

Lesson 3.1 Assessment

(Answer Key)

Student
Assessment
3.1



Section 1: Multiple Choice

Choose the correct answer for each of the following questions; two answers might be possible in some cases.

1. What is the primary difference between an Islamic perspective and neuroscience reductionism, concerning human nature?
 - a. The existence of consciousness
 - b. The purpose of life
 - c. The composition of the soul
 - d. The role of the brain
2. According to Islamic doctrine, what happens to the soul after death?
 - a. The soul ceases to exist.
 - b. The soul goes through various stages and continues to exist.
 - c. The soul becomes part of the physical body.
 - d. The soul transforms into a different entity.
3. In the context of the Islamic perspective, what is personal identity related to?
 - a. Physical appearance
 - b. The brain's functions
 - c. The soul
 - d. Cultural background
4. According to neuroscientific reductionism, what does the world consist of?
 - a. Only physical objects with measurable properties
 - b. Both physical and metaphysical things
 - c. Only metaphysical entities
 - d. Only sensory experiences
5. What is the main challenge posed by neuroscience reductionism to an Islamic concept of human nature?
 - a. The existence of angels
 - b. The idea that consciousness may be an illusion
 - c. The belief in an afterlife
 - d. The concept of personal identity
6. According to the holistic or Islamic worldview, what is a human composed of?
 - a. Only a physical body
 - b. The mind and consciousness
 - c. Both physical and metaphysical properties
 - d. Only sensory qualities (qualia)

Section 2: Short Answers

Write a well-formulated response for each of the following.

7. Summarize the Islamic concept of the soul and personal identity. Explain the concept of ensoulment according to the Islamic doctrine, detailing the stages of the soul's existence.

A: Personal identity is related to the soul, an identity that exists beyond this world and that carries through into the next life (not limited to the bodily identity). We still continue to exist as human beings in the afterlife. The difference would be that, in the afterlife, we are a soul without a body.

Our soul goes through various stages (4 general stages)

1. Life of Souls - We were souls without bodies.
 2. This Life - Our souls were breathed into our bodies.
 3. In the Grave - Our souls will separate from our bodies and our bodies will decay, as our soul moves on. "Every soul shall experience death." (Sūrah Āl Imrān:185) - here it says that every soul shall "experience" death, and in many other translations, it says shall "taste" death, so this shows that death is not the end, but a step in a continued process.
 4. The Afterlife - Our souls will be reunited with our resurrected bodies.
8. Discuss the evidence presented for the existence of the soul, both rational and revelatory.

A: Rational evidence: We know we have a soul through introspection. That means that we can look inside ourselves and see that the thing that experiences cognition, pain, pleasure, happiness, sadness, humility, arrogance, gratitude, and ingratitude, is something other than our bodies. We're not exactly sure what the soul is, but we know it's there.

Revelatory evidence:

1. Life of Souls - We were souls without bodies.
 Revelatory Evidence: "Remember when your Lord took out from the loins of the children of Adam their offspring and said, 'Am I not your Lord?' and they said, 'Yes indeed, we testify.' 'Now you have no right to say on Judgment Day, 'We were not aware of this.'" (Sūrah al-A'raf:172)

2. This Life - Our souls were breathed into our bodies.
 Revelatory Evidence: "... then an angel is sent to it and it breathes the soul into it and it is commanded to write down four things ..." (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī)

3. In the Grave - Our souls will separate from our bodies and our bodies will decay, as our soul moves on.

Revelatory Evidence: "Every soul shall experience death." (Sūrah Āl 'Imrān:185) - here it says that every soul shall "experience" death, and in many other translations, it says shall "taste" death, so this shows that death is not the end, but a step in a continued process.

4. The Afterlife - Our souls will be reunited with our resurrected bodies.

Revelatory Evidence: " ... then it will be blown in again and we will suddenly stand up, looking." (Sūrah al-Zumar:68)

9. Reflect on the implications of the purpose of human life from the three different perspectives discussed (Islamic view, neuroscience reductionist view, and artificial intelligence).

A: Islam: - What does it mean to be human? - To have a soul
- What is the purpose of life? - To develop the soul

Neuroscientists:

- What does it mean to be human? - To have a brain (to have just a physical body)
- What is the purpose of life? - We would not be able to derive a purpose of life from just a mere body deduction.

Artificial Intelligence:

- What does it mean to be human? - To act like a human
- What is the purpose of life? - No real purpose if AI is only here to mimic human behavior.

10. Contrast the Neuroscientific Reductionism view with an Islamic worldview regarding the nature of existence and human experience. Provide examples and arguments supporting your evaluation.

A: Neuroscientific Reductionism view - The world consists of only physical objects. The only things that exist are things that can be measured; everything else does not exist. This is an incomplete view of the world and does not account for everything we observe. An Islamic worldview comprises physical and metaphysical realms, in which physical objects possess metaphysical properties called qualia. These physical objects also have a meaning and purpose. Therefore, a human being is a composite of both physical and metaphysical properties: the Soul & the Body. This view is holistic and accounts for the physical body, human subjective experiences, and allows for the possibility of an immaterial soul.