one day be revealed. Do we all have a 'quantum book' existing in the Timeless Dimension? The study of quantum physics suggests that all events are known instantaneously within this mysterious world of microscopic physics, from which our time-locked universe originates and by which it is held together. It is therefore possible that our thoughts are continually being stored within the Timeless Dimension.



To my mind these possibilities and mysteries relating to the human brain lead me to a renewed amazement and awe of our Creator and to wonder what amazing things are waiting for me, when one day I am released from the limitations of time and enter into the Timeless Dimension of reality.

As a Christian, I realise more than ever before the importance of remembering that our lives are actually a testing and training for far greater things that await us in the Timeless Dimension of reality.

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