

## PERSPECTIVE ARTICLE

Discovering the mind-heart connection:  
Thoughts in the mind pass through the heart  
before influencing the bodyAbdul Basit\*

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## Abstract

Understanding human consciousness has long been a central focus of scholarly inquiry across disciplines. While conventional perspectives often attribute cognition solely to the brain, both ancient wisdom and modern research suggest that the heart also plays an integral role in this complex interplay. This paper explores the hypothesis that thoughts originate in the mind, traverse the heart, and subsequently influence the body. Drawing from ancient philosophical traditions, contemporary neurocardiological insights, and Qur'anic teachings, this research presents a holistic framework of consciousness that bridges the physical and metaphysical realms. By challenging the conventional brain-centric view of consciousness, it proposes an alternative understanding of the thoughts that originate in the mind, pass through the heart, and subsequently influence other parts of the body. Through an examination of historical perspectives, recent neurocardiological studies, and extraordinary medical cases, this study aims to advance a more integrated understanding of human consciousness and behavior.

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## 1. Introduction

The quest to understand human consciousness has long captivated scholars across various disciplines. Traditional scientific perspectives often position the brain as the epicenter of cognition. However, emerging research and ancient wisdom suggest a more nuanced interplay between the mind and heart. This paper explores the hypothesis that thoughts originate in the mind, pass through the heart, and subsequently influence the body. Supported by both Qur'anic teachings and contemporary scientific observations, this exploration aims to present a comprehensive framework that encompasses both the physical and metaphysical dimensions of human existence.<sup>1,2</sup>

In recent scholarly pursuits, I have authored two significant articles exploring the intricacies of the mind–body relationship. The first article, published in the *Journal of Neurology and Translational Neuroscience*, examines the mind–brain relationship. The present perspective article, my most recent contribution, focuses on the mind–heart relationship. These works challenge conventional views by proposing that consciousness

is not localized within the brain but rather exists as a state of the mind intricately linked to metaphysical dimensions. Traditional neuroscience has yet to pinpoint a specific location in the brain where consciousness resides, prompting further investigation into the true nature of consciousness.<sup>3</sup>

Drawing on ancient philosophical insights and divine teachings, this research proposes that consciousness is a state of the mind fundamentally connected to the metaphysical realm. This state transcends physical boundaries and is not confined to a specific locality within the body. The brain and heart, though critical to human function, are not the origins of consciousness, but rather, they serve as tools of the mind. The mind, an immaterial entity, utilizes these organs to interact with and influence the physical body. This insight aligns with the ancient philosophical and divine perspective that, during human creation, God breathed the immaterial essence – the soul – into the material body. This essence, referred to as *Nafs* in classical Arabic, serves as a bridge between the immaterial and material realms.<sup>4-6</sup>

A pivotal finding in my research is the concept of intention as a unique attribute of the mind. The mind employs the body as a tool through its intentions, directing physical actions and behaviors. This dual control mechanism highlights how metaphysical principles govern physical matters. The heart and brain are instrumental in this process, serving as conduits through which the mind manifests its intentions in the physical world. Further emphasizing that consciousness is a state of mind but not a locality, the research suggests that thoughts originate in the mind, pass through the heart, and subsequently influence the brain and other parts of the body.<sup>7,8</sup>

This paper integrates scientific research, philosophical inquiry, and Qur'anic insights to present a comprehensive understanding of the mind–heart connection. By challenging the conventional brain-centric view of consciousness, the study offers a holistic perspective on human nature, emphasizing the heart and brain as tools of the soul (divine essence) or mind. The findings highlight the profound interplay between the physical and metaphysical realms, inviting further exploration into the nature of consciousness and the limits of physical understanding.<sup>9,10</sup>

## 1.1. Research background

In recent years, studies in neurocardiology have highlighted the heart's role in emotional and cognitive processes, suggesting that the heart may influence the brain more than previously thought. In addition, ancient philosophical traditions and religious teachings, including Qur'anic

insights, have long emphasized the heart's significance in human consciousness.<sup>11,12</sup>

## 1.2. Purpose and significance

This paper explores the hypothesis that thoughts originate in the mind, pass through the heart, and subsequently influence the body. By integrating perspectives from modern science, ancient philosophy, and religious teachings, this study aims to provide a comprehensive framework that encompasses both the physical and metaphysical dimensions of human existence.<sup>13,14</sup>

## 1.3. The present state of research and challenges

Despite growing interest in the mind–heart connection, significant challenges remain in fully understanding this complex relationship. The present research remains fragmented, highlighting the need for interdisciplinary approaches that bridge the gap between traditional scientific methods and holistic perspectives.<sup>15</sup>

## 2. Ancient philosophical perspectives on the mind–heart connection

### 2.1. Greek philosophy

#### 2.1.1. Philosophical contributions of Plato

Plato, a towering figure in Greek philosophy, introduced the concept of dualism, which divides the mind and body into distinct entities.<sup>1</sup> While he did not explicitly attribute cognitive functions to the heart, his work laid the foundation for understanding the mind as an immaterial entity. Plato's ideas complement the hypothesis that the mind influences the heart, which in turn affects the brain. This dualistic approach aligns with the idea that thoughts originate in the immaterial mind and pass through the heart before manifesting in the physical body.

#### 2.1.2. Aristotle's views on the heart

Aristotle, one of the most influential figures in ancient Greek philosophy, believed that the heart was the central organ responsible for sensation and intelligence.<sup>2</sup> He proposed that the heart was the seat of the soul and played a crucial role in the processing of thoughts and emotions.<sup>2</sup> According to Aristotle, the brain functioned primarily as a cooling mechanism for the blood heated by the heart's activity, thereby supporting its function. This perspective placed the heart at the core of human consciousness and perception, in contrast to modern views that localize consciousness solely in the brain. Aristotle's views highlight the heart's integral role in cognition, suggesting that the heart processes thoughts before they reach the brain.

## 2.2. Egyptian beliefs

### 2.2.1. Heart in ancient Egyptian culture

In ancient Egyptian culture, the heart was considered the center of life, morality, and intellect.<sup>3</sup> Egyptians believed that the heart contained the soul and was the seat of emotions, thoughts, and conscience. During mummification, the heart was carefully preserved, as it was believed to be essential for judgment in the afterlife. The “weighing of the heart” ceremony depicted in the *Book of the Dead* illustrated this belief, where the heart was weighed against the feather of Ma’at, the goddess of truth and justice. A heart lighter than the feather indicated a virtuous life, allowing the deceased to enter the afterlife. This cultural reverence for the heart highlights its perceived role in cognition and morality, aligning with the hypothesis that thoughts influence the heart first before affecting other parts of the body.

## 2.3. Chinese medicine and philosophy

### 2.3.1. The heart as the emperor

In traditional Chinese medicine and philosophy, the heart is viewed as the “emperor” of the body, governing the mind and spirit.<sup>4</sup> It houses the *Shen*, which translates to “spirit” or “mind,” and is responsible for consciousness, thought processes, and emotional well-being. The *Shen* integrates and controls mental functions, maintaining harmony between the body and mind. This perspective supports the idea that the heart plays a central role in processing thoughts and emotions, influencing overall health and behavior. The heart’s primacy in Chinese philosophy aligns with the view that thoughts pass through the heart before affecting the brain and body.

## 2.4. Indian philosophy

### 2.4.1. Atman and the heart

In Indian philosophy, particularly in the Upanishads, the heart is depicted as the seat of the *Atman*, or the inner self.<sup>5</sup> The *Atman* represents consciousness and self-awareness, residing within the heart. This view supports the idea that the heart is central to one’s true nature and consciousness, influencing the mind and body. The heart *chakra* (energy center), known as *Anahata* in yogic traditions, is considered the center of compassion, love, and emotional well-being, further emphasizing its integral role in human experience.

### 2.4.2. The Anahata chakra

The heart *chakra*, or *Anahata* in yogic traditions, is the fourth primary *chakra* and is associated with love, compassion, and emotional balance.<sup>6</sup> It is believed to be the center of emotional intelligence and connection, facilitating the

flow of energy between the physical and spiritual realms. Practices such as heart-centered meditation aim to align the heart with the mind, suggesting that the heart plays a pivotal role in accessing deeper states of consciousness and intuitive knowledge.

## 3. Scientific perspectives on consciousness and the heart

### 3.1. Neurocardiology and the heart’s role

#### 3.1.1. Heart-brain interaction

Neurocardiology is an emerging field that explores the complex interactions between the heart and the brain.<sup>1</sup> Research has shown that the heart is not merely a passive organ but actively communicates with the brain through neurological pathways, biochemical signals, and electromagnetic fields.<sup>2</sup> The heart contains a complex network of neurons that enable it to act as a mini-brain, influencing emotional and cognitive processes.<sup>3</sup> This network, often referred to as the “heart-brain,” has the capacity to process information, learn, remember, and even make decisions independently of the cerebral cortex.<sup>4</sup>

#### 3.1.2. The heart as an information processor

Studies conducted by the HeartMath Institute suggest that the heart plays a crucial role in processing emotional and cognitive information.<sup>5</sup> The heart’s rhythmic patterns can directly affect brain functions, influencing emotional experiences and cognitive processes.<sup>6</sup> The heart sends more signals to the brain than the brain sends to the heart, and these signals can influence perception, emotional processing, and higher cognitive functions.<sup>7</sup>

### 3.2. Brain-heart communication

#### 3.2.1. Autonomic nervous system (ANS)

The ANS plays a vital role in regulating the communication between the heart and the brain.<sup>8</sup> It comprises the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems, which manage the body’s stress response and relaxation state, respectively.<sup>9</sup> The vagus nerve, a major component of the parasympathetic nervous system, acts as a primary conduit for heart-brain communication.<sup>10</sup> It helps regulate heart rate, blood pressure, and other physiological functions by transmitting signals between the heart and brain.<sup>11</sup>

#### 3.2.2. Heart rate variability (HRV)

HRV is a measure of the variation in time between each heartbeat, and it is considered a key indicator of the body’s ANS function.<sup>12</sup> High HRV is associated with improved emotional resilience, cognitive flexibility, and overall well-being.<sup>13</sup> Studies have shown that HRV reflects the heart’s

ability to respond to various emotional and physiological stimuli, indicating a close link between heart rhythms and mental states.<sup>14</sup>

### 3.3. Electromagnetic fields of the heart

#### 3.3.1. HeartMath Institute's research

The HeartMath Institute has conducted extensive research on the heart's electromagnetic field and its impact on human physiology and psychology.<sup>15</sup> The heart generates an electromagnetic field that is detectable several feet away from the body.<sup>16</sup> This field is the most powerful rhythmic field produced by the human body and can influence emotional states, stress levels, and overall health.

#### 3.3.2. Impact on social interactions

The heart's electromagnetic field can affect not only our own emotional states but also those of people around us.<sup>16</sup> Research suggests that the heart's electromagnetic field can synchronize with the fields of others, creating a form of energetic communication that influences social interactions and relationships.<sup>16</sup> This phenomenon, known as heart coherence, highlights the heart's role in fostering emotional connections and empathy.<sup>16</sup>

## 4. The role of the heart in emotions and physical health

### 4.1. Emotional states and heart rhythms

The heart's response to emotional and mental states is a fascinating interplay of physiological and psychological factors. Different types of heartbeats are triggered by various thoughts and emotions, with each influencing hormone production and glandular secretion.<sup>1-3</sup>

#### 4.1.1. Types of heartbeats

- (i) Normal heartbeat (resting heart rate): A steady, regular rhythm maintained during rest, with an average rate of 60 – 100 beats/min (bpm) for adults. This type of heartbeat reflects a calm and relaxed state, with balanced hormonal secretion.
- (ii) Elevated heartbeat (tachycardia): An increased heart rate, typically above 100 bpm. This can be triggered by emotions such as fear, happiness, and stress:
  - (a) Fear: Part of the fight-or-flight response, fear elevates the heart rate through the release of adrenaline (epinephrine) from the adrenal glands.<sup>4,5</sup>
  - (b) Happiness: Joy and excitement can elevate the heart rate due to the release of endorphins and dopamine.<sup>6</sup>
  - (c) Stress/anxiety: High levels of stress or anxiety can lead to a persistent elevation in heart rate,

accompanied by increased levels of cortisol and adrenaline.<sup>7</sup>

- (iii) Decreased heartbeat (bradycardia): A slower-than-normal heart rate, typically below 60 bpm, which may occur during deep relaxation or meditation. This state promotes the release of calming hormones such as serotonin and endorphins.<sup>8</sup>
- (iv) Irregular heartbeat (arrhythmia): An abnormal rhythm, which can include skipped beats, extra beats, or an irregular pace. This can be triggered by emotions such as depression, sadness, and acute stress:
  - (a) Depression/sadness: These emotional states can lead to irregular heartbeats, influenced by imbalances in neurotransmitters such as serotonin and norepinephrine.<sup>9</sup>
  - (b) Acute stress: Sudden stress or shock can disrupt the normal heart rhythm, causing arrhythmias.<sup>10</sup>

### 4.2. Hormonal responses to emotions

Emotions directly impact the heart rate and rhythm through various hormonal responses.<sup>11-13</sup>

- (i) Fear:
  - (a) Heart rate: Increases.
  - (b) Hormones: Adrenaline and cortisol.
  - (c) Effects: Prepares the body for immediate action, increasing blood flow to muscles and heightening alertness.
- (ii) Happiness:
  - (a) Heart rate: Increases.
  - (b) Hormones: Endorphins and dopamine.
  - (c) Effects: Promotes the feelings of pleasure and well-being, thereby enhancing overall heart health.
- (iii) Sadness:
  - (a) Heart rate: May vary, potentially increasing or becoming irregular.
  - (b) Hormones: Serotonin (imbalance) and cortisol.
  - (c) Effects: Can result in decreased energy levels and mood disorders, which may impact heart rhythm.
- (iv) Stress/anxiety:
  - (a) Heart rate: Increases.
  - (b) Hormones: Adrenaline and cortisol.
  - (c) Effects: Sustained stress can lead to chronic high blood pressure and cardiovascular issues.
- (v) Depression:
  - (a) Heart rate: May become irregular.
  - (b) Hormones: Serotonin and norepinephrine (imbalance).
  - (c) Effects: Can result in chronic fatigue, sleep disturbances, and cardiovascular problems.

### 4.3. Heart health and mental states

The heart's response to our mental and emotional states highlights the profound connection between the mind and



the body. Our thoughts and emotions significantly influence the heart rate and rhythm, leading to various hormonal responses and physiological changes. This intricate relationship highlights the importance of managing stress, fostering positive emotions, and maintaining mental well-being for overall heart health.<sup>14</sup>

### 4.3.1. Stress and cardiovascular health

Chronic stress is a major risk factor for cardiovascular diseases. It triggers the release of stress hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline, which can elevate heart rate, blood pressure, and inflammation, contributing to long-term damage to the heart and blood vessels. Managing stress through relaxation techniques, exercise, and healthy lifestyle choices is crucial for maintaining heart health.<sup>15</sup>

### 4.3.2. Mindfulness practices

Mindfulness practices, which focus on bringing awareness to the present moment, have been shown to improve heart health by reducing stress, lowering blood pressure, and improving overall cardiovascular function. Techniques such as meditation, deep breathing, and yoga promote relaxation and emotional balance, positively impacting heart health.<sup>16</sup>

## 4.4. Case studies

- (i) Meditation and heart health: Research has shown that individuals who practice meditation regularly have lower blood pressure and improved HRV, indicating enhanced ANS function and resilience to stress.
- (ii) Yoga and cardiovascular function: Studies have demonstrated that yoga practitioners experience reduced heart rate and blood pressure, as well as improved overall cardiovascular health, attributed to the calming effects of yoga on the mind and body.

## 5. The metaphysical nature of consciousness

### 5.1. Qur'anic insights on the mind–heart connection

#### 5.1.1. *Qalb* (قَلْب)—The heart as intellect and deliberation

In the Qur'an, the term *Qalb* is often used to describe the heart's role in intellect and deliberation. This usage emphasizes that the heart is not merely a physical organ, but also a center of understanding and reasoning. For example, in Surah Al-Araf (7:179), it is stated: "They have hearts with which they do not understand, and they have eyes with which they do not see, and they have ears with which they do not hear. Those are like livestock; rather, they are more astray. It is they who are the heedless." This verse

highlights the heart's cognitive function and its importance in guiding human behavior and consciousness.<sup>1</sup>

#### 5.1.2. *Fawad* (فَوَاد)—The heart as the seat of emotions

The Qur'an also uses the term *Fawad* to represent the heart as the seat of emotions. This concept is reflected in verses such as Surah Al-Isra (17:36), "And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the sight, and the heart – about all those (one) will be questioned." Here, the heart is portrayed as central to emotional and sensory perception, emphasizing its role in processing and responding to emotional stimuli.<sup>2</sup>

#### 5.1.3. *Sadar* (صَدْر)—The heart as the center of understanding and receptivity

In Qur'anic terminology, *Sadar* refers to the chest or breast and is often used to metaphorically describe the heart's receptivity and capacity for understanding. In Surah Az-Zumar (39:22), it states: "So is one whose breast Allah has expanded to (accept) Islam and he is upon a light from his Lord (like one whose heart rejects it)? Then, woe to those whose hearts are hardened against the remembrance of Allah. Those are in manifest error." This verse highlights the heart's role in spiritual and intellectual openness, aligning with the idea that thoughts and insights pass through the heart before manifesting in conscious actions.<sup>3</sup>

#### 5.1.4. Qur'anic guidance for a calm heart

The Qur'an provides guidance on how the heart can achieve tranquility and calmness. In chapter 13, verse 28, it is mentioned, "Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah. Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah, hearts are assured." This verse highlights that the remembrance of Allah brings peace and calm to the heart, emphasizing the spiritual connection and the role of divine remembrance in achieving inner tranquility.<sup>4</sup>

### 5.2. The concept of *Nafs* and *Rooh*

#### 5.2.1. Divine essence

The concept of *Rooh*, often translated as "soul" or "divine essence," is fundamental to understanding the metaphysical nature of consciousness. According to Islamic teachings, when God breathes the *Rooh* into the human body, it transforms into *Nafs*, which can be translated as "mind" or "self." This divine essence is immaterial and operates beyond the physical constraints of the body, indicating that consciousness is not confined to any physical locality.<sup>5</sup>

## 5.2.2. Immaterial nature of consciousness

Consciousness, as described in the Qur'an, transcends physical boundaries and exists as a state of mind, influenced by the divine essence. For instance, in chapter 5, verse 116, God uses the term *Nafsik*, derived from *Nafs*, to signify divine understanding and presence. This highlights the metaphysical connection between God and human consciousness, suggesting that true understanding and awareness originate from a divine source.<sup>6</sup> The Qur'anic distinction between *Khalq* (creation) and *Amr* (order) further supports this idea, as it separates the physical body from the immaterial divine essence.<sup>7</sup>

These Qur'anic insights align with ancient philosophical views and modern metaphysical research, emphasizing the profound interplay between the immaterial mind and the material body. By recognizing consciousness as a state of mind influenced by divine essence, we acknowledge the limitations of physical understanding and open ourselves to deeper, more complex realities governed by metaphysical principles.<sup>8</sup>

## 6. Cardiac memory and the heart's role in consciousness

### 6.1. Cardiac memory phenomenon

#### 6.1.1. Understanding cardiac memory

The phenomenon of cardiac memory refers to the heart's ability to "remember" patterns of behavior and physiological responses even after medical interventions such as ablation therapy or transplant. This concept suggests that the heart is more than just a pump – it possesses intrinsic capabilities to retain information related to its previous states. Studies have demonstrated that patients who have undergone certain cardiac procedures still exhibit patterns of heart rhythms consistent with their pre-intervention states, indicating a form of memory embedded within the heart muscle itself.<sup>1</sup>

#### 6.1.2. Implications for consciousness

The existence of cardiac memory supports the hypothesis that the heart plays a significant role in processing emotions and thoughts. If the heart can retain and recall specific patterns, it may also influence the overall state of consciousness by providing a foundation for emotional and cognitive experiences. This aligns with the idea that thoughts and emotions pass through the heart before affecting other parts of the body and that the heart serves as an important intermediary in the conscious experience.<sup>2</sup>

### 6.2. Case studies

#### 6.2.1. David Bennett's pig heart transplant

A notable example supporting the concept of cardiac memory and the heart's role in consciousness involves David

Bennett, a 57-year-old man who received a genetically modified pig heart transplant in January 2022. Despite the heart being of animal origin, Bennett's mind continued to function and direct his bodily actions, demonstrating that the heart can adapt to its new host while maintaining physiological functions.<sup>3</sup> This case highlights the argument that the heart, while crucial for physical circulation, is not the seat of consciousness. Instead, it acts as a tool utilized by the mind, which operates as an immaterial entity.<sup>4</sup>

#### 6.2.2. Other anomalous cases

There are several extraordinary cases where individuals with significant brain damage or minimal brain structures continue to exhibit normal cognitive functions, further supporting the presence of an immaterial aspect of human consciousness. Examples include:

- (i) Pam Reynolds' near-death experience: During complex brain surgery, Reynolds had a vivid near-death experience despite having no measurable brain activity, suggesting that consciousness extends beyond the brain.<sup>5</sup>
- (ii) A man from France living with 10% of his brain: Despite a massive reduction in brain tissue, this individual maintained normal cognitive functions and led a regular life, challenging the conventional understanding of the brain's role in consciousness.<sup>6</sup>
- (iii) Anencephaly and hydrocephalus cases: Individuals born without significant portions of their brain or with severe brain abnormalities often display unexpected cognitive abilities and awareness, indicating that consciousness may not be solely localized in the brain.<sup>7</sup>

These case studies illustrate the adaptability of the heart and its interaction with the mind, reinforcing the hypothesis that consciousness arises from a complex interplay between the heart, brain, and an immaterial mind.<sup>8</sup> They highlight the potential for the heart to influence conscious experience through its retained patterns and memory, further bridging the gap between the physical and metaphysical realms.<sup>9</sup>

## 7. Mind-heart coherence and its impact on health

### 7.1. HRV and cognitive flexibility

#### 7.1.1. Research findings

HRV is a significant measure of the heart's ability to adapt to stress and maintain homeostasis. Higher HRV is associated with better overall health, emotional resilience, and cognitive flexibility, with studies showing that individuals with higher HRV are more adaptable to stress and exhibit improved emotional regulation and cognitive functions.<sup>1,2</sup>

HRV reflects the synchrony between the heart and the brain, indicating a coherent state where both organs are in optimal communication.<sup>3</sup>

## 7.1.2. Practical applications

Improving HRV through lifestyle changes and stress management techniques can lead to improved mental and physical health. Practices such as deep breathing exercises, physical activity, and biofeedback are effective in increasing HRV.<sup>4,5</sup> By fostering a state of coherence between the heart and mind, individuals can enhance their emotional stability and cognitive performance. This coherence is crucial for overall well-being, as it supports the body's ability to adapt to challenges and maintain internal balance.<sup>6</sup>

## 7.2. Mindfulness and heart health

### 7.2.1. Impact of mindfulness

Mindfulness practices have been shown to significantly improve heart health by reducing stress and promoting relaxation. Techniques such as meditation, yoga, and mindful breathing help regulate the ANS, reducing the dominance of the stress-response (sympathetic) system while enhancing the relaxation-response (parasympathetic) system.<sup>7,8</sup> These practices lead to lower blood pressure, reduced heart rate, and improved cardiovascular function.<sup>9</sup>

### 7.2.2. Case studies

- (i) Meditation: Regular meditation practice has been associated with reduced blood pressure and increased HRV, indicating improved autonomic regulation and reduced stress levels.<sup>10</sup>
- (ii) Yoga: Yoga practitioners often show lower resting heart rates and improved cardiovascular resilience, attributed to the combined physical, mental, and emotional benefits of the practice.<sup>11</sup>
- (iii) Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR): Programs such as MBSR have been widely implemented to help individuals manage stress and improve heart health.<sup>12</sup> MBSR combines mindfulness meditation and yoga to cultivate awareness and reduce stress. Participants in MBSR programs often report significant improvements in their emotional well-being and physical health, including enhanced heart function and reduced risk of cardiovascular disease.<sup>13</sup>

## 7.3. Spiritual heart and intuition

### 7.3.1. Wisdom traditions

Various spiritual traditions recognize the heart as the center of wisdom and intuition. These traditions suggest that the heart is not only a physical organ but also a source of deep insight and guidance.<sup>14</sup> Practices such as heart-

centered meditation and heart coherence techniques aim to align the heart and mind, facilitating access to deeper states of consciousness and intuitive knowledge.<sup>15</sup>

### 7.3.2. Heart-centered meditation

Heart-centered meditation focuses on bringing awareness to the heart, fostering a sense of peace, compassion, and connection. This practice involves visualizing the heart as a source of light and love, allowing individuals to tap into their inner wisdom and intuition. Research has shown that heart-centered meditation can enhance emotional well-being, reduce stress, and improve overall health.<sup>16</sup>

### 7.3.3. Heart coherence techniques

Heart coherence techniques involve synchronizing the heart's rhythmic patterns with positive emotional states. By focusing on feelings of gratitude, love, and compassion, individuals can achieve a state of coherence in which the heart and mind are harmoniously aligned. This state of coherence has been associated with improved emotional regulation, cognitive function, and physical health.<sup>16</sup>

## 8. The dual control of the physical and metaphysical realms

### 8.1. Intention and action

#### 8.1.1. Role of intention

Intention is a unique and crucial attribute of the mind, which uses the physical body as a tool to perform actions. In Islamic divine philosophy, it is revealed that the mind, as an extension of the divine essence (*Rooh*), influences the physical world through intentions.<sup>1</sup> The mind is accountable for these deeds in the afterlife, as stated in divine texts.<sup>2</sup> This concept is supported by Qur'anic teachings, which emphasize that the mind (*Nafs*) perceives and influences the physical world through intention. For instance, in Surah Al-Imran (3:154), it is mentioned, "[It was] so that Allah might test what is in your breasts and purify what is in your hearts." This verse highlights the role of intention and the heart's responsiveness to mental states.<sup>3</sup>

#### 8.1.2. Mind-body connection in metaphysical terms

The mind-body connection is not confined to physical interactions but extends into the metaphysical realm. The heart and brain are tools through which the immaterial mind expresses itself.<sup>4</sup> Thoughts and intentions first affect the heart, which then influences other parts of the body. This sequence is supported by the idea that the heart's electromagnetic field and hormonal responses are directly influenced by mental states.<sup>5</sup> The metaphysical influence of the mind highlights the dual control mechanism over the

physical world, where metaphysical forces shape physical actions and experiences.<sup>6</sup>

## 8.2. The interplay of physical and metaphysical realms

### 8.2.1. Qur'anic perspectives

The Qur'an provides profound insights into the interplay between the physical and metaphysical realms. It distinguishes between *Khalq* (creation) for the physical body and *Amr* (order) for the divine essence, highlighting the dual nature of human existence.<sup>7</sup> The *Rooh* (divine essence), when breathed into the human body, becomes *Nafs* (mind), an immutable connection between the divine and the material.<sup>8</sup> This connection illustrates that while the physical world operates under natural laws, it is simultaneously influenced and controlled by metaphysical forces. For example, in Surah Al-Hajj (22:46), it is stated, "So have they not traveled throughout the earth and have hearts by which to reason and ears by which to hear? For indeed, it is not the eyes that are blinded but blinded are the hearts which are within the breasts." This verse emphasizes the heart's role in understanding and reasoning, influenced by the metaphysical mind.<sup>9</sup>

### 8.2.2. Scientific and philosophical integration

Integrating scientific research with philosophical inquiry provides a comprehensive understanding of the dual control of the physical and metaphysical realms. The heart's electromagnetic field, neurocardiology, and cardiac memory phenomena support the idea that the heart plays a significant role in shaping physical and mental states.<sup>10</sup> Philosophical perspectives, such as those from ancient Greek, Egyptian, Chinese, and Indian traditions, align with the idea that the heart is central to human experience, processing thoughts and emotions before influencing the brain and body.<sup>11</sup>

### 8.2.3. Metaphysical influence on physical actions

The metaphysical realm, governed by the divine essence, exerts control over physical actions through the mind's intentions. This dual control mechanism is evident in the way mental states influence heart rhythms, hormonal responses, and overall health.<sup>12</sup> The concept of the heart as a tool of the mind aligns with the idea that thoughts and intentions are first processed by the heart, which then affects physical actions and experiences.<sup>13</sup> This understanding bridges the gap between physical laws and metaphysical principles, providing a holistic view of human consciousness and behavior.<sup>14</sup>

By recognizing the dual control of the physical and metaphysical realms, we gain deeper insights into the

nature of existence and the intrinsic role of metaphysical forces in shaping the physical world. This perspective invites further exploration into the profound connection between the mind, heart, and body, highlighting the need to integrate scientific, philosophical, and spiritual knowledge to fully understand human nature.<sup>15</sup>

## 9. Conclusion

This paper integrates scientific research, philosophical perspectives, and Qur'anic insights to present a comprehensive understanding of the mind-heart connection. By challenging the conventional brain-centric view of consciousness and emphasizing the heart and brain as the tools of the soul (divine essence) or mind, this study offers a holistic perspective on human nature.<sup>1</sup>

The findings highlight the profound interplay between the physical and metaphysical realms, suggesting that thoughts and emotions originate in the mind, pass through the heart, and subsequently influence other parts of the body. This sequence highlights the heart's crucial role in processing and mediating conscious experiences.<sup>2</sup>

Recognizing the dual control of the physical and metaphysical realms invites further exploration into the nature of consciousness and the limits of physical understanding. Future research should focus on integrating diverse perspectives and methodologies to enhance understanding of this intricate connection.<sup>3</sup> By bridging the gap between science, philosophy, and spirituality, deeper insights into human existence and the intricate relationship between the mind, heart, and body can be obtained.<sup>4</sup>

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Not applicable.



## Consent for publication

Not applicable.

## Availability of data

Not applicable.

## Further disclosure

This research presents a novel concept that challenges traditional views in neuroscience. It is anticipated to bring significant advancements and new perspectives to the field.

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