



DEFINING SPIRITUAL HEALING FOR MORE COMPREHENSIVE UNDERSTANDING OF THE UNDERLYING CONCEPT WITH FRESH PERSPECTIVES IN INTERVENTIONAL PRACTICES ADOPTED IN HEALTH AND WELLNESS - A CIS GUIDED NARRATIVE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Spiritual healing is widely referenced in health and wellness discourse; yet, its conceptual boundaries remain unclear and are often reduced to religion, private belief, or therapeutic language. This critical interpretative synthesis (CIS)-aligned narrative review sought to provide a comprehensive understanding of spiritual healing by integrating linguistic, etymological, philosophical, psychological, civilizational, consciousness-oriented, and health-related perspectives. A multidisciplinary, concept-led search was conducted between January and February 2026, and 75 references were selected for conceptual relevance, theoretical richness, historical depth, and interpretation value. The literature underwent recursive thematic analysis. The review found that spirituality and spiritual healing are best understood as layered rather than fixed constructs. Recurring domains included definitional plurality, the distinction yet overlap between spirituality and religion, selfhood and meaning, relational and narrative healing, embodied and symbolic practice, sociocultural embeddedness, clinical translation, quantum-consciousness-oriented expansion, and methodological tension. Ancient civilizational traditions situated healing within moral, ritual, cosmological, and embodied frameworks, whereas contemporary health literature recast spiritual healing as an ethically bounded care domain. The strongest convergences centred on the inner life, meaning-making, connectedness, transcendence, restoration of coherence, and movement from fragmentation to integration. Spiritual healing emerges not as a singular doctrine or non-material abstraction, but as a multilevel, context-sensitive process through which persons or communities restore existential coherence through relational, embodied, symbolic, contemplative, and not essentially religious practices. This narrative review offers a robust conceptual foundation as well as fresh perspectives for further scholarship and intervention practices related to spiritual healing in health and wellness.

KEYWORDS: Spiritual healing; Spirituality; Meaning-making; Neuropsychology; Neurophilosophy; Quantum phenomena; Health and wellness.

INTRODUCTION

Numerous interventions within the domain of health and wellness are broadly categorized under spiritual healing and are purported to derive their foundation from spirituality. There is absence of a unifying definition that encompasses both intrinsic and extrinsic meanings of both spiritual healing and spirituality. As well as there is a lack of integration and synergy with disciplines and domains where it is frequently referenced—such as conceptual and lexical, psychological, phenomenological, sociocultural, anthropological, quantum phenomena in biological systems, methodological, and epistemological. Hence, it necessitates fresh perspectives and a renewed examination of their definition. Thus, the aim of this CIS aligned narrative review is to develop a more comprehensive and critically informed understanding of what is spiritual healing, to integrate its linguistic, philosophical, neuro-psychological, civilizational, and other cross-domain health-related foundational evidences, while also re-evaluating its significance in contemporary health and wellness interventional practices to offer fresh perspectives.

OBJECTIVES

1. To investigate the linguistic, etymological, and conceptual underpinnings of spirituality and spiritual healing.
2. To analyze the interpretations of spirituality across philosophical, psychological, civilizational, and health-related literature, with a particular focus on non-material, beyond-material, and pre-material perspectives.
3. To identify the convergent principles that shape spirituality and spiritual healing across various cultures, traditions, and disciplinary discourses and paradigms.
4. To explore novel interpretative perspectives drawn from meaning-making, selfhood, motivation, subliminal processing, and consciousness-oriented models that may enhance the conceptualization of spiritual healing.
5. To propose a more comprehensive working understanding of spiritual healing that is pertinent to interventional practices in health and wellness.

MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted as a critical interpretive synthesis (CIS)-aligned narrative review to elucidate the conceptual foundations of spirituality and spiritual healing and to develop a comprehensive interpretive framework for health and wellness. This review was conducted between January and February 2026, employing a search strategy, removal of duplicates, and subsequent thematic and conceptual analysis of the findings from each reference.

A critical interpretive synthesis (CIS)-aligned, multidisciplinary, concept-driven search strategy was used to identify literature defining spirituality and

spiritual healing across diverse but connected knowledge traditions. Rather than limiting the search to intervention studies, the review sampled sources from lexicography, etymology, philosophy, phenomenology, psychology, neuropsychology, consciousness studies, religion, spirituality studies, medical humanities, health, wellness, traditional healing, and ancient civilizational discourses.

Search terms were developed in thematic clusters, including *spiritual, spirituality, spiritual healing, meaning-making, selfhood, transcendence, inner life, soul, spirit, non-material, beyond material, pre-material, consciousness, self-organization, subliminal, quantum consciousness, spiritual care, spiritual coping, ritual healing, ancient healing, Ayurveda, pneuma, Atman, Brahman, Dao, and Qi*. As this review adopted an interpretative-analytic approach guided by CIS principles, it prioritised conceptual relevance, theoretical richness, historical depth, and explanatory value over narrow methodological uniformity. Sources were selected not only for discussing spiritual healing but also for contributing to the semantic, philosophical, psychological, civilizational, and health-related understanding of spirituality and healing. This domain-based search design enabled the final corpus to support a thematic synthesis, moving from linguistic foundations to broader conceptual, cultural, and intervention interpretations relevant to health and wellness.

Of the 149 references identified through the search strategy, 75 were selected from linguistic, etymological, philosophical, psychological, historical, civilizational, consciousness-oriented, and health-related literatures. Selection was guided by relevance to the review question, conceptual richness, cross-disciplinary contribution, and utility for understanding spirituality, meaning-making, selfhood, transcendence, healing, and relevance to intervention practices. The review sought theoretical depth, conceptual comparison, and interpretive integration across heterogeneous sources rather than quantitative synthesis of evidence or formal statistical pooling of data. References were examined for definitional positions, semantic assumptions, ontological orientation, models of healing, and implications for interventions employing spiritual healing in health practices. Following CIS principles, the literature was critically examined, compared, and reinterpreted. A recursive thematic analysis was performed, in which recurrent ideas were coded, compared across traditions and disciplines, and grouped into conceptual domains. These themes were refined into an integrated narrative structure that captured convergence and counterpoints to reduce bias. The final analysis and synthesis of evidence was presented as a conceptually driven, CIS guided thematic narrative review rather than a systematic review or meta-analysis. The findings were represented in an integrated manner with the discussions for more concise and systematic appraisal of the critical interpretive synthesis lens in this narrative review.

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis for the narrative review was conducted across ten domains relevant to spiritual healing such as conceptual and lexical, religious studies and health humanities, psychological and phenomenological, relational and therapeutic, practice and intervention, sociocultural and anthropological, clinical and systems, quantum and consciousness-oriented, methodological and epistemic, and selfhood, embodied self, and advanced integrated fields.

Coding for the analysis of the 75 references was done based on recurring keywords, including spirituality, definition, inner life, semantic plurality, religion, sacred,

secular, pluralism, selfhood, meaning, transcendence, resilience, authenticity, narrative, dialogue, listening, trust, ritual, prayer, meditation, mindfulness, touch, sacred space, embodied practice, community, ancestry, tradition, moral order, spiritual assessment, palliative care, interdisciplinary care, quantum consciousness, entanglement, coherence, microtubules, nonlocality, quantum biology, consciousness models, evidence hierarchy, conceptual stretch, intervention relevance, epistemic plurality, embodiment, symbolism, neural correlates, and transformed awareness. Table No 1 below depicts the thematic analysis across domains and themes, critical keywords as well as implications of the same for defining spiritual healing.

Table No 1: What defines Spirituality/Spiritual Healing? - Core Domains and Themes.

<i>Domains & Themes</i>	<i>Keywords</i>	<i>Implication for defining spiritual healing</i>
CONCEPTUAL AND LEXICAL	spirituality, definition, inner life, semantic plurality, operational ambiguity ^{[1-7],[11]}	Spiritual healing is a multidimensional concept with layered constructs requiring careful analysis and interpretation.
RELIGIOUS STUDIES AND HEALTH HUMANITIES	religion, spirituality, sacred, secular, pluralism, institutional versus personal ^{[5],[7],[11]}	Spiritual healing may coexist/ may be compatible with religion, religious beliefs and practices, but it is not religion dependent / does not require basis in religion and can exist independently
PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PHENOMENOLOGICAL	selfhood, meaning, transcendence, resilience, authenticity, existential coherence ^{[6],[7],[9],[12],[62],[63]}	It should include selfhood, meaning, transcendence, and existential coherence and wholeness as core dimensions.
RELATIONAL AND THERAPEUTIC	narrative, accompaniment, dialogue, listening, trust, intersubjectivity ^{[5],[11],[36],[63]}	Relationship/ relational support, supportive presence and accompaniment, philosophical companionship and reinterpretation of life are regarded as key pathways of spiritual healing.
PRACTICE AND INTERVENTION	ritual, prayer, meditation, mindfulness, touch, sacred space, embodied practice ^{[5],[11],[29],[31],[36],[53]}	Spiritual healing interventions are viewed as embodied-symbolic practices and their use varies by context, stage and maturity of application.
SOCIOCULTURAL AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL	community, ancestry, place, tradition, moral order, cultural embeddedness ^{[5],[31],[36]}	Spiritual healing interventions are seen as shaped by tradition and culturally embedded practices rather than being universal in form.
CLINICAL AND SYSTEMS	spiritual assessment, chaplaincy, palliative care, referral, bedside presence, interdisciplinary care ^{[5],[11]}	Spiritual healing in healthcare is considered as an ethically guided domain of care rather than as doctrine based or purely devotional/worship-oriented activity.
QUANTUM AND CONSCIOUSNESS-ORIENTED AND QUANTUM PHENOMENA IN REALITY AND BIOLOGICAL SYSTEMS	quantum consciousness, entanglement, coherence, microtubules, nonlocality, quantum biology, consciousness models, ontological speculation ^{[13],[45],[52],[61],[66]}	Literature on quantum phenomena and consciousness broadens the conceptual horizon of spiritual healing by introducing questions of interconnection, consciousness, and models of reality that go beyond reductionist explanations.
METHODOLOGICAL AND EPISTEMIC	evidence hierarchy, conceptual stretch, translational limits, intervention relevance, epistemic plurality ^{[5],[6],[11],[12],[53],[61],[64]}	Spiritual Healing may be understood across definitional, philosophical, historical, conceptual, exploratory, speculative, and clinical-interventional layers.
SELF /SELFHOOD, EMBODIED SELF IN SPIRITUAL HEALING, ADVANCED INTEGRATED FIELDS	meaning, selfhood, relation, embodiment, symbolism, neural correlates, transformed awareness, care ^{[1-7],[9],[11],[12],[18],[29],[31],[36],[45],[53],[61-64],[66][69-75]}	Advanced integrated fields of neurotheology, neurophilosophy, neurophenomenology broaden intervention-oriented discussion of spiritual healing in health and wellness discourses.

Integrated Findings and Discussion

The findings, including the final analysis and synthesis of evidence from the reviewed literature, were systematically integrated with the discussion to facilitate a more concise and systematic representation through the critical interpretative synthesis lens in this narrative review.

a) Etymological meaning of the words Spiritual and Spirituality

Before defining spiritual healing, it is crucial to establish a foundational etymological understanding of the terms "spiritual" and "spirituality." This requires a linguistic and conceptual meaning analysis, as well as a historiographical examination of the evolution of these terms.

According to the standard lexicographical definition from *Merriam-Webster*, the term "spiritual" describes an adjective *pertaining to, relating to, consisting of, or affecting the spirit*, thereby distinguishing it from the material and validating the conceptual synthesis of the "non-material dimension of personhood".^[1] *Etymonline* indicates that the term originates from the mid-13th century, denoting "life, the animating or vital principle in humans and animals," derived from the Anglo-French "spirit," Old French "espirit" ("spirit, soul" from the 12th century, Modern French "esprit"), and directly from the Latin "spiritus," meaning "a breathing (of respiration, also of the wind), breath;" also "breath of a god," hence "inspiration; breath of life," and consequently life itself.

The term "*spiritual*" entered the English language through Middle English and Anglo-French, from Late Latin "*spiritualis*," derived from "*spiritus*," which was associated with breath, air, and spirit, thus linking the term to vitality rather than merely doctrine. The Latin term also connoted "*disposition, character; high spirit, vigor, courage; pride, arrogance*." It is a derivative of "*spirare*," meaning "to breathe," and was formerly thought to originate from a Proto-Indo-European root (*s)peis-* "to blow", which is also cited as the source of Old Church Slavonic *pisto*, meaning "to play on the flute". However, de Vaan suggests that the Latin verb is "possibly an onomatopoeic formation imitating the sound of breathing, with no direct cognates."

The term is also attested in English from the mid-14th century with the meanings "*character, disposition; way of thinking and feeling, state of mind; source of a human desire*;" while in Middle English, "freedom of spirit" signified "freedom of choice." It is recorded from the 1580s in the metaphorical sense of "animation, vitality," and by around 1600 as "frame of mind with which something is done," as well as "mettle, vigor of mind, courage." According to Barnhart and the Oxford English Dictionary (1989), the earliest use of the word in English appears to derive from passages in the Vulgate, where the Latin word translates Greek "*pneuma*" and Hebrew "*ruah*." A distinction between "soul" and "spirit" (as

"seat of emotions") became prevalent in Christian terminology (such as Greek "*psykhē*" and "*pneuma*," Latin "*anima*" and "*spiritus*"), but "is without significance for earlier periods" [Buck].

In classical Latin, "*spiritus*," usually meaning "breath," replaced "*animus*" in the sense of "spirit" during the imperial period and appeared in Christian writings as the usual equivalent of Greek "*pneuma*".^[2] The Cambridge Online Dictionary indicates that contemporary usage extends the term toward deep inward life and forms of meaning, often religious in nature, relating to the inner character of a person, while "spirituality" is defined as the quality involving deep feelings and beliefs of a religious nature, rather than the physical aspects of life.^[3] *Encyclopedia Britannica* describes spirituality as the quality or state of being concerned with religion or religious matters, foregrounding the state of being spiritual. This semantic field supports the view of the spiritual as pointing beyond physical description toward an interior dimension of human existence.^[4]

There is a general consensus that the terms "spiritual" or "spirituality" pertain to concepts that extend beyond the material realm. This interpretation is considered valid, while the characteristics that associate these terms with their "pre-materialistic" connotations should be examined through a historical-philosophical lens rather than a strict definitional approach. This distinction facilitates linguistic grounding while allowing for philosophical and psychological exploration in spiritual healing.

b) Spirituality/spiritual related to non material /pre-material /beyond material?

Through a synthesis of linguistic and etymological analysis, a consensus emerges that the etymological meaning of the term "spiritual" may be located within and understood in relation to (i) *non-material*, (ii) *beyond material*, or (iii) *pre-material*. This necessitates a distinction between the concepts underlying these three terms and their connection to the definitions of "spiritual" across the intersecting domains of philosophical, linguistic, and health research. It is also pertinent to examine whether these definitions possess distinctive qualities or converge at a common point of agreement.

Every word or term encompasses two sets of meanings, that is (i) *intrinsic meanings* and (ii) *ascribed meanings*. Definitions are ascriptions. However, it is essential to investigate whether a definition integrates both intrinsic and ascribed meanings. Definitions that successfully integrate these two components are naturally considered to enhance the comprehension and application of the conceptual foundations of the spiritual healing phenomenon and are thus regarded as superior and more comprehensive-

Boutros HM et al. (2026) assert in their discursive review that there is a lack of consensus regarding the definition of spiritual health and note the variability in the conceptualization and understanding of spiritual practices. Existing reviews often overlook the underlying semantics through which spirituality is understood, treating it as a construct whose meaning is still actively being developed across various literatures rather than being definitively established. Spirituality is often conveyed through the processes of meaning making, understanding personal experiences, and exploring or reaffirming one's sense of purpose, sometimes utilizing sacred language. It is frequently characterized by connections within four domains (a) the self, (b) others, (c) nature, and (d) the transcendent. A significant finding of this study is that spirituality is frequently discussed independently of "organized religion," "dogma," or structure. Boutros HM et al consistently demonstrated that spirituality is often perceived as personal, privatized, existential, transcendental, and more acceptable than organized religion. Spirituality is characterized by its involvement with the transcendent, a broader sense of mystery, care of the soul, and the idea of a vital life force. Notably, in one community context, "spiritual alienation" is described as a disconnection from the non-material and morally affirming values.^[5] The review effectively delineates the socially constructed and ascribed semantic domain of spirituality. However, it provides limited evidence for the intrinsic aspect of meaning, as it does not claim to identify a singular essential core.^[5]

In his work, Cannata observes that the Oxford English Dictionary defines spirituality as a concern for "spiritual (as opposed to worldly or material) matters or pursuits." He further demonstrates that dictionary definitions of "spirit" frequently employ terms such as immaterial and supernatural, in contrast to the body or the physical world. This directly supports the non-material and transcendent nature of the spiritual and of spirituality.^[6] Cannata traces the historical usage of the term *spiritualitas*, noting that by the ninth century, it was employed in a generic sense in contrast to what was "corporal, material." Later, in the seventeenth century, Descartes used "spirituality of soul" in opposition to the extension of matter, thereby imbuing the term with a strong anti-material or supra-material contrast in philosophical discourse. Cannata elucidated how "spirit" came to denote something inward and not directly visible, yet he does not explicitly conceptualize spirituality as "pre-material" in a stable ontological sense. Cannata contended that dictionary definitions derived solely from spirit/spiritual are often circular and conceptually weak, describing this as the problem of explaining obscure concepts through even more obscure ones. To circumvent this issue, he sought an alternative expression not confined to the same root, concluding that "inner life" serves as the most effective working definition of spirituality.^[6] Advocating for the ascribed meaning, Cannata cautioned that definitions should not be

regarded as fixed, final, or conclusive endpoints. Instead, they function as working instruments for research. In Cannata's framework, dictionary and scholarly definitions are not immutable essences but are tools shaped by history, perspective, and research needs. Concurrently, Cannata was not content with endless semantic drift; he sought a definition that encapsulates something essential in spirituality. He proposed that "inner life" achieves this more effectively than other options, as it identifies a deeper experiential core beneath the unstable verbal surface. Cannata's methodological approach, encapsulated in the definition of 'inner life,' suggested that spirituality should be understood more as an event, experience, story, or narrated process rather than as a fixed entity with rigid properties. He also asserted that "inner life" carries methodological implications, such as attention to subjectivity, dialogue between science and intuition, dialogue between materialism and idealism, and a focus on what is inward, meaningful, emotional, and connected to life as a whole.^[6]

In his work, Gäub asserted that there existed diverse and incompatible notions of nonreligious spirituality, rendering a singular conceptual analysis implausible. Instead, he endeavors to identify a "common core" and establish minimum adequacy conditions for a concept to be recognized as spirituality. His findings indicated variability, yet pointed out that a minimal convergent core can be discerned. His review treated the field as conceptually diverse and sought to derive a minimal philosophical core from this diversity. His initial major formulation contended that spirituality constitutes "a certain type of attitude" that individuals adopted towards the totality of existence, and consequently, towards themselves. Its defining characteristic is an "ontological, axiological, and phenomenological reduction or diminution of the individual self in the light of the totality of existence." This perspective shifts spirituality away from a purely institutional or doctrinal usage towards a trans-egoic orientation, aligning more closely with the category of "beyond material" rather than a narrow "non-material substance" definition. Gäub in his work developed the concept of spirituality through five interlinked definitional qualities that extend the term beyond a merely external or socially ascribed label. *Firstly*, spirituality encompasses an affective depth, involving profound emotional responses such as awe, reverence, gratitude, fear, or despair in relation to reality as a whole. *Secondly*, it includes evaluation, wherein persons and objects are perceived as possessing intrinsic value rather than mere instrumental utility. *Thirdly*, it possesses a *noetic dimension*, as spiritual life involves perceived insight into the nature of reality and the self. *Fourthly*, its intentional object is not an isolated entity but the totality of existence, including one's own place within the world. *Fifth* and finally, spirituality reshapes self-relation, culminating in a diminished or decentered ego and a more selfless perspective on reality. Together, these findings suggested that spirituality is a composite

concept integrating inward experience, value, cognition, and existential orientation.^[7]

Ryff proposed that "the soul is often defined as the spiritual part of being human," and that spirituality is frequently characterized "in terms of the soul, as distinguished from material and physical qualities of being human." A strand of contemporary theoretical literature approaches spirituality not merely as a religious designation, but as an aspect of human existence distinct from material and physical attributes. Ryff incorporated Aristotle's perspective, asserting that the highest human good is "the activity of the soul in accord with virtue.

She associated this with eudaimonia, understood as the progression toward one's authentic and optimal nature. This perspective indicates that spirituality is not merely regarded as an immaterial remnant or a spectral counterpart to matter, but rather as a realm of ethical realisation, self-truth, and human flourishing. The literature contrasted spirituality with matter, treating it as a higher-order axis of meaning, virtue, and self-realisation. In this context, the concept of "beyond material" is more robust. Ryff's analysis of Maslow is significant; she observed that individuals who achieve self-actualisation exhibited awe, wonder, and occasionally mystical or peak experiences in which the self is transcended. Across various traditions in Ryff's work, spirituality tends to converge around themes of transcendence, self-expansion, meaningful orientation, and movement beyond ordinary self-enclosure. Ryff explicitly noted that Aristotle's model did not necessitate religious experience or contact with the divine. Furthermore, she demonstrated that many influential theories of positive functioning did not fundamentally rely on religion, although some possessed adjacent spiritual overtones. This supports the claim that definitions of spirituality may contain an *intrinsic conceptual core* beyond institutional religion, *while still acquiring different ascribed meanings in different intellectual traditions.*

Ryff later noted that ideals of human fulfillment vary across history and cultures. She contrasted Western emphasis on rationality with Eastern emphases on *oneness, intuition, and less separation from the whole of nature.* This suggests that spirituality acquires different cultural formulations, yet these are not arbitrary. They are structured by different civilizational views of the person, nature, and the whole. This supports the claim that *ascribed meanings vary historically and culturally.* At the same time, it hints that these ascriptions still organise around deeper recurring themes. Ryff distinguished spirituality from the material and physical and expands it into virtue, meaning, and transcendence. However, *she does not explicitly argue that spirituality is pre-material in an ontological or etymological sense.*^[8]

Karen S. Dunn and Sheria G. Robinson-Lane, in their work "A Philosophical Analysis of Spiritual Coping,"

asserted that although spirituality varied across cultures and value systems, its "elemental definition remained the same" as "the essential connections that provide meaning and purpose in life." Thus, it fundamentally concerns those connections that ground meaning and purpose for an individual or a community, which could be part of the intrinsic semantic nucleus around which ascriptions gather. Dunn and Robinson-Lane noted that, unlike religiosity, spirituality "necessitates no doctrine." Spirituality is not reducible to formal belief systems; hence, the phenomenon of spiritual healing cannot be conceptually confined to religious doctrine alone. This supports the proposition that many definitions of spirituality are ascribed in a way that detaches them from institutional religion and relocates them into broader human functions such as meaning, connection, coping, and transcendence. The review further drew upon the work of Baldacchino and Draper's definition to state that there are both religious and non-religious strategies in spiritual coping, leading to enhanced physical, psychological, and social well-being, resilience, and self-transcendence. Thus, the few common points on which most definitions of spiritual healing converge revolve around meaning, purpose, connection, adaptive response, and transcendence. Dunn and Robinson-Lane's review further stated that *spiritual coping fostered self-transcendence* and cites Maslow's idea that *transcendence is the highest and most holistic level of consciousness, involving relation to self, others, nature, and the cosmos.* Hence, spirituality is not merely a semantic negation of matter but a positive movement toward wider connectedness and a more holistic horizon.

Before spirituality can be classified as non-material, beyond material, or pre-material, it is essential to first clarify the concept of the material itself. The philosophy of science reveals that even "the physical" is not a self-evident or stable category.^[10] In their work, *Hempel's Dilemma: Not Only for Physicalism*, Erez Firt, Meir Hemmo, and Orly Shenker (2022) explored what it means for something to be physical. They concluded that the term is linked to what physics claims exists. This presents an immediate issue- if "the physical" is defined by physics, *its meaning fluctuates with the developments in physics itself.* Past physics included entities now dismissed; current physics remains incomplete; future physics is unknown. *Thus, "material/physical" cannot be treated as a fixed baseline category.* The authors argued that this is not merely a verbal problem. They contended that deep scientific theories are mutable and structural accounts and an appraisal about deep-structure of reality itself. By drawing on examples from thermodynamics, quantum mechanics, and quantum gravity, they demonstrated that even fundamental assumptions about nature, including the status of spacetime, may be revised. Their point was that *the scientific image of reality is not a definitive map.*^[10]

Nita et al.'s work explicitly stated that defining spirituality in an essentialist sense is unnecessary, as

long as one can explore its manifestations and associated connotations. She suggested that spirituality or spiritualities can be examined as "semantic or semiotic fields" and as "symbolic and material discourses."; while definitions of spirituality vary across contexts, they consistently converged around themes of inner-directedness, care, meaningful communication, empathy, and inclusive, healing-oriented discourse.^[11]

c) Examining the pre-material stance of spirituality or spiritual healing:

A pre-material attribute of spirituality refers to the prior field of lived meaning, inner orientation, value-apprehension, and self-transcending interpretation through which human beings organize experience before such experience is stabilized into observable behaviors, institutional forms, doctrinal language, or measurable therapeutic outcomes. Thus, the pre-material nature of spirituality or spiritual healing can be examined under three layers (i)Phenomenological pre-material^[12,13] (ii)Semantic pre-material^[12,13] (iii)Ontological pre-material.^[14,15,16]

Phenomenological pre-materialism posits that spirituality is initially perceived as an internal mode of lived experience, rather than as an external doctrine, ritual form, or quantifiable outcome. This perspective is embraced by psychology when it refocuses on the "unseen" workings of the inner world, subjective experience, self-actualization, and ultimately transcendence, which involves surpassing the self in pursuit of meaning, altruism, and an elevated state of consciousness. Phenomenological methods are well-suited to spirituality because they aim to comprehend experience, view reality as complex, and explore the significance of experiences to individuals. Consequently, spirituality is considered "pre-material" in this context because it first manifests as an inward orientation, value, purpose, and interpreted experience before any outward expression.^[12]

The concept of semantic pre-material suggests that spirituality initially operates as a context-sensitive domain of meanings, connotations, and lived discourses before it is solidified into doctrine or institutional labels. Contemporary scholarship indicates that spirituality can be examined as a semantic or semiotic field, while also highlighting its fluidity, contextual nature, and resistance to a singular, fixed definition.^[11,5]

Pérez-Jara argued that the acknowledgement of qualitatively irreducible emergent levels above the purely physical does not deny materialism but rather enriches it; therefore, semantic priority should not be mistaken for proof that spirituality is ontologically independent of matter.^[13]

In Wittgenstein's view, "Every word has a meaning. This meaning is correlated with the word. It is the object for which the word stands." This reflects his belief that

meaning derives from language use. Thus, "spiritual" meaning emerges through practices and language-games, rather than from an intrinsic essence. While meanings may precede formal codification, this doesn't prove spirituality exists independently of material reality, as higher-level realities may remain materially dependent.^[14] Although Wittgenstein begins with the picture that every word has a correlated meaning, his later position shifts toward the view that, for a large class of cases, the meaning of a word is its use in language.^[14]

Ontological pre-materialism is best conceptualized as a metaphysical stance positing that an entity antecedent to matter underpins reality. This entity may be understood as spirituality, spirit, consciousness, or a *foundational meaning-order* that transcends mere physical processes, *being in some sense more fundamental than matter itself*. Ontological pre-materialism asserts that spirituality or a spiritual principle holds *ontological precedence over matter*, with material reality being derivative of, grounded in, or contingent upon this antecedent spiritual reality. This is a metaphysical assertion, rather than merely a linguistic or psychological one.^[13]

d) Decoding what is meaningfulness and where meaning making stands in defining spirituality/spiritual healing

Spirituality is a multifaceted concept characterised by personal meaning-making and connections to the self, others, nature, and the transcendent, independent of organised religion or belief systems. It encompasses the expression of inner experiences and purpose through language, while the reviewed literature emphasises spirituality's non-material nature, involving affective depth and self-transcendence. It is a lived process shaped by subjectivity and cultural context, functioning as a semantic domain reflecting a foundational reality that precedes material existence, while fostering resilience and meaning. *This generates curiosity about meaningfulness and the architecture of meaning-making!*

According to Reiland, the significance of a word in a public language emerges from its use by skilled speakers who follow socially established conventions, rather than viewing it as a mere static sign or personal token.^[15] Moisl further elaborated that this public meaning encompassed an *intrinsic layer of intentionality*, as meaning involves *internal cognitive processes that enable the mind to engage with the world*, rather than merely rearranging symbols based on external interpretations.^[16] San Martín elucidated that the specific meaning a word conveys in any given context is determined by *contextual activation*, as the word possesses a semantic potential, while factors such as theme, culture, ideology, and discourse influence the particular pre-meaning that becomes pertinent in that context.^[17]

Applying the aforementioned framework, it becomes evident that spirituality can be conceptualised as a

layered process of meaning-making, rather than as a fixed doctrine or dogma of belief systems or merely a private sentiment. At the public level, *its intelligibility is grounded in shared linguistic practices*, in which a term acquires meaning through socially sustained rules of use, rather than through an appeal to an isolated essence.^[15] At the inward level, language expressing about spiritual or spirituality could be understood as *indexing an internal orientation of aboutness, through which individuals relate self, world, value, and significance in their experiences*.^[16] At the semantic level, spirituality is best regarded as a context-sensitive field, with its activated meaning varying across thematic, cultural, and ideological settings, *such that no single formulation exhausts its full semantic potential*.^[17] From this perspective, spirituality remains a plural yet intelligible domain of human experiential and expressive meaning-making. By cautious extension, spiritual healing may also be interpreted through the same framework, not as a uniformly defined entity, but as a contextually framed language of restoration, significance, and reorientation, whose meaning emerges through public use, inward intentionality, and situational semantic activation.^[15-17]

Spiritual healing hence is interpreted *as a process of meaning-making*, wherein experiences of distress, restoration, and reorientation are rendered comprehensible through shared language, inward intentionality, and contextually shaped interpretation, in the least. In this regard, its public meaning is contingent upon socially intelligible rules of use rather than a singular, fixed essence.^[15] Its inward force may be understood through internal aboutness and the significance-laden self-world relationship.^[16] Furthermore, its semantic content varies across devotional, therapeutic, cultural, and philosophical contexts, such that each formulation captures only a *contextually shaped pre-meaning* rather than the entire semantic potential of the term.^[17] Therefore, spiritual healing should be considered not as a singular category but as a diverse yet coherent discourse of restoration, whose significance is derived from its application, internal focus, and context.

The curiosity surrounding the reconciliation of inadequate linguistic expressions of spirituality, akin to an overshadowed forest of words, invites an exploration of the pre-meanings embedded within the cognitive framework of language and expression in academia and research over the years. This exploration pertains to the very nature and definition of spirituality and spiritual healing. At a minimum, it necessitates an examination of the prevailing discourses in philosophy and the interpretations of spirituality by eminent thinkers and philosophers of different parts of the world in the last few hundred years. Furthermore, it requires an in-depth investigation into how ancient civilizations and their thinkers approached the pre-meaning in the context of meaning-making related to spirituality and spiritual healing.

e) **Vignettes on the interpretation of the term spirituality from eminent thinkers of the world and ancient civilizations and how it is related to defining spiritual healing**

In their conference proceedings article titled “*Spirituality and Moral Values*,” published in the SHS Web of Conferences for CILDIAH-2018, Evgeniia Erenchinova and Elena Proudchenko conducted a theoretical analysis and compiled definitions and perspectives from philosophers across various historical periods.^[18]

In the Pythagorean tradition, spirituality is linked to justice, order, and a morally structured universe, where human existence relates to a broader, law-like harmony. Consequently, spiritual healing was seen as restoration of alignment with cosmic-moral order, rather than symptom alleviation only. Through *kalokagathia*, Plato associated spirituality with the integrated cultivation of truth, goodness, beauty, and human excellence. Based on these thinkers, spiritual healing can be understood as recovering inner harmony and reforming the individual towards a complete human ideal. Aristotle's notion that the soul is the entelechy of the body challenges any simplistic separation between spirit and embodiment.^[18] This perspective interprets spiritual healing not as escape from the body, but as embodied restoration, wherein inward and outward aspects remain interconnected.

In Greek antiquity, humans were depicted as a synthesis of aesthetic and moral principles, serving as a microcosm related to the world order.^[18] Based on that, spiritual healing can be conceptualized as the process of re-harmonizing the individual with oneself, society, and existence.

Within the Christian moral imagination, spirituality encompasses the transcendence of the ego, communion with higher values, and purification from selfishness.^[18] Spiritual healing is thus perceived as the purification of inner life and a reorientation towards a peace and value-centered existence. In the Indian tradition, the spiritual foundation is based on *Brahman*, the originating principle from which the world emerges. Spiritual healing is understood as a reconnection with the originating ground of being and metaphysical continuity.^[18] Hegel conceptualized spirit as pure activity and freedom, manifesting through subjective, objective, and absolute forms.^[18] Consequently, spiritual healing is seen as the recovery of freedom, meaning, and purpose.

Marx and Engels associated spirituality with the freedom of will, moral duty, and responsibility for actions.^[18] This perspective allowed for a secular interpretation of spiritual healing, where healing involves the reconstitution of moral agency, self-direction, and ethical action within social life. Dal' defined spirituality as a state belonging to the soul, mind, will, and moral-mental powers of the human being.^[18] This definition aids in interpreting spiritual healing as attention to the non-corporeal yet person-defining dimensions of life,

particularly thought, will, and moral interiority. Frankl is a prominent figure in this discourse, describing spirit as the locus of relations between self-being and being, where spirituality is treated as an aware being that reveals, connects, unites, and comprehends another being, with spirit as presence.^[18] This framework renders spiritual healing intelligible as the restoration of meaning, presence, connection, and existential relation.

Berdyayev's assertion, "Spirit is freedom," is pivotal, emphasizing that spirit is determined from within rather than by external compulsion.^[18] Spiritual healing, therefore, may be understood as the recovery of inner freedom and alignment with one's deepest ideals. Russell characterized philosophy as reflection on subjects where knowledge is not yet possible, and spirituality remains a subject of philosophical reflection, still not clearly defined.

Borodina interpreted spirituality as the inner sphere of personal identity and the capacity to construct one's world of claims and assessments according to ideals of life and dignity.^[18] This provides a basis for defining spiritual healing as the reconstruction of identity, dignity, evaluative order, and the inner world of meaning. Nee's formulation bridged to spiritual healing, describing spirituality as the soul's openness to freedom, creativity, perfection, and integrity, while spiritual birth is linked to conscience. It posited that conscience acts as a doctor of the soul, healing it from sinfulness and suffering towards a new level of existence.^[18] Here, spiritual healing is the awakening of conscience, integrity, and a transformed existence beyond suffering.

P. D. Ouspensky, in his work *"The Fourth Way: A Record of Talks and Answers to Questions Based on the Teaching of G. I. Gurdjieff,"* refrained from defining spirituality as a doctrine, ritual, or denomination. Instead, the spiritual path is conceptualized as an awakening from ordinary "sleep," characterized by the attainment of self-remembering, the enhancement of consciousness, and the transformation of one's being through knowledge, effort, discipline, and inner work.

He depicted that ordinary human life was mechanical and fragmented, following which proposed that earnest work aims to progress towards higher consciousness and a more unified inner state. A second key aspect is that Ouspensky's approach is *not based on uncritical acceptance*. Ouspensky, a Russian thinker with contributions to the fields of proto-neurophilosophy and spiritual psychology, endorsed experience and verification over dogma. He asserted in the Fourth Way that "faith *does not enter*" initially, individuals must "study, verify, understand, and find proofs" rather than *accept assertions without questions*. This suggests that spirituality as Ouspensky, is a "transformative inner practice grounded in conscious effort and understanding," rather than passive religiosity. Third, spirituality connects to "evolution." Ouspensky stated

that human evolution occurs through knowledge acquisition and effort, not automatically. Thus, spirituality is a "discipline of awakening and development," representing a transition from fragmentation to a higher state of being.^[19] Any discipline may unfold and progress through linear or nonlinear processes, acknowledging that randomness influences both micro- and macro-levels of reality. This concept may also be read in relation to neurocognitivism, cognitive psychology, and behavioural economics.

Adam Drozdek, in his work *Berdyayev's Metaphysics of Freedom* stated that for Berdyayev, freedom is the *greatest good* and the centre of his philosophy, drawing heavily from German mystics, Berdyayev claims that everything began with the divineness and the absolute. The absolute, due to its state of perfection, is incapable of creation. From the concept of divine nothingness, as articulated by *Eckhart's Gottheit* and *Boehme's Ungrund*, the Trinity arises. This notion of freedom is *an irrational entity that precedes existence*. *Chance, characterised by its irrationality* (SR 95), *is associated with freedom rather than natural laws* (SS 113). *In scientific discourse, statistical laws are acknowledged, with chance playing a pivotal role in determining outcomes* (SS 110). *Freedom is depicted through chance, randomness, and undetermined events*. Spirituality transcends feeling or moral sentiment, belonging to the spirit world that Berdyayev sees as authentic, while the objectified natural world is secondary. Berdyayev's key formulations include "God is Spirit," "God is Freedom and Love," and "spirit is freedom and freedom is spirit." Spirituality means participating in a higher reality of freedom, creativity, and non-objectified spirit. Drozdek shows Berdyayev's spirituality as metaphysical, with freedom preceding being, the material world linked to objectification, and true life belonging to the spirit rather than the "merely phenomenal order."^[20]

In this chapter, *Postatheism and the Phenomenon of Minimal Religion in Russia*, the concepts of postatheism and "minimal religion" or "poor faith" were examined, in which spirituality was situated outside the confines of church membership and formal rituals, emerging in the aftermath of the decline of militant atheism.^[20] Mikhail Epstein, in *The Routledge Handbook of Postsecularity*, characterizes this phenomenon as general faith rather than one confined to specific confessional forms; "faith pure and simple," representing a perception of God that transcends historical traditions. Epstein conceptualised it as a minimal, nondenominational engagement with the divine. Although interpretations of spirituality may encompass lofty ideals and moral values, Epstein differentiated it from secular idealism. Minimal religion sustains a direct connection with faith while surpassing existing dogmas and affiliations, remaining religious yet minimal: introspective, nonsectarian, and open.^[21]

In contrast to Russian, Indian, and European thinkers, the American approach to exploring the meaning of spirituality has historically tended to perceive spirituality as an aspect or subset of religious experience, *rather than through a separate ontological perspective*. This perspective often aligns with personal values associated with living a life connected to the religiosity of Christian belief systems or pre-New Age mysticism, which examined individual values in one's life. American thinkers frequently approached spirituality through the "idiom of religion, mysticism, religious experience, faith, or the spiritual self," but they progressively disentangled spirituality from church doctrine, sectarian authority, and supernatural orthodoxy. This trend persisted until the emergence of Abraham Maslow's contributions. Emerson is primarily discussed in terms of self, experience, moral conscience, and religion as a recurring concern, rather than through any direct formal account of spirituality.^[22] The dominant language is not "spirituality" but "the religious," and Dewey's contribution is to relocate the religious within reconnection, harmony, and adjustment to the conditions of existence rather than within supernatural doctrine alone.^[23] This experiential line becomes more explicit, as Dewey's religious trust is placed alongside Connolly's spiritual affinity, and spirituality is presented through openness, shared ideals, wholeness, and transformative engagement rather than through creed-centered belief.^[24]

Maslow introduced a significant shift *by positioning self-transcendence beyond self-actualization and associating the highest motivational life with service, communion beyond the personal ego, and transcendent or transpersonal experiences*.^[25] Emersonian and Unitarian interpreters continued to operate within the realm of religion and mysticism, yet they redefine mysticism as universal, intuitive, ethical, and open beyond sectarian or historical confines, thereby detaching spirituality from strictly confessional Christianity.^[26] James did not provide a concise definition of spirituality; rather, his pluralistic and action-oriented perspective on faith aimed to establish *a conceptual space for the coexistence of science and spirituality*.^[27] The inward movement becomes even more pronounced as James's spiritual self is characterized as the inner or subjective being and the totality of states of consciousness, encompassing intellectual, moral, and religious aspirations, while mystical states remain central to religious experience.^[28]

Spirituality has been somewhat conceptually interpreted across various cultures and intellectual traditions as an intrinsic, value-laden aspect of human existence that interconnects freedom, conscience, meaning, embodiment, transcendence, and harmony with a broader order. Consequently, spiritual healing can be characterized not merely as the alleviation of distress but as the restoration of moral-existential alignment. This encompasses the reconnection with values, the recovery of inner freedom, the awakening of conscience, and the

renewed harmony between the self, the world, and what is perceived as higher or ultimate.

However, these elements necessitate examination from the perspectives of ancient civilisations, which served as precursors to most current frameworks of spiritual healing and knowledge as well as prevalent belief systems. These civilisations essentially represent a continuation or modification of that "pre-meaning," which can be perceived as spiritual or related to spirituality. A critical interpretation identified by the reviewers is that the majority of the components and attributes of how ancient civilisations and texts conceptualised spirituality were grounded in notions of the soul, harmony, diseases, and afflictions, and more importantly values inculcated in day-to-day life which led or tend to progress towards more holistic expression of an individual in particular and an ethnocommunity at large. This underscores the fact that the wisdom of ancient civilisations lies in addressing these issues through spiritual rituals, which are fundamentally diverse expressions of spiritual healing, whose most pristine and embedded elements and practices continue to be disseminated in ethnocultural lineage-based healing systems even to this day in few parts of the world at large and India in specific.

Evidence broadly supports that the healing traditions of ancient civilisations did not isolate disease from value, ritual, cosmology, or interior life but rather situated both affliction and recovery within a comprehensive framework that encompassed body, mind, spirit, and order. In the Brooklyn Papyrus, an ancient Egyptian medical papyrus, Healing was described as simultaneously physical and psychological, with magic, religion, incantation, and medicinal practice working in concert as part of a balanced and holistic therapeutic process, rather than as separate domains, as explained by Golding.^[29] Consequently, spiritual healing employed various modes, means, and instruments to facilitate the healing of the body. Alex Villas Boas and Isidro Lamelas opined that in the Hippocratic and post-Hippocratic traditions, the concept of the spiritual was interpreted through *pneuma* as an integrating, vitalizing, and unifying principle of body and soul, with the restoration of health linked to the restoration of nature, balance, and living dynamism, rather than merely the alleviation of symptoms.^[30] In the Asclepieia, Ancient Greece, ritual purification, incubation, dreams, music, exercise, baths, massage, sacred landscapes, and medical care were integrated within what a review by Pavli and Maltezou that explicitly identified as a holistic approach to physical, psychological, and emotional healthcare.^[31] Ancient civilisational frameworks often perceived healing as the reordering of the whole person within a meaningful moral and cosmological context, rather than merely addressing a localised bodily lesion.^[30] *Ancient spiritual healing appears less as a singular doctrine and more as an integrated civilizational response (ICR), wherein ritual, value, symbolism, embodied care, and*

inner experience converge in the endeavour to restore life to coherence.^[31]

Ancient Indian civilization did not confine spirit or spirituality to a narrow doctrinal category, as evidenced by the literature reviewed herein. Divino attested that the Vedic and early contemplative world is depicted through seers, ascetics, sacred utterance, cognition, contemplative discipline, and liberation-oriented practice, indicating that *spirituality was associated with knowledge, disciplined interiority, and transformative modes of awareness rather than mere belief.*^[32] Shinde et al. did not explicitly define the concepts of spirit or spirituality; however, they offered a civilizational interpretation by examining the archaeological treatment of the deceased. Their documentation of the organization of Harappan cemeteries, diverse burial forms, symbolic burials, grave goods, animal remains, and potential burial rituals indicated that personhood and death were not regarded merely as biological events but were integrated into ritualized and socially significant practices. While this does not constitute direct evidence for a concept of spirit, it supports the inference that early Indian civilization already situated death, remembrance, and the body within a symbolic framework that transcended the immediate material existence and even its disposal.^[33]

In Srivastava's work, this civilizational orientation became more explicit wherein he explained that ancient Indian civilization's thought was said to prioritize consciousness as the primary reality, interpret Atman as the inner self or soul and Brahman as the ultimate source, and develop methods of inner observation, purity, and concentration.^[34] Tendulkar and Dwivedi's examination of ancient Indian classics deepened this inner anthropology by presenting dream, waking, deep sleep, and "Turiya" as states of the Atman or soul, thereby demonstrating that spiritual inquiry extended into subtle states of consciousness and not merely external rituals.^[35] In Behere et al.'s study, this same civilizational logic became explicitly therapeutic in intent and process wherein life is depicted a combination of senses, mind, body, and soul, complete health is the balance of mind, body, and soul, and spiritual knowledge, philosophy, remembrance, concentration and disciplined conduct are integral to healing.^[36] Shilpa and Murthy explained that the person is again treated as *cosmically embedded entity* through Prakriti, Tridosha, Triguna, and elemental constitution, suggesting that the spiritual and psychological dimensions of life were understood within a single anthropological and cosmological framework.^[37] Medhananda subsequently elucidated how this ancient civilizational heritage was reinterpreted in modern Indian thought through the work of Sri Aurobindo. Rooted in Vedic and later traditions which emerged from the Vedic traditions, for example- Vedantic philosophy, Aurobindo reinterpreted the traditional focus on the soul, rebirth, karma, divine purpose, and spiritual practice into a more contemporary philosophy of spiritual evolution. The continuity between the ancient Indian civilizational and

Aurobindo-nian frameworks lies in the emphasis on the inner soul/self, transformative practices, and the perspective that life experiences can serve as instruments for spiritual growth and, by extension, spiritual healing.^[38]

According to Noegel, ancient Mesopotamians viewed the spirit as a divine, corporeal, wind-like force capable of imparting life, causing illness, traversing the body, and conveying divine messages through prophecy and omens. He described this as exploring the "materiality of spirit" and "phenomenology of prophecy and divination." In Mesopotamian thought, the spirit was seen as a tangible "wind" or "breath," not as an abstract concept. Using the Akkadian term "šāru" for "spirit, wind," Noegel asserted the "animating spirit of living beings" was "divine in nature" and "moist, wet, and vaporous." Noegel connected the spirit with fog, dew, rain, and liquids to demonstrate its materiality. This divine wind could enter the body, animate it, and exit it. He cites formulas like "leave wind" from body parts to show spirits affecting organs and causing illness. Noegel further notes "blurry taxonomic boundaries" between winds, spirits, ghosts, demons, and gods in Mesopotamian culture, examining terms like *etemmu* ("spirit of the dead, ghost") and *zaqīqu* ("demon," "ghost," dream god).^[39]

Across the works of Greenwood^[40], Wang^[41], and Koithan and Wright^[42], the ancient Chinese civilizational approach was shown to be holistic, harmonising, and body-mind-spirit integrative. Greenwood interpreted Qi or subtle energy across gross, subtle, and causal levels, with body, mind, and spirit as interpenetrating dimensions and the Tao as the deepest source. Wang presented the Confucian/Taoist model-perspectives not as a doctrine of the spirit, but as an ancient Chinese *civilisational psychology*, in which health depends on transforming desire and achieving unity with nature and society, freeing the mind through selflessness and balance. Koithan and Wright^[42] explained that traditional Chinese medicine treated humans as a microcosm of the macrocosm, with its collective stance on health as life in balance, and located illness in disharmony, disrupted Qi flow, emotional excess, pathogenic influences, and disordered living. Healing was about restoring balance through acupuncture, herbs, moderation, meditation, introspection, and harmonious relationships. These support a civilizational model in which spirituality is less a separate doctrinal category than a process of embodied and experienced sense of harmony, Qi regulation, moral-psychological discipline, and alignment with the Tao, nature, and cosmos. Consequently, as per the ancient Chinese civilisation's *ICR*, spiritual healing is embedded in restoring harmony across body, mind, spirit, conduct, and environment.^[40-42]

f) Underlying principles which are common in all interpretations and definitions of spirituality and spiritual healing

Spirituality and spiritual healing share elements of inner life, meaning-making, and connectedness to self, others, nature, and the wider order.^{[5-8], [15-18]} Spirituality represents an interior dimension, whereas spiritual healing enables restoration through transformation^{[18], [29-38]} Both focus on the movement from fragmentation to coherence. The literature shows spirituality as an *inner relation* to reality, with spiritual healing *restoring* this when disrupted.^[7,17,18] Spirituality functions as an *organising axis* of human life by shaping how experience is interpreted; how the self relates to others, nature, conscience, cosmos, or the transcendent; and how significance is assigned to suffering, purpose, and conduct.^[15-18] Spiritual healing occurs at the point of the disturbance. When this orienting relation is fractured by affliction, disorder, or loss of meaning, healing is conceived as the restoration of coherence across the body, mind, soul, values, and world.^[30,31,36,40-42] Diverse traditions link healing with reordering and restoring the balance between the self, body, mind, soul, and the wider world.^[40-42] Yet one of the most fundamental underlying principles that almost all of the interpretations and definitions on spiritual /spirituality agree upon is that it is the “*attempt to look beyond*”; while keeping “materialism as the core “; which can be aptly summed as the process of “*beyonding*”.

The great Indian thinker Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose stated in his work *An Indian Pilgrim: An Unfinished Autobiography and Collected Letters, 1897–1921* “Reality is, after all, too big for our frail understanding to fully comprehend. Nevertheless, we have to build our life on the theory which contains the maximum truth. We cannot sit still because we cannot, or do not, know the Absolute Truth.”^[43] He had rightly pointed out that we cannot sit still because *we cannot or do not know the absolute truth*. Because somewhere, somehow, we have to light the fire, we have to start the search! Hence it is the common point in all definitions and interpretations of spirituality or the spiritual and is tentatively natural to uphold that *looking beyond materialism is spiritual*. It is the *common point* in all of the definitions.

And this underlying principle has been described from the perspectives of philosophy using the principles of physics, metaphysics, philosophy, psychology, epistemology and ontology in the previous sections. Taking into account the *pre-meanings* of the word and processes and thought discourses related to the spiritual from different ancient civilisational perspectives adds more weight to the stance that looking into the “*pre-adjutant*” and “*post-adjutant*” of materialism can very well be the beginning of the spiritual, and further leading to spirituality. This becomes a safe and also a “self” start as a pivotal ideology rallying behind the word and all the philosophies and expressions related to this word. Before proceeding further, it is imperative to establish a

semantic understanding of the terms “pre-adjutant” and “post-adjutant” to provide clearer context. Semantically, “adjutant” denotes an assisting or auxiliary role, derived from a root meaning “to help” (*Latin: adiutare/adiuvare*), and is used here in relation to *an agency of the pre-material aspect of spirituality or even consciousness* that supports a superior or primary function.^[44]

g) Convergence of neuropsychology, self determination and motivation in going beyond materialism in examining the nature of spirituality and spiritual healing

Transcending materialism does not entail the abandonment of science or reason; rather, it involves rejecting the notion that matter constitutes the sole admissible reality. Both the thinker Subhas Chandra Bose and researchers Ponte and Schäfer have advocated for the inclusion of spirit, form, consciousness, potentiality, and the numinous as legitimate explanatory categories in any form of enquiry.^[44,45] Even the physicist Eddington has been cited through concepts such as “universal Mind,” “mind-stuff,” and “something of spiritual nature” to substantiate the argument that the fundamental nature of the universe resembles *a mind-like entity rather than being merely particulate*.^[44]

Ponte and Schäfer assert that transcending materialism does not necessitate the rejection of the empirical world. Rather, it involves refuting the notion that empirical matter constitutes the entirety of reality. Their principal argument was that classical materialism confines reality to “material things,” whereas the integration of quantum ontology and Jungian psychology reveals a “non-empirical realm” or “non-material forms.” These forms, although invisible, are real because they have the capacity to “*manifest in the empirical world and exert influence within it*”.^[44] Thus, here they extended the inquiry beyond materialism by positing that the spiritual represents a genuine, albeit non-empirical, order of form, consciousness, and meaning that underlies, informs, and actualizes within the empirical world.

When we move beyond a sense of materialism, especially psychologically it is well understood that an individual’s basic needs are already fulfilled and one moves towards identifying deeper needs. This can be understood from the lens of Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy which in its classic form arranged needs and motivation from basic to developed and higher levels – physiological needs, safety, belongingness and love, esteem, and self-actualization.

At the foundational level of human needs, individuals are primarily oriented toward survival, security, affiliation, recognition, and personal competence. As articulated by Maslow and further examined by Koltko-Rivera, it is evident that when basic physiological needs are adequately met, allowing the individual to transcend mere survival concerns, “other (and ‘higher’) needs

emerge."^[25] This represents a crucial psychological insight. Once fundamental deficiencies are sufficiently addressed, motivation shifts from a focus solely on material sustenance, protection, or social validation to the pursuit of fulfillment, meaning, and broader value commitments. Koltko-Rivera contended that Maslow's later theoretical developments extended beyond self-actualization to include an additional dimension, self-transcendence.^[25] Self-actualization concerns fulfillment of one's potential, whereas self-transcendence concerns seeking something beyond like seeking truth, calling and connection which exceeds mere survival or ego-maintenance.^[26,46]

Fulfilling any need is fuelled primarily by motivation. Neuropsychological and behavioral science research has established that individuals are primarily motivated by three factors: (i) *autonomy*, (ii) *relatedness*, and (iii) *competency*.

Simpson and Balsam defined motivation as "*the energizing of behavior in pursuit of a goal*," emphasizing that it is not merely "*a vague inner drive*" but rather a "*dynamic process*." This process is influenced by physiological states, environmental conditions, and past experiences, all of which are integrated through evaluation, learning, retrieval, and cost-benefit analysis to determine both the direction and intensity of action.^[47] Thus one's motivation serves as the *critical* link between need and pursuit, elucidating not only the reasons behind an individual's movement towards a goal but also the dynamics through which certain goals become more pronounced, diminished, expansive, or refined over time.

In Pihlström's analysis^[22], autonomy was conceptualized as the capacity for self-legislation and acting on one's principles, rather than being driven by external pressures or societal norms. Kitson et al.^[46] defined relatedness through self-transcendence, characterized by diminished self-focus and enhanced connection, emphasizing the need for belonging within a broader context. While competency is not explicitly theorized as a primary need in Simpson and Balsam's work, it is connected to transforming motivation into goal-oriented actions through response selection and learned regulation.^[47] Behere et al.^[36] suggested that the potential for change resided within the individual and must be realized.^[47,36]

Gerstenberg et al.^[48] described self-determination theory (SDT) as a "*comprehensive framework of human motivation, development, growth and well-being*," and state that SDT differentiates between "*autonomous and controlled motivation*." Where autonomous motivation means engaging in activity from "*personal choice and genuine interest*," while controlled motivation that stems from "*internal or external pressures*"^[48] Coxen et al. stated, "Three needs are considered essential," namely autonomy, competence, and relatedness.^[50] They defined autonomy as "*the need to make free choices*," competence as "*the need to master tasks*," and

relatedness as "*the need to connect with others*".^[50] Zhang and Miao describe autonomy as "*volitional control over decisions*," competence as confidence to "*effectively perform specific behaviors*," and relatedness as "*being connected to and cared for by others*".^[51] Di Domenico and Ryan defined that intrinsic motivation was the tendency "to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise one's capacity, to explore, and to learn," arguing that its expression depends on support for competence and autonomy, while relatedness provides a "secure base" for exploration.^[49] The triad of autonomy, competence, and relatedness forms the basic motivational architecture through which deep motivation needed for self-actualization is generated and sustained.

Also, it is evident from the literature on neuropsychology and behavioural sciences as well as the interpretation of the thinkers taken together that motivation for "*beyonding*" the material calls for a more nuanced and introspective organization of life, wherein motivation is increasingly guided by meaning, value, connectedness, and personal development. This is precisely where spirituality and spiritual healing become relevant, as both involve the reorientation of the individual towards wholeness, significance, and broader integration, rather than mere survival.^[25,46]

We can safely say that if we want to take these three motivations beyond material level, this means it is somewhere, surely related to *the subliminal, and subtleness*.

h) Vignettes from examining the subliminal layers which are related to self/selfhood, spirituality or spiritual healing and approaching it through the doorway "one substance – infinitum"-concept

The comprehensive understanding of subliminal layers remains elusive with current scientific methodologies, as these layers operate beyond the material realm. Without delving into semantics, we can only attempt a limited exploration through the lens of quantum phenomena in biological systems, given our nature as biological entities, as well as through the fields of behavioral sciences and neuropsychology.

Alvarez et al. (2024) elucidated that quantum phenomena in biological systems as those subtle and often non-intuitive processes that operate beyond ordinary sensory perception. These phenomena include *photon capture in vision, exciton-based energy transfer in photosynthesis, spin-correlated radical pairs in magnetoreception, and quantum effects in neural processes*. Their review explicitly examines how quantum biology investigates *the influence of quantum effects on the chemistry underlying biological processes, emphasising coherence, spin dynamics, and the potential roles of entanglement and superposition in neural function*. In this context, the phenomena in question are not "subliminal" in the psychological sense but are sub-visible, microphysical, and accessible only through indirect biological effects

rather than direct measurement; hence, they are essentially subliminal and subtle from the perspective of crude materialism.^[52]

The discussion also engages with concepts of reality, physicality, materialism, and spirituality. Arora (2025) contended that materialism regarded the brain as the "sole generator of subjective experience"; yet, she asserted that an explanatory gap persisted *because qualia cannot be derived solely from neural data*. She further maintained that quantum mechanics and systems theory imply a "participatory universe," suggesting that consciousness may be a "fundamental component" rather than merely "an epiphenomenon of matter." Although her stance is explicitly transpersonal and not aligned with the established neuro-scientific consensus, it is significant in this context as it broadens the perspective-*if subtle, non-conscious, and non-obvious processes already influence perception and behaviour, then the demarcation between what is materially measurable and what is primarily experiential becomes less rigid than what crude materialism assumes currently.*^[53]

When these subtle biological processes were juxtaposed with the psychological milieu, a connection emerged. Elgendi et al. (2018) defined subliminal priming as "behavior outside of awareness" and assert that stimuli "below the threshold of perception" can still influence behavior, choices, and actions.^[54] Jiang (2024) further explored this experimentally, demonstrating that subliminal stimuli exert "unconscious effects on individual behavior" and that "unconsciously triggered cognitive conflict influences perceptual choice".^[55] Human cognition is not limited to what is consciously perceived; some influences are processed below the level of awareness, yet continue to affect evaluation, attention, conflict control, intention, and action selection.

Subtle biological and subliminal processes indicate that reality is mediated by *layers of activity* that are not *directly accessible* to ordinary awareness. Integrative scholars and researchers have employed this perspective to contend that *physicality may not entirely encompass reality*, and that spirituality should not be disregarded solely because it cannot be reduced to *observable material phenomena*. (Alvarez et al., 2024; Arora, 2025).

Elgendi et al. (2018) reported that subliminal priming can influence evaluative judgments, decision-making, and choice, with effects stronger when priming aligns with existing goals. They stated that these subliminal messages assisted in achieving goals only if already present, noting that priming affects both choice and intention. Jiang (2024) showed that unconscious conflict modified perceptual choice and attentional processing, indicating that *stimuli beyond awareness (SBA)* can bias interpretation, choice, and goal pursuit (Elgendi et al., 2018; Jiang, 2024).^[53,54,55]

Embedded within these subliminal layers are the profound inquiries regarding the *meaning of life* and the *meaning of death*. These represent two essential and unavoidable questions that individuals, once their basic needs are met, are inclined to investigate and comprehend through diverse approaches. As meaning of life becomes somehow *indescribable, unfathomable* in broader context, we can safely say, rather than meaning of life, we can find out the meaning of "my life" first as the first step. As an initial step, it is prudent to examine the meaning of one's own life. It is also important to recognize that the significance of an individual's life includes both the existing meaning and the potential for further accomplishments. And the meaning of "my life" obviously comprises of meaning accomplished or attained in "my life" already and what else can be achieved. When one thinks of what else can be achieved, there comes automatically again the *catch 22* situation; until and unless one understands *own beginning* well and *own end* well. One cannot carry out meaning-making of own life beyond what one has already attained. One can never go beyond the box.

By examining our beginning through the lens of present-day experimental science we are well aware that we are biochemical and cellular organisms; yet we are also "self organisms", which has started happening because of some ever-happening non-deficient underlying process. And as we start peeping into this process, we find the applied philosophers of ancient India, ancient Greece and a few other civilizations talking about only one substance, which modern sciences describe as *infinitem* (whatever it is).

Philosophers from ancient India, Greece, and China frequently maintained that the diversity observed in the world originates from a singular ultimate foundation-referred to as *Brahman, apeiron, the One, or Dao*-which they characterized as *boundless, fundamental, and generative*. In contrast, contemporary science is yet to have a consensus on an equivalent metaphysical "one substance," although certain scientific frameworks incorporate concepts such as *infinity, continuity, or unbounded structures*.^[56,57,58,59]

Gassab et al. (2025)^[60] asserted that contemporary science does not offer a definitive concept of a "single substance." However, the authors utilised conceptual models oriented towards continuity, field-like extension, systemic integration, and nonlocal organisation. Gassab et al.^[60] consistently characterized *consciousness not as an isolated point-event but through system-level formulations*- an "electromagnetic field surrounding the entire neural network," information "distributed over a wide spatial area," a "global EM field of the brain itself," and, following the Jibu-Yasue perspective, a "nonlocal and unified conscious experience" facilitated by a "Bose-Einstein condensation of quantum fields in the brain".^[60] While these are not definitive proofs of infinitude, they supported the discussion of scientific models that depend

on *unbounded or continuous structures* rather than solely discrete particles. Gassab et al. also discussed about the *"fundamental influence of space-time on quantum superposition," "collective states," "coherent superposition,"* and the manner in which an entire microtubule segment can function as a *"coherent superposition"* of the ground states of its smaller components".^[60] In this context, the self is defined less as an entity and more as a system:- consciousness emerges from "complex synaptic computations within neural networks," from "local neural networks" interacting with

a broader field, and from high "correlation" and "synchronisation" among individual nerve cells.^[60] Consequently, the advances put forward by Gassab et al. along with the models examined by Penrose–Hameroff, McFadden, Susan Pockett, E. Roy John, Jibu and Yasue, and Matthew Fisher, when put together, advocated for a scientific transition from a purely particulate perspective towards *field-like, relational, and system-wide descriptions* that can be employed to justify the *infinitum*, continuity, and a larger generative order.

Table No 2: Selected consciousness models relevant to subliminal or subtle processes.^[60]

Thinker	Theory / Concept	Relevance to subliminal or subtle processes
Gassab et al.	<i>Quantum information science based models of consciousness</i>	<i>Discussed consciousness through quantum informational approaches that attempt to explain hidden or non-classical processes underlying awareness.</i>
Roger Penrose and Stuart Hameroff	<i>Orch OR theory</i>	<i>Proposed that consciousness is linked to quantum processes in neuronal microtubules, suggesting subtle sub-neuronal events may shape conscious experience.</i>
Johnjoe McFadden	<i>CEMI field theory</i>	<i>Suggested that consciousness is associated with the brain's endogenous electromagnetic field, indicating that internally generated field-level activity may influence awareness beyond simple synaptic signaling.</i>
Susan Pockett	<i>Global electromagnetic field theory</i>	<i>Argued that consciousness may arise from the global EM field of the brain itself, pointing to a distributed and subtle physical basis of experience.</i>
E. Roy John	<i>Electrical pattern and neural oscillation model</i>	<i>Linked consciousness with large-scale electrical activity and oscillatory brain patterns, emphasizing dynamic but partly hidden neural coordination.</i>
Jibu and Yasue	<i>Quantum field theory of consciousness</i>	<i>Explored consciousness as a nonlocal and unified phenomenon, implying that subtle field-like processes may contribute to integrated subjective experience.</i>
Matthew Fisher	<i>Posner molecule model of cognition</i>	<i>Suggested that quantum entanglement involving Posner molecules could support biologically embedded subtle information processing relevant to cognition.</i>

In Gassab et al.'s work^[60], the "self" emerged as a system-level process: consciousness links to "complex synaptic computations within neural networks," "local neural networks" interacting with wider fields, and high "correlation" across nerve cells. Andrew Ober^[61] shifted from its emergence to a phenomenological-hermeneutic model of selfhood. He defined the self through a layered model where the core self comprises "Self-defining traits," "Self-directing traits," and "Self-evaluating traits," with consciousness and bodily presence, distinguishing it from personal identity. Ober's "self" served as the interpretative basis through which experiences were filtered and made meaningful, making such experiences "self-bound" and arising from the core self- being the source as well as the destination.^[61]

However, Sharon Vaisvaser^[62] diverged from the approach of Gassab et al. by adopting a more neuroscientific perspective. She conceptualized the self as a "multi-layered complex construct" comprising bodily and mental elements, subjective-objective perspectives, and spatial and temporal dimensions, rather than merely as a computationally emergent system.^[62]

Drawing on the works of Damasio, Gallagher, Qin, Friston, Hohwy, Zahavi, and Northoff, she described the self as *nested and embodied*, encompassing the "proto-self," "minimal self," "interoceptive self," "autobiographical," "narrative," and "mental self".^[62] Her principal contribution was to regard selfhood as an "agent's embodied model in the world" and as a "self-organizing system" characterized by "Markov blankets" and "self-evidencing" activity, with the "salience network" and "Default Mode Network" facilitating integration across levels.^[62] Consequently, unlike Gassab et al., who primarily framed the self in terms of quantum-consciousness models and neural coherence, Vaisvaser emphasized the self as embodied, predictive, relational, and clinically modifiable, while Ober highlighted the self as "interpretive, trait-structured, and existentially self-forming."

Therefore, when we consider the continuity of matter through the lenses of beginning and end, we find our beginning more easily through the support of modern science. However, regarding the end, there has always been a problem or dilemma. There are two fundamental

schools of thought. The first states that beyond the body, we are part of infinitum again, leaving no trace behind. Owing to a momentary self-organisation, a cute *quark accident occurred* (leading to the process of biogenesis).

Gómez-Márquez explained that biogenesis is not a singular miraculous leap from inert matter to life, but a gradual transition where matter, energy, and time foster increasingly organized molecular interactions, culminating in the first living system.^[63] Self-organization is defined as the spontaneous emergence of order among molecular ensembles, occurring through local physicochemical interactions, concentration effects, phase transitions, self-assembly, and growing coordination among molecular components.^[63] Biogenesis begins when disorganized living matter attains sufficient organization, functional integration, and information-bearing capacity to form a self-sustaining system, wherein life manifests as an emergent property.^[64] Gómez-Márquez thus conceptualized life's origin as a multi-stage process, wherein prebiotic matter transitions from chemical complexity to organized living matter, establishing the system–process duality- once the first living system was constructed, life emerged as its intrinsic dynamic process.^[63] Maurice Goldhaber explained that among elementary fermions, first-generation quarks (up and down) and the electron are "widely believed to be the ultimate building blocks of which the visible universe is built." The heavier quarks and leptons of later generations decay into first-generation products, making visible matter traceable to these lighter constituents. *Quarks are thus building blocks of visible matter*, as atoms comprise protons and neutrons made of first-generation quarks.^[64]

There exist very old materials, which, even in the contemporary world, are increasingly receiving appropriate support, which defines that the pre-stage of a highly individualistic entity/something is like a crystallised taste or smell or colour, akin to a crystallised perception/state of taste, smell, or colour. Here, it has been consistently pointed out and emphasized how colour and taste can attain a meta-state of the present, irrespective of different layers of reality. At the fundamental core of different states of reality certain characteristics like colour, like taste can get a meta-state (continuously ascribed naturally with certain conditions and certain characteristics).

David Wallace argued that definite things are not always fundamental; in quantum field theory, stable forms emerged as structures from a deeper field-like continuum, and particles are better understood as emergent through effective field theory and IR-equivalence.^[65] Gerhard Ecker showed that the deepest level of visible matter was organized by hidden relations, since in quantum chromodynamics "colour" is not visible colour but an internal property of quarks and gluons, with gluons being coloured.^[66] Thus, what appears as a definite quality need not be fundamental; it may be a

higher-order stabilisation grounded in deeper, non-sensory "*pre-material*" structures of reality.^[65,66]

Wallace has argued that apparent qualities may be emergent stabilisations of a deeper continuum, and Ecker has argued that the hidden basis of reality may already contain structured distinctions that are real without being directly perceptible. In this sense, the "*meta-state*" discussed here is closest to the idea that *experienced qualities crystallise from deeper relational orders of reality*. So, if one sees the reason why, the idea finds increasing support which also says a lot about how in the world AI is competing with sentient human beings for sentience. There, then, whatever remained buried in the layers of mythology, somehow is now almost oozing out with pressure that something, some characteristics, some presence remain as an after effect, as an after state.

i) Fresh perspectives on defining spiritual healing

Although the reviewers do not intend to engage in a debate regarding the veracity of these opinions, definitions, and interpretations of spiritual healing, rather simply open up different perspectives and underlying principles that were evident during the course of the literature review, it is important to highlight that, at an individual level, a person may utilise their own biases to conduct personalised experimentation. This approach allows for a more profound understanding of the complexities and realities of life. At an individualistic level a person carries forth his/her own bias to carry out personalised experimentation because with this one way can one naturally delve into deeper understanding and realities of life itself. It is the "my" component of "my life". In this context, spiritual healing becomes more relevant than ever.

To further discuss a few of its contents and components, the reviewers propose the following consistent stances drawn from the contextualities derived in due process of the literature review and the multiple domains of philosophy, psychology, behavioural sciences, semantics, epistemology, quantum phenomena and ontology. The discussion on fresher perspectives is duly represented below.

1. **An ontological-existential contextuality with epistemological implications:** To toss the coin for one's own sake and take a side as to whether one is going to be the one with the continuum of some aftertaste or aftereffect that remains to move ahead. We propose this important content, which needs to be taken into account to have a deeper meaning making and understanding of meaning in one's own life. In aggregate, we can create very important unsolved questions that remained for not less than 5000 years, which say, "*Why I Am Me, And Then What?*" For this reason, one has to toss the coin, at least for oneself, trying to find out what is waiting for one beyond the graveyard, what is waiting beyond the burial of the body. The inherent bias or

“sidedness” in the experiments we create and design for ourselves is likely to have a significant impact on our lives, influencing the fundamental questions of the 5Ws (*What, Where, When, Why, and How*).

2. ***Asociological-hermeneutic and axiological contextuality with psychological implications:*** In world culture, if we take religion as a subculture, then we can safely deduce that all the world’s so-called religions can be divided into two broad parts: the first is ascribing to a continuum, infinitum, qualitative aesthetics versus specific person-bound ideology. In other words, we can say that although all religions carry a few of both of these aspects, if we dissect them deeply, we generally find that there are many person-specific religions, where followers and supporters of that religion look into different aspects of that religion through the lens of their own fundamental mentor. This means that their primal source of inspiration comes from the words of the fountain head person, whose face is important. There also exists certain face-less religions which are more related to experiential understanding. So, in the context of spiritual healing from the religion side, keeping this factor as a consistent content, a person can decide the direction of his bias. *Is it towards the person specific or towards understanding specific?* Because, if someone is person-specific, then the person and that person’s relatedness, he or she is going to see the world according to that person’s provided lens, and if someone is taking the qualitative understanding as the main thing, then there, that person obviously chooses existential reality as important or connecting to own choice more valuable. This creates a significant and visible difference in how the person’s value system emerges. We understand here how deeply the value system influences that person’s mental and emotional hygiene. Therefore, the second point is of paramount importance: how the value system is important for that person’s character and behavioral expressions.
3. ***An epistemological and methodological contextuality:*** There is a third contextuality that never fails to fascinate an ignited mind: the imperiality of knowledge. There are certain realities that are presently beyond the experimental level and await confirmation through empirical and indirect experimentation. Why? As usual repeatedly used in modern science we knew even a hundred years before about the Higgs Boson particle which finally got confirmed in 2012 or vindicated the unified electroweak theory in 1983 as W and Z Bosons by CERN. One of the doyens of modern India’s scientific endeavours in Physics and pioneer in quantum statistics Satyendra Nath Bose talked about Bosons theoretically. Mathematically and empirically, in a discussion, he asserted its existence and subsequently offered teasers that, after a

hundred years, proved to be correct. (fringe science) Even quantum mechanics was considered a fringe science or pseudoscience not long ago. Different thought experiments are conducted purely to obtain valuable information in terms of effectual provability. Here, we must point out that if something is repeatedly proven, then we cannot deny its effect like the effect-based medicine like homeopathy and other disciplines. (*EBM vs EBM: effect-based medicine vs evidence based medicine*) We accept many practices only because of their effect. Then the rationale behind their effectiveness is investigated arrived at. Many times, we have seen writings of the other side or the other way around that happened in modern science; for example, spiritual healing, philosophically, can create and generate some empirical and some indirect possibilities to experiment certain ideas that stand at the exotic level of modern science. Rather than crossing one’s fingers, we can and should look into avenues and ways to look in these and find something lurking and waiting to be unfolded.

4. ***A methodological and interdisciplinary contextuality:*** Through spiritual healing we can assert possible experimentations of certain very advanced and new age disciplinary studies such as neuro-theology, neuro-epistemology, neuro-philosophy and bio-energetics. To all these disciplines, spiritual healing can provide many clues and materials and provide novel experimental ground. All these above discussed points can contribute to mental and emotional hygiene.

Carvour, Radke, and French characterized the *neuroscience of religion* (NoR), also referred to as neurotheology or spiritual neuroscience, as a discipline that examines the correlational relationships between brain functions and religious phenomena. In the context of spiritual healing, this facilitates the mapping of ritual behaviors.^[67]

Winkelman introduced *neuropsychology and neuroepistemology* as methodologies that connect first-person phenomenological qualitative data to brain processes, elucidating mystical consciousness through various forms of knowing. This approach enables the decoding of mystical states in spiritual healing.^[68] Brook and Mandik described the *philosophy–neuroscience movement* as the application of neuroscience to traditional philosophical problems, utilizing philosophical methods to illuminate issues within neuroscience. This perspective allows for the testing of mind-brain concepts in spiritual healing.^[69]

Musholtrefined this further by distinguishing between the concepts of “being a self” and “being aware of being a self”, as well as between personal and subpersonal levels of explanations, thereby facilitating the clarification of self-processes in spiritual healing^[70]. Berkovich-Ohana et al. defined *neuropsychology* as a

means of bridging first-person (1P) and third-person (3P) approaches through the establishment of meaningful connections between two irreducible phenomenal domains, which aids in tracking boundary dissolution in spiritual healing.^[71]

Pariante defined *psychoneuroimmunology* as the study of communication between the brain and the immune system, with *immunopsychiatry* representing a hierarchical shift. This framework opens pathways for inflammation-healing in spiritual healing.^[72] Swerdlow operationally delineated *bioenergetics* as energy metabolism related to *energy homeostasis*, noting that interventions manipulating bioenergetic function may possess therapeutic potential. This approach targets metabolic resilience in spiritual healing.^[73] Rubik, Muehsam, Hammerschlag, and Jain defined *biofield science* as the study of the complex homeodynamic regulation of living systems, with energy medicine involving the application of extremely low-level signals to the body. This perspective provided a basis for biofield-based therapeutics in spiritual healing.^[74] This can take applied human science and applied philosophy to a new sphere.

CONCLUSION

For achieving mental and emotional hygiene, life course integration and life stance are more important than lifestyle. Without a stance, there cannot be any organizing axis in lifestyle. Conversely, despite being well tied to a life stance, if the life course is not properly integrated, following a lifestyle will not be easy. Without clearer life stance or life course integration, lifestyle is simply a paid hedonism. Spiritual healing can design life course integration, and life stance can lead to living a designed life. This most firmly calls on researchers to delve deeper into the subject.

Call for action: The incorporation of spiritual healing into various disciplines is essential. The elements of spiritual healing offer a cost-effective and alternative means to generate high-quality empirical research that can significantly benefit human society.

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