


The Concept of Rûh in Islam: An Interdisciplinary Analysis of Interpretation, Philosophy, and Theology

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SUBJECT

Religion

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Google Scholar, SINTA, Garuda, and JSTOR databases based on: developments in contemporary hermeneutic methodology in Islamic studies, current academic debates on science-religion integration, and rapidly growing research interest in neuroscience-spirituality post-2015, which results in 34 secondary references. The qualitative research method, employing a library research design, applies Gadamerian hermeneutics, content analysis, comparative analysis, and interdisciplinary synthesis. Research findings demonstrate that *Rûh* is an immaterial substance that is *hadîth* (created) and originates from God's command (*min anri Rabbî*), functioning as the animating force of the body and the source of life, connecting humans with the divine dimension, and possessing majazi perpetuity. Despite terminological variations, a fundamental consensus indicates that *Rûh* is an independent, non-material substance, distinct from *nafs* in terms of function and characteristics. This research also presents counter-discourses from Sufi metaphysics (Ibn' Arabî), *kalâm* debates (Mu'tazilah vs Ash'ariyah), and dialogue with contemporary neuroscience. Comprehensive understanding of *Rûh* has significant implications for *aqidah*, Islamic bioethics, and development of contemporary Islamic psychology.

Abstract

The concept of *Rûh* constitutes a central theme in Islamic anthropology, sparking intensive debate among Quranic exegetes, Muslim philosophers, and theologians from the classical to contemporary eras. The semantic diversity of *Rûh* in the Qur'an poses complexity in formulating a comprehensive definition. This study aims to construct a comprehensive definition of *Rûh* through an interdisciplinary approach integrating Quranic exegesis, Islamic philosophy, and theology by employing Gadamerian hermeneutics and Islamic epistemology (*bayânî*, *burhânî*, *'irfânî*) as analytical frameworks. Primary data focuses on the exegesis of ayah concerning *ruh*, (QS *al-Isrâ'* 17:85, QS *al-Hijr* 15:28-29, QS *al-Sajdah* 32:9, and QS *al-A'râf* 7:172) with secondary ones which represents the derivation of it (QS *Şad* 38:72; QS *al-Baqarah* 2:87, 253; QS *al-Nahl* 16:102; QS *al-Shûrah* 42:52; QS *al-Mujâdilah* 58:22), classical-contemporary *tafsîr* (al-Râzî, al-Alûsî, Ibn Qayyim, Shihab), and works of Muslim philosophers (Ibn Sînâ, al-Fârâbî, Ibn' Arabî, al-Ghazâlî). Secondary sources derive from SINTA-indexed (1-4) and SCOPUS-indexed (Q1-Q4) scholarly articles from 2015-2025 obtained through searches in

Introduction

The nature of humankind in Islamic perspective is a central theme that has attracted the attention of Muslim scholars, philosophers, and intellectuals from the classical to contemporary eras. Among the various concepts that shape the understanding of the essence of humanity, the *Rûh* occupies a fundamental yet most mysterious position, as reflected in the words of Allah SWT in QS. al-Isrâ'/17: 85 which explicitly acknowledges the limitations of human knowledge about the Spirit (Shihab, 2009). The terminology of the *Rûh* in the Qur'an shows semantic diversity: as the mover of the body (QS. al-Hijr/15: 29), the angel Gabriel (QS. al-Baqarah/2: 87), revelation (QS. ash-Syûrâ/42: 52), and the help of Allah (QS. al-Mujâdilah/58: 22), giving rise to complexity in formulating a comprehensive definition (Samad, 2015).

The terminology of *Rûh* in the Qur'an exhibits semantic diversity, which challenges commentators (*mufasssir*) to formulate a comprehensive definition. The word *Rûh* and its derivatives appear 24 times in 19 surahs of the Qur'an with various meanings: the mover of the body that gives life (QS. al-Hijr/15: 29, as-Sajdah/32: 9), the angel Gabriel as the bearer of revelation (QS. al-Baqarah/2: 87, al-Nahl/16: 102), revelation or the Qur'an itself (QS. asy-Syûrâ/42: 52), the help and mercy of Allah (QS. al-Mujâdilah/58: 22), and the tranquility of the soul (Samad, 2015: 216-217). This diversity of meanings raises a fundamental question: is *Rûh* identical to the *nafs* (soul), or are they two distinct entities? Classical scholars such as al-Razi, al-Alusi, and Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyah offered diverse perspectives on the nature of the Spirit as an immaterial substance derived from God's command (Napitupulu, 2020: 267-268). Meanwhile, Muslim philosophers such as Ibn Sina and al-Farabi developed a theory of the soul that integrated the legacy of Greek thought with the teachings of revelation, resulting in a distinctive conception of Islamic anthropology (Kusuma, 2022: 62-63; Napitulu, 2020).

Research on the *Rûh* in Islamic studies has produced a variety of academic works that can be categorised into three main groups. The first group focuses on exegetical research that explores the interpretation of verses about the *Rûh*, particularly Surah al-Isrâ' 17:85, in the works of certain exegetes, such as al-Razi, al-Alusi, Hamka, and al-Zamakhsyari (Ali, 2021; Azkiah, 2022). These articles make a significant contribution to understanding the hermeneutical perspectives of classical and contemporary exegetes on the concept of the *Rûh*. The second group includes philosophical research that examines the concept of the soul (*nafs*) in the Islamic philosophical tradition, particularly the thought of Ibn Sina, al-Farabi, Ibn 'Arabi, and al-Ghazali (Kusuma, 2022; Napitupulu, 2020; Hakamah, 2022). These studies have successfully revealed the hierarchy of souls (vegetative, sensitive, rational), the soul-body relationship, and the concept of the immortality of the soul that characterises Islamic philosophical anthropology (Napitulu, 2020). The third group relates to theological research that addresses the debate about the ontological status of the *Rûh*: whether the *Rûh* is *hadith* (new/created) or *qadîm* (*azali*/eternal), and the theological implications of this understanding for the doctrine of resurrection and the afterlife (Ali, 2021: 45-47). This study is important for understanding the theological consensus of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamâ'ah*, which emphasises the nature of the hadith of the *Rûh* as a creature of Allah who is eternal yet not *azali*.

The identified research gaps are: there has been no systematic interdisciplinary synthesis that integrates the perspectives of interpretation, philosophy, and theology in one analytical framework; the conceptual distinction between *Rûh*, *nafs*, and *'aql* has not been integrated with the perspective of Qur'anic interpretation; there has been no comprehensive analysis of the implications of understanding *Rûh* for contemporary

Islamic bioethics; and counter-discourse from Sufi, *kalâm*, and neuroscience perspectives has not been presented critically (Napitupulu, 2020; Ali, 2021).

The contribution of this research lies in: integrating the perspectives of interpretation, philosophy, and theology through Gadamerian hermeneutics (fusion of horizons) and Islamic epistemology (*bayânî-burhânî-irfânî*); producing a comprehensive definition of *Rûh* that bridges various Islamic scientific traditions; presenting counter-discourse and alternative readings from the perspectives of Sufi metaphysics, *kalâm* debate, and neuroscience dialogue; and identifying practical implications for Islamic creed, bioethics, and contemporary Islamic psychology. Research questions: How is the etymological-terminological definition of *Rûh* in the Qur'an and classical Islamic literature across perspectives from scholars of interpretation, Islamic philosophers, and theologians regarding the nature of *Rûh*? What is the conceptual relationship between *Rûh*, *nafs*, and *'aql* in Islamic anthropology?

Research method

This research employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical library research design (Adlini et al., 2022). An interdisciplinary approach serves as the primary framework, integrating three Islamic scholarly traditions: interpretation, philosophy, and theology (Rohmatika, 2019). This research applies Gadamerian hermeneutics as the primary methodological framework, emphasising three key concepts:

Fusion of horizons (*Horizontverschmelzung*): The process of interaction and fusion of the historical-cultural horizons of classical texts on the Spirit with the researcher's horizon of contemporary understanding, resulting in an expanded understanding (Gadamer, 2013). In this study, the horizons of the Qur'anic texts and classical exegesis (al-Razi, 12th century CE; al-Alusi, 19th century CE) are combined with contemporary horizons that encompass developments in neuroscience, bioethics, and 21st-century Islamic psychology.

Effective-historical consciousness (*wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein*): The awareness that our understanding of the Spirit is shaped by the interpretive traditions that have preceded us (Gadamer, 2013). The researcher acknowledges that this analysis is influenced by the Sunni exegetical tradition, Islamic Peripatetic philosophy, and Ash'ari-Maturidi theology, which are dominant in Indonesian Islamic discourse.

Dialogical understanding: Understanding as a dialogical process between the researcher and the text, not an objective reconstruction of the original meaning (Gadamer, 2013). This research does not aim to reconstruct the "original meaning" of the Spirit in the Qur'an, but rather to produce new understanding through critical dialogue with various interpretive traditions.

To enrich the critical analysis, this study also adopts elements of Ricoeur's (1970) hermeneutics of suspicion by reading the text about the *Rûh* "with suspicion" to reveal hidden assumptions, internal tensions, and silences in the text, as well as presenting counter-discourse from marginalised perspectives (Sufism, secular-critical perspectives). The search strategy is as follows: Database (Google Scholar, Portal Garuda (SINTA), JSTOR, Directory of Open Access Journals/DOAJ); English keywords (ruh OR soul OR spirit OR nafs) AND (tafsir OR exegesis OR interpretation) AND (philosophy OR falsafah OR theology OR kalam); Arabic keywords (رُوحُ OR نَفْسٌ) AND (تَفْسِيرٌ) AND (فَلَسَفَةٌ OR كَلَامٌ); Indonesian keywords (ruh OR jiwa OR roh) AND (tafsir OR penafsiran) AND (filsafat OR teologi); secondary search method (published articles 2015-2025 or the last ten years); and primary search method (all periods for classical texts).

Inclusion criteria are: Peer-reviewed scientific articles indexed by SINTA (1-5) or SCOPUS (Q1-Q4); *Mu'tabar* tafsir books (al-Razi, al-Alusi, al-Qurthubi, Shihab, etc.); Authoritative works of Muslim philosophers (Ibn Sina, al-Farabi, Ibn 'Arabi, al-Ghazali, Ibn Qayyim); Texts that directly discuss the concept of *Rûh*, *nafs*, or *'aql* and; Language: Arabic, English, or Indonesian. While the exclusion criteria are: Non-peer-reviewed articles, blogs, popular opinions; Texts that are not directly related to the discourse of *Rûh* in Islam; Duplicate or redundant articles, and articles that cannot be accessed in full-text. Based on a gradual selection process according to inclusion-exclusion criteria, this study uses: eight classical and contemporary tafsir books as primary sources, nine main works of Islamic philosophy, four classical theological works, three Arabic lexicon dictionaries, and 24 indexed scientific articles (SINTA and Scopus) for the period 2015–2025, seven theory and methodology books, and three undergraduate theses as secondary sources that are directly relevant to the concepts of *ruh*, *nafs*, and *'aql* (data attached).

Data analysis was carried out using five complementary methods:

Thematic Content Analysis: Identifying the main themes, semantic patterns, and categorisation of the meaning of *Rûh* in the Qur'an and the interpretations of scholars using the thematic coding scheme (Kiger & Varpio, 2020): Ontological code: *hadith* vs *qadîm*, substance vs accident, material vs immaterial; Relational code: *rûh-nafs*, *rûh-'aql*, *rûh-qalb*, *rûh-jasad*; Functional code: the mover of the body, the divine link, the basis of *ma'rifah*, and; Theological code: creation, eternity, resurrection.

Comparative Analysis: Comparing the perspectives of scholars of interpretation (al-Razi, al-Alusi, Shihab), Islamic philosophers (Ibn Sina, al-Farabi, Ibn 'Arabi, al-Ghazali), and theologians through a comparative matrix that includes: definitions of the *Rûh*, key arguments, Qur'anic evidence, ontology, periods, and schools of thought (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Gadamerian Hermeneutics: Interpreting the historical-cultural context of classical scholars' interpretations and reconstructing their meaning for the contemporary context through a fusion of horizons (Gadamer, 2013). This process involves identifying the researcher's pre-understandings (Sunni tradition, Indonesian Islamic epistemology), analysing effective history (how interpretive traditions shape our understanding), and critical dialogue with the text to generate new understandings.

Hermeneutics of Suspicion: Reading texts critically to uncover hidden assumptions, internal tensions, and present counter-discourse (Ricoeur, 1970). This research interrogates: Why is the Sufi perspective (Ibn 'Arabi) often considered "heterodox" in mainstream discourse? How is the concept of *Rûh* used to legitimise specific anthropological hierarchies? What are the political-social implications of different conceptions of the *Rûh*?

Interdisciplinary Synthesis: Integrating findings from tafsir, philosophy, and theology to construct a comprehensive definition of the *Rûh* that encompasses ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions through Islamic epistemologies: *bayânî* (textual analysis), *burhânî* (rational-philosophical), and *'irfânî* (intuitive-spiritual) (Aswandi & Dewi, 2025).

This research is based on three complementary pillars of Islamic epistemology (Aswandi & Dewi, 2025): *Bayânî* (textual) epistemology that emphasises the authority of the Qur'an and hadith texts as the primary sources of knowledge about the *Rûh*. Linguistic-semantic analysis of key verses (QS. 17:85, 15:29, 32:9, 7:172); *Burhânî* (rational) epistemology that enables the use of reason to understand philosophical arguments

about immaterial substances, the immortality of the soul, and the Rûh-body relationship through deductive logic and rational argumentation (Ibn Sînâ, al-Fârâbî), and; 'Irfânî (intuitive-spiritual) epistemology that opening up space for intuitive-spiritual knowledge gained through inner experience (*dhawq*), revelation (*kashf*), and direct witnessing (*musyâhadah*) in the Sufi tradition (Ibn 'Arabî, al-Ghazâlî). The data will then be presented in the form of an extraction table.

Result and discussion

Etymological and Terminological Analysis of Rûh

Etymological research on the word Rûh (رُوحٌ) shows that the root word comes from the letters *r-w-h* (ح - و - ر), which have a broad semantic field of meaning in Arabic. According to Ibn Manzhûr in *Lisân al-'Arab*, this root word contains basic meanings related to something broad, significant, original, and blowing (Azkiah, 2022). Derivatives from this root word produce various word forms with various nuances of meaning: *râha-yarûhu-rawâhan*, which means going in the evening; *rîh* (رِيحٌ), which means wind; and *rayhân* (رَيْحَانٌ), which refers to fragrant plants (Azkiah, 2022). The similarity of etymological roots between Rûh and *rîh* (wind) indicates that the concept of Rûh cannot be separated from the dimensions of vitality, movement and life, just as the wind gives life to the universe.

The terminology of the Qur'an employs the word Rûh and its derivatives 24 times in 19 surahs, exhibiting a significant diversity of contextual meanings (Azkiah, 2022). Semantic analysis found four primary meanings: Rûh as the mover of the body or the essence of human life (QS. al-Hijr/15: 29, as-Sajdah/32: 9, Shâd/38: 72); Rûh in the sense of the angel Jibrîl as the bearer of revelation (QS. al-Baqarah/2: 87, 253; al-Nahl/16: 102); Rûh in the meaning of revelation or the Qur'an itself (QS. asy-Syûrâ/42: 52, al-Isrâ'/17: 85); and Rûh in the sense of Allah's help and mercy (QS. al-Mujâdilah/58: 22) (Pane, 2024). This semantic diversity poses a methodological challenge for interpreters (*mufasssîr*) to determine the correct meaning of the verse within its context through a contextual approach (*siyâq al-kalâm*) and analysis of the verse's *munâsabah* (Azkiah, 2022).

Classical Scholars' Perspectives on the Rûh

Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (1149-1210 CE), in his *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, offered a substantialist conception of the Rûh with a philosophical approach. According to al-Razi, the Rûh is "a being that changes and influences the body" (*al-wujûd al-mu'atstir fî al-badan*), acting as an independent "simple essence" (*al-jawhar al-basîth*) and not composed of a mixture of material elements like the body (Napitupulu, 2020). Al-Razi asserted that the Rûh exists by God's command, "*Kun fayakûn*," as Allah states in Surah al-Isrâ'/17:85, regarding the Rûh as *min amri Rabbî* (from the command of my Lord) (Napitupulu, 2020). According to al-Razi, the relationship between the soul and the body is reciprocal: physical experience influences the soul's power, and conversely, the soul also influences the body's form and condition, particularly through the power of reason (Napitupulu, 2020).

Shihab al-Din al-Alusi (1802-1854 CE) adopted a more cautious approach in his work on the Rûh *al-Ma'ânî*, emphasising the mysterious aspect of the Rûh. Al-Alusi defined the Rûh as a "compound and simple immaterial entity" that exists solely by the command and will of Allah, and functions to bring the body to life (Napitupulu, 2020). Al-Alusi's perspective provides a special characteristic in its emphasis on the epistemology of human limitations: "the special nature of the Rûh does not have to be revealed because many things in this world remain mysterious in nature, but their existence and benefits can be felt" (Napitupulu, 2020). Al-Alusi's epistemological approach acknowledges that the limitations of human knowledge about the Rûh are not

a reason to reject its existence, but instead invites an attitude of intellectual humility and openness to scientific research within appropriate methodological limits.

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyah (1292-1350 AD) made important contributions through in-depth linguistic and theological analysis in *al-Rûh*. Ibn Qayyim emphasised three theological propositions about *Rûh*: *Rûh* is something new (*hadîts*) and is a creature (created), not an *azali* like the attributes of Allah; The *Rûh* does not die with the death of the body, but separates and releases itself to return to its Creator; *Rûh* is “the power of knowing God” (*quwwat al-ma’rifah bi Allâh*) and returning to Him (Ali, 2021). A direct quote from Ibn Qayyim: “*al-rûh lâ tamûtu bi mawti al-badan, bal tafâriqu wa tunziqu li tarji’ a ilâ bâri’ihâ*” (The Spirit does not die with the death of the body, but is separated and released to return to its Creator). Ibn Qayyim’s perspective integrates ontological (the *Rûh*’s status of existence), eschatological (the *Rûh*’s continuation after death), and epistemological-spiritual (the *Rûh* as the basis *ma’rifatullâh*).

The consensus of classical scholars on the novelty/creation of the *Rûh* is a fundamental theological issue. Al-Razi, al-Alusi, and Ibn Qayyim agree that the Spirit is a *hadith* (new/created) based on three main arguments (Ali, 2021): the interpretation of the phrase “you were not given knowledge except a little” (QS. 17:85) shows that the *Rûh* at the beginning of creation was silent from knowledge and *ma’rifah*, then acquired it gradually; the *Rûh* experienced change (*taghyir*) from a state of deficiency to perfection; change is the character of something new (*hadith*), not a character that is *qadîm* (*azali*). This consensus is crucial in distinguishing the *Rûh* as a creature from the eternal attributes of Allah, thereby maintaining the principle of *tauhid* and rejecting the concepts of *hulûl* (incarnation) or *ittihâd* (absolute unity between the Creator and the creature).

Islamic Philosophical Perspectives on the Soul and Rûh

Al-Kindî (801-873 CE), the “First Arab Philosopher,” defined the soul as *Jauhar* (substance) that serves as a form (*shûrah*) for the body (Kusuma, 2022). The soul-body relationship is accidental (non-essential): the soul can exist independently without the body, but the body requires the soul to live and function. The soul is immortal after death because it is not composed of perishable material elements (Kusuma, 2022). Al-Kindî divided the human soul into three faculties: *al-quwwah al-syahwâniyah* (the power of desire) in the stomach, *al-quwwah al-ghadhâbiyah* (the power of anger) in the chest, and *al-quwwah al-aqliyah* (the power of reason) in the head, reflecting Platonic influence.

Al-Fârâbî (872-950 CE) developed a theory of the soul that emphasised the purity and perfection of the soul through intellectual activity. According to al-Fârâbî, the soul is spiritual (*rûhânî*) and substantially different from the material body (Kusuma, 2022). Purity of the soul is achieved through the activity of thinking (*ta’qqul*), which frees the soul from dependence on matter. The pinnacle of purity of the soul is union (*ittishâl*) with the active intellect (*al-aql al-fa’âl*), resulting in true happiness (*al-sa’âdah al-qushwâ*) (Kusuma, 2022).

Ibn Sina (980-1037 CE) made a monumental contribution through his synthesis of Aristotelianism, Neoplatonism, and Islamic teachings. Ibn Sina defined the soul as “an independent immaterial substance that does not perish with the annihilation of the body” (Serena, 2023). Ibn Sina’s argument for the independence and immortality of the soul is based on the “flying man” (*al-rajul al-thâ’ir*) thought experiment: a person created instantly in a floating state without functioning physical sensors retains awareness of himself, demonstrating that the soul is independent of the body for its existence (Serena, 2023). Ibn Sina proposed a hierarchy of souls: *al-nafs al-nabâtiyah* (plant soul) with the powers of nutrition, growth, and reproduction; *al-nafs al-hayawâniyah* (animal soul) with

the powers of locomotion and sensory perception; *al-nafs al-nâthiqah* (human soul) with the power of universal thought and knowledge (Kusuma, 2022).

Ibn 'Arabî (1165-1240 CE) offered a different metaphysical perspective by distinguishing between the *Rûh*, *nafs*, and the body within the framework of the theory of *wahdat al-wujûd* (unity of being). According to Ibn 'Arabî, the *Rûh* is "the indestructible and eternal rational soul in humans, functioning as the prince (*amîr*) of the body and soul" (Mahpur, 2019). Quote from Ibn 'Arabî in *Futûhât al-Makkiyah*: "*al-rûh huwa amîr al-body wa al-nafs, wa huwa al-latifah al-rabbâniyah allatî lâ tafnâ*" (*Rûh* is the prince of body and soul, and he is the subtle divine substance that is incorruptible). The *rûh* represents *al-'aql al-kullî* (universal rational principle), the soul represents *al-nafs al-kulliyah* (universal vital principle), and the body represents *al-jism al-kullî* (particular variety) (Mahpur, 2019). The spirit from Allah that was breathed into Adam (QS. al-Hijr: 29) is understood by Ibn 'Arabî as *al-nafakh al-rahmânî* (the blowing of divine grace) that gives existence and life (Mahpur, 2019).

Al-Ghazâlî (1058-1111 CE) integrated theological, philosophical and Sufistic perspectives. Al-Ghazâlî defined *Rûh* as "the power that brings life" (*al-quwwah allatî tuhdliiru al-hayâh*), which he also called *al-Rûh al-hayawânî* (Napitupulu, 2020). Al-Ghazâlî's quote from *Ihyâ 'Ulûm al-Dîn*: "*al-rûh huwa al-quwwah allatî tuhdliiru al-hayâh wa tajrî fî al-'urûqi ka al-nûr*" (*Rûh* is the power that brings life and flows in the vessels like light). Al-Ghazâlî differentiates between *Rûh* as a biological principle and *al-nafs al-insâniyah* (human soul), which is *lathîfah rabbâniyah* (divine subtle substance), which is the true essence of humans and the basis of *ma'rifatullâh* (Napitupulu, 2020).

Table 1. Comparative Matrix of Scholars' and Philosophers' Perspectives on the *Rûh*

Scholar	Period	<i>Rûh</i> Definition	Main argument	Quranic evidence	Ontology	Epistemology
Al-Râzî	1210 CE	<i>Wujud mu'atsir fi al-badan</i> (a form that affects the body)	<i>Basîth</i> substance (simple) independent	QS 17:85 (<i>min amri Rabbî</i>)	<i>Hadîts</i> (created)	Burhânî-Bayânî
Al-Alûsî	1854 CE	The simple essence of non-materiality	The mysterious essence whose impact is felt	QS 17:85	<i>Hadîts</i>	Bayânî-'Irfânî
Ibn Qayyim	1350 CE	<i>Quwwat al-ma'rifah bi Allâh</i> (the power of know God)	Not dying with the death of the body	QS 17:85, 97:4	<i>Hadîts</i>	Bayânî-'Irfânî

Al-Kindî	873 CE	Jauhar rûhânî (spiritual substance)	Soul as a form of body	QS 15:29	Hadîts	Burhânî
Al-Fârâbî	950 CE	Rûhâniyah Substance is separate from matter	Purity through <i>ta'qqul</i> , <i>ittishâl</i> with active reason	QS 15:29	Hadîts	Burhânî
Ibn Sînâ	1037 CE	Independent immaterial substance	The "flying man" argument, the hierarchy of souls	QS 15:29, 32:9	Hadîts	Burhânî
Ibn 'Arabî	1240 CE	<i>Tajallî ilâhî, amîr al-badan</i>	<i>Wahdat al-wujûd, al-nafakh al-rahmânî</i>	QS 15:29	Hadîts (manifestation of a single being)	'Irfânî
Al-Ghazâlî	1111 CE	<i>Al-quwwah allatî tuhdliru al-hayâh</i>	Lathîfah rabbâniyah, the light of life	QS 15:29, 32:9	Hadîts	Burhânî-'Irfânî

Counter-discourse and alternative reading about Rûh

In order to avoid a non-dialectical reading and present the diversity of discourses in the Islamic tradition, this study explores four counter-discourses that are often marginalised in mainstream discourses on the Rûh:

Sufi Metaphysics: Ibn 'Arabî's Perspective and Wahdat al-Wujûd

Ibn 'Arabî's Sufi perspective on the Rûh is often considered "heterodox" in mainstream discourse because the concept of *wahdat al-wujûd* is mistakenly understood as pantheism. However, a critical reading shows that Ibn 'Arabî did not teach an absolute identity between God and creation, but rather the "unity of being" in the sense that there is only one true Being (Allah), while everything else is an "appearance" (*tajallî*) or "manifestation" (*mazhar*) of that single Being (Chittick, 1998).

Within this framework, Rûh is understood not merely as a separately created substance, but as a divine manifestation that makes humans into *al-insan al-kâmil* (perfect human beings) who reflect the Divine Names and Attributes (Chittick, 1998). Ibn 'Arabî in *Futûhât al-Makkiyah* states: "*al-rûh min amr Allah, wa huwa al-nafakh al-rahmânî alladhî bi hi saara al-insânu khalîfatan*" (The Spirit originates from God's command, and it is the breath of *Rahmânî* by which humans become *khalîfah*) (Mahpur, 2019).

This perspective offers a deeper understanding of the intrinsic nobility of humans: humans are not mere "creatures" separate from God, but rather "mirrors" (*mir'ah*) that reflect Divine beauty and perfection. The ethical implication of this

perspective is a profound respect for human life and a strict prohibition against any form of degradation of human dignity (Chittick, 1998).

The Kalâm Debate: Mu'tazilah vs. Ash'ariyah on the Nature of the Hadith of the Rûh

In the Islamic theological tradition (*kalâm*), there is a classic debate between the Mu'tazilah and Ash'ariyah on the nature of the *hadith* (newness) of the *Rûh* and its implications for the doctrine of resurrection. The Mu'tazilah asserted that the *Rûh* is a *hadith* (created in time) and is a *jism lathîf* (subtle body), not a purely immaterial substance (Nasr, 1996). According to the Mu'tazilah, resurrection in the afterlife involves the re-creation of both the body and the *Rûh*, so that the continuity of personal identity is guaranteed through God's knowledge, not through the eternity of the *Rûh*'s substance (Nasr, 1996).

The Ash'arites, on the other hand, assert that the *Rûh* is an immaterial substance (*jawhar rûhânî*) that is created (*hadith*) but remains eternal after creation (*bâqin ba'da al-khalq*). Resurrection involves the reunion of the *Rûh*, separated from the body, with the resurrected body (Ali, 2021). The Ash'arites emphasise that the *Rûh*'s eternity does not mean that the *Rûh* is eternal like God, but rather that it is eternal in a metaphorical sense, meaning it does not experience death like the body.

This debate is important because it has theological implications for the concept of moral responsibility (*taklîf*): if the *Rûh* is eternal, then accountability in the afterlife is continuous with earthly life; if the *Rûh* is recreated, then accountability depends on God's knowledge of human actions in this world (Nasr, 1996).

Modern Psychology and Neuroscience: Rûh vs. Consciousness

Developments in contemporary neuroscience present an epistemological challenge to the concept of the *Rûh* as an immaterial substance. Neuroscientific research demonstrates a strong correlation between brain activity and the phenomenon of consciousness, raising the question: Is consciousness identical to the *Rûh*, or is the *Rûh* a metaphysical reality distinct from consciousness (Arroisi & Latifah, 2023)?

The Integrative Perspective developed by Muslim researchers such as Miftachurrozaq & Suyadi (2023) and Arroisi & Latifah (2023) offers a framework that integrates neuroscientific findings with the Islamic concept of the *Rûh*: Biological consciousness is a neurobiologically explicable brain function, correlated with al-Ghazali's concept of the *Rûh* (*al-Ruh al-hayawânî* or the animal spirit); Spiritual consciousness or *ma'rifatullâh* is a transcendental dimension that cannot be reduced to brain activity, correlated with the concept of *al-nafs al-nâthiqah* (rational soul) or *Rûh* in a special sense; The brain-mind-soul relationship is understood as a causal relationship, not an identity: the brain (*dimâgh*) is the material instrument for consciousness (*wa'y*), while *Rûh* is the ontological basis that makes spiritual consciousness possible (Arroisi & Latifah, 2023).

This perspective rejects both reductionist materialism (which reduces consciousness solely to brain activity) and radical Cartesian dualism (which separates soul and body dichotomously). Instead, he proposes emergent monism within an Islamic framework: spiritual consciousness "emerges" from the complex interaction between the *Rûh* (an immaterial substance), the brain (a material substance), and God's grace (*tawfiq ilâhî*) (Miftachurrozaq & Suyadi, 2023).

Secular-Critical Reading: Deconstructing the Concept of the Rûh

A secular-critical reading of the concept of the *Rûh* in Islam, although rarely presented in mainstream Muslim discourse, is essential for honest intellectual dialogue. The main criticisms from a secular perspective are: Empirical inevitability, there is no empirical

evidence that can verify the existence of the *Rûh* as an immaterial substance; The problem of interaction, how can an immaterial substance (*Rûh*) causally interact with a material substance (the body) if the two have radically different ontological natures?; Ideological function, the concept of *Rûh* is often used to legitimize socio-anthropological hierarchies (humans are superior to animals because they possess the *Rûh*) and to distract from structural injustices in the world (Haque, 2004).

Scholarly responses: Non-empirical epistemology, not all reality can be verified through empirical methods; metaphysical realities such as the *Rûh* require a different epistemology (*bayânî-irfânî*) (Aswandi & Dewi, 2025); Causal interaction, in Islamic philosophy, the interaction of the *Rûh*-*jasad* is explained through the concepts of *ta'alluq* (attachment) and *tadbîr* (management), not mechanical causality as in physics (Kusuma, 2022); Normative function, the concept of the *Rûh* does not function to legitimize injustice, but rather to affirm the intrinsic nobility and moral responsibility of humans (Nasr, 1996).

This critical dialogue with a secular perspective is important so that Islamic studies do not become entangled in “defensive apologetics” that avoid difficult questions, but rather face intellectual challenges honestly and rationally (Gadamer, 2013).

Analysis of the Tafsir of Key Verses about the Rûh

QS. *al-Isrâ'*/17: 85, *Mystery and Epistemological Limitations*

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

They asked you (Prophet Muhammad) about *Rûh*. Say, “The *Rûh* is part of the affairs of my Lord, whereas you have not been given knowledge except a little.”

Muhammad Quraish Shihab, in his *Tafsir al-Mishbâh*, explains that the question about the *Rûh* in this verse is closely related to the context of resurrection discussed in the previous verses (QS. *al-Isrâ'*: 49-51) (Shihab, 2009). The meaning of the *Rûh* in this verse is the potential for the body’s movement or soul that gives life to the body. The phrase “*min amri Rabbî*” (from the affairs/commands of my Lord) has two dimensions of meaning: the Spirit originates from Allah’s command “*Kun fayakûn*” which indicates that the *Rûh* is a creature created by Allah’s will; knowledge of the essence of the *Rûh* falls solely under Allah’s authority (Shihab, 2009).

It is essential to recognise that the phrase “you have not been given knowledge except a little” does not prohibit researching the *Rûh*, but instead acknowledges the epistemological limitations of human ability to comprehend the ultimate essence of the *Rûh* (Shihab, 2009). Thabâthabâ’î in *Tafsir al-Mîzân* asserts that the *Rûh* has a domain (*manzhûmah*), specificity (*khasâ’ish*), and impact (*âtsâr*) in the beautiful universe. However, there is an epistemological veil (*hijâb*) that prevents humans from knowing its essential nature (Shihab, 2009). Thabâthabâ’î’s approach is in line with Islamic philosophy, which distinguishes between knowledge of the “what” of something (*mâhiyah*) and knowledge of the “that” of something (*wujûd*): humans can know that the *Rûh* exists and can observe its impacts, but cannot achieve comprehensive knowledge of its essential nature.

QS. *al-Hijr*/15: 28-29, “Blowing” of the *Rûh* and Human Glory

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰئِكَةِ اِنِّي خَالِقٌ بَشَرًا مِّنْ صَلٰصَالٍ مِّنْ حَمَإٍ مَّسْنُونٍ

(Remember) When your Lord said to the angels, "Indeed, I will create a human being from dry clay from which black mud was formed.

فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ

So, when I have perfected (the event) and have breathed My Rûh (creation) into it, bow down to it in prostration.

M. Quraish Shihab explains that the word "sawwâ" (سَوَّى) in this verse means making every part of the body function as planned, indicating the structural and functional perfection of Adam's body (Shihab, 2009). The word "nafakha" (نَفَخَ), meaning "to blow," has a profound symbolic dimension: the blowing of the Rûh is not a physical or mechanical process, but rather the granting of Rûhaniah potential to humans that transforms a clod of dust into a noble being (Shihab, 2009).

The phrase "min rûhî" (from My Rûh) indicates a special relationship between the human Rûh and Allah, but does not mean that the Rûh is part of Allah's essence. *Idlâfah* (support) here is *tasyrif* (reverence) and *tamlîk* (ownership), not *juz'iyah* (participation) (Shihab, 2009). Sayyid Quthub, with a spiritual-existential approach, asserts that the Rûh from Allah transforms meaningless body parts into noble ones, enabling humans to receive the mandate of *khalîfah* due to their specialness since creation (Quthub, 1992). The Rûh connects humans with Allah and enables the leap from the material to the immaterial realm, from the realm of *syahâdah* (the visible) to the realm of *ghaib* (the unseen). This is what distinguishes humans from other creatures: the ability to transcend material limitations and achieve *ma'rifah* about metaphysical reality (Quthub, 1992).

QS. al-A'râf/7: 172, *Primordial Covenant and the Fitrah of Tauhid*

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ شَهِدْنَا أَنْ تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَافِلِينَ

(Remember) When your Lord brought forth from the backbone of Adam's offspring, their descendants and Allah took testimony against themselves (saying), "Am I not your Lord?" They answered, "Yes (You are our Lord), we testify." (We did it) so that on the Day of Resurrection you (not) say, "Indeed we were heedless of this,"

Tabâthabâ'î and Rashîd Ridha interpret human testimony in the afterlife as the *sunnah al-khilqah al-ilâhiyah* (the sunnah of divine creation), namely the natural principle of *tawhid* (monotheism) embedded in the ontological structure of the human Rûh (Shihab, 2009). This testimony is not a historical or temporal event of the past, but a permanent structure that continues (*mutashil*) throughout human life. This testimony is conveyed through the potential of reason bestowed by God and the evidence of His greatness in the universe that can be grasped by reason (Shihab, 2009).

M. Quraish Shihab, in his *Tafsir al-Mishbâh*, asserts that "the pure soul of every human being is in a state of *fitrah* (purity), and within this pure soul lies the recognition of the Creator of the universe" (Shihab, 2009). This *fitrah* is an innate disposition embedded in the structure of the human Spirit, not knowledge acquired through external learning. The theological implication: every human being has a moral responsibility to maintain this *fitrah* of *tawhid* and not to contaminate it with *shirk* (polytheism) or *kufr* (denial). This verse also provides the basis for the concept of moral accountability:

humans cannot claim ignorance of God because the *fitrah* of *tawhid* has been embedded in their ontological structure since creation (Shihab, 2009).

The Difference Between Rûh, Nafs, and 'aql in Islamic Anthropology

The conceptual distinction between *Rûh*, *nafs*, and *'aql* is a central issue in Islamic anthropology that requires systematic comparative analysis. Etymologically, *Rûh* (رُوحٌ) comes from the root *r-w-h*, meaning to breathe, vast, and original; *nafs* (نَفْسٌ) comes from the root *n-f-s*, meaning self, soul, or desire; while *'aql* (عَقْلٌ) comes from the root *'a-q-l*, meaning to bind or to bind, indicating the function of reason as a binder or controller of desires (Napitupulu, 2020).

Ontological essence: *Rûh* is an immaterial substance that originates directly from Allah's command (*min amri Rabbî*), is simple (*basîth*), and is not composed of material elements (Napitupulu, 2020). *Rûh* functions as the body's motivator and source of life, serving also as a connection between humans and the divine dimension. *Nafs*, on the other hand, is a *rûhânî* substance that encompasses human psychic faculties such as thinking, feeling, and will. *Nafs* has a spiritual hierarchy: the soul that commands evil (*nafs ammârah bi al-sû'*), the soul that criticises (*nafs lawwâmah*), and the soul that is at peace (*nafs muthma'innah*), as mentioned in the Qur'an. The intellect (*'aql*) is the power of thought and reasoning, which is one of the powers of the *nafs*, especially the cognitive power that distinguishes humans from animals (Napitupulu, 2020).

The conceptual relationship between these three concepts can be understood through the following hierarchical model: *Rûh* is the deepest essence or core that gives life; *Nafs* includes *Rûh* plus psychic powers (cognitive, affective, conative); *'Aql* is one of the powers of *nafs* that functions for cognition and reasoning; *Qalb* (spiritual heart) is the vessel of *ma'rifah* and the meeting place of *Rûh* and *nafs* (Napitupulu, 2020). This hierarchical model shows that Islamic anthropology views humans as complex entities that cannot be reduced to a simple Cartesian dualism between mind and body.

Ontological status: *Rûh* is eternal and does not die with the death of the body, as is the consensus of Muslim scholars and philosophers (Ali, 2021). Textual evidence: QS. 56:83-87 about the *Rûh* that is not returned at death; QS. 23:99-100 about the *barzakh* as the residence of the soul after the death of the body. Ibn Qayyim asserted: "*al-rûh lâ tamûtu bi mawti al-badan, bal tunziqu li tarji'a ilâ bâri'ihâ*" (The soul does not die with the death of the body, but is released to return to its Creator) (Ali, 2021). The *nafs* has an ontological status that depends on its spiritual level: a *nafs* that has reached the level of *muthma'innah* is eternal and will enjoy heavenly bliss. In contrast, a *nafs* trapped in the level of *ammârah* will experience torment. *'Aql*, as a power of the *nafs*, depends on the existence of the *nafs* itself (Napitupulu, 2020).

Moral characteristics: *Rûh* is divine, *rûhânî*, and noble because it originates from Allah; the *nafs* can be good or bad depending on its spiritual level; while *'aql* is neutral as a cognitive instrument that can be used for good (*ta'aqqul* regarding truth) or evil (sophistry and manipulation) (Napitupulu, 2020).

Interdisciplinary Synthesis: A Comprehensive Definition of the Rûh

Based on the integration of Islamic interpretation, philosophy, and theology, this research produces the following comprehensive definition of *Rûh*:

"*Rûh* is an immaterial substance (*jawhar rûhânî*) that is *hadith* (created) and originates directly from the command of Allah (*min amri Rabbî*). It functions as the body's animator and source of biological life. It connects humans with the divine dimension and enables them to gain knowledge of Allah. It possesses the power of cognition and spiritual awareness. It is not composed of material elements (*basîth*). It is eternal,

metaphorically speaking, in the sense that it does not experience death like the body, but is separated from the body at death to return to its Creator." This definition integrates four dimensions:

Ontological Dimension: *Rûh* has three main characteristics: It is an independent substance that does not depend on matter for its existence, as emphasized by al-Razi, al-Alusi, and Ibn Sina (Napitupulu, 2020); It is *hadith* (created) and not *qadîm* (eternal), based on the consensus of classical scholars who affirm that the *Rûh* undergoes a change from imperfection to perfection (Ali, 2021); It is eternal and does not perish with the death of the body, as emphasized by Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyah and Muslim philosophers. This eternity serves as the theological basis for the doctrines of resurrection (*ba'th*) and the afterlife (*ma'ad*) (Ali, 2021).

Epistemological Dimension: *Rûh* has three characteristics: The ultimate nature of the *Rûh* is mysterious and cannot be fully known by humans, as Allah says "you are not given knowledge except a little" (QS. 17:85) (Shihab, 2009); Although its essential nature is mysterious, *Rûh* can be known through its symptoms and impacts in human life, as emphasized by al-Alûsî (Napitupulu, 2020); A comprehensive understanding of *Rûh* requires a multi-epistemological approach that integrates *bayânî* (analysis of the texts of the Qur'an and hadith), *burhânî* (philosophical reasoning), and *'irfânî* (spiritual experience) (Aswandi & Dewi, 2025).

Functional Dimension: *Rûh* has four main functions: The driving force of the body and the source of biological life (QS. 15:29, 32:9) (Shihab, 2009); (b) Connecting humans with Allah and enabling *ma'rifatullâh* according to Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyah (Ali, 2021); The source of spiritual awareness and the natural principle of tawhid embedded in the human ontological structure (QS. 7:172) (Shihab, 2009); The basis for psychic powers such as *'aql* (ration), *qalb* (spiritual heart), and *nafs* (empirical soul), thus serving as the foundation of Islamic anthropology (Napitupulu, 2020).

Theological Dimension: *Rûh* has three doctrinal implications: Originating from Allah's command "*min amri Rabbî*" which indicates a special relationship between humans and their Creator (Shihab, 2009); Carrying divine attributes in the sense that humans are endowed with the potential of *khalîfatullâh* (representatives of Allah on earth) to realize divine values in the world (Quthub, 1992); The eternity of *Rûh* is the basis for the doctrine of resurrection in the afterlife and the moral accountability of humans before Allah (Ali, 2021).

Current Discussion

This research produces a testable conceptual model of the *Rûh* as the ontological basis of spiritual consciousness within the framework of Islamic epistemology (*bayânî-burhânî-'irfânî*). This model can be tested through: Empirical studies of the correlation between spiritual practices (*tazkiyah al-nafs*) and psychological well-being; Phenomenological analysis of spiritual experience in the Sufi tradition; Interdisciplinary dialogue between the concept of the *Rûh* and neuroscientific findings on consciousness.

The resulting Islamic anthropological model can be visualized as follows: Humans are a unity of the body (material) and the *Rûh* (immaterial) that gives rise to the soul (*nafs*) as an existential totality. The soul has three primary faculties: *'aql* (ration) for cognition and reasoning; *qalb* (spiritual heart) for spiritual insight and intuition; and *syahwah* (passion) for motivation and desire. These three forces interact dynamically in human life, and the balance between them determines a person's spiritual level (Napitupulu, 2020).

This model differs from Cartesian dualism, which dichotomizes mind and body, because Islamic anthropology views humans as an integrated psychosomatic entity with a spiritual dimension that connects them to the Creator.

Akidah: Reformulating the Understanding of Resurrection

The understanding of the eternal *Rûh* provides a solid theological foundation for belief in resurrection in the afterlife, where death is understood not as destruction but rather as the temporary separation of the *Rûh* from the body (Ali, 2021). The concept of the *Rûh*, derived directly from God's command (*min amri Rabbî*), affirms humanity's absolute dependence on God for spiritual life and ontological existence, thus reinforcing the principle of tawhid and rejecting materialism, which reduces humans to merely the physical-biological dimension (Shihab, 2009).

Islamic Bioethics: Definitions of Death, Organ Transplantation, and Euthanasia

The concept of the *Rûh* has significant implications for contemporary bioethical issues. If death is understood as the "separation of the *Rûh* from the body" (according to the hadith: "*al-mawtu huwa farâq al-rûh 'an al-jasad*"), then the crucial question is: when exactly does this separation occur? Is it brain death or cardiac death? Moderate contemporary scholars tend to accept brain death as a sign of the separation of the *Rûh* because the brain is the centre of consciousness and life (Daar & al-Khitamy, 2001). However, conservative scholars reject this and only accept cardiac death because the hadith mentions the *Rûh* being located in the heart (Rady & Verheijde, 2009). Organ transplantation is also relevant because once the *Rûh* has separated from the body (death), the remaining body is "material" that can be used for medical purposes, including organ transplantation, provided the donor or family consents. The procedure is performed respectfully (Padela & Auda, 2020). However, mutilation of the body must be minimised because the body retains its dignity as the former "dwelling" of the *Rûh* (Daar & al-Khitamy, 2001).

The concept of the *Rûh* being eternal and returning to God emphasises that life is a trust from God, not the absolute property of humans. Therefore, active euthanasia (hastening death) is strictly prohibited in Islam because only God has the right to remove the *Rûh* (Rady & Verheijde, 2009). However, passive euthanasia (stopping ineffective therapy) can be justified under certain circumstances because it does not hasten death but allows the natural process of death to take place (Javadli, 2024).

Education: Islamic Psychology Curriculum

A comprehensive understanding of the Spirit requires the development of an Islamic psychology curriculum based on the anthropology of the *Rûh-nafs-'aql*. This curriculum includes: Islamic theory of the soul such as the hierarchy of the *nafs* (*ammarah-lawwâmah-muthma'innah*), psychic powers (*'aql-qalb-syahwah*), and the relationship between the *Rûh* and the body; Islamic psychopathology that diseases of the heart (*amrâdh al-qulûb*) such as arrogance, envy, and excessive anger; Islamic psychotherapy such as purification of the soul through dhikr, *murâqabah* (introspection), and *tawbah* (repentance) (Haque, 2004; Rothman & Coyle, 2018).

Science-Religion Dialogue: A Framework for Integrating Neuroscience and the Concept of the Rûh

This research offers a framework for integrating neuroscience and the concept of the *Rûh* through a three-level model of consciousness (Arroisi & Latifah, 2023; Miftachurrozaq & Suyadi, 2023): Biological consciousness (brain function) = *al-Rûh al-hayawânî* (al-Ghazâlî); Cognitive consciousness (mental activity) = *al-'aql* (rational reason); Spiritual consciousness (*ma'rifatullâh*) = *al-Rûh* or *al-nafs al-nathiqah*. This

framework can serve as a basis for collaborative research between Muslim neuroscientists and scholars to explore the phenomena of consciousness, spiritual experiences, and the effects of religious practices (such as prayer and dhikr) on the brain and psychological well-being.

Limitation

This research has four main limitations with methodological consequences that need to be articulated:

Limited to Textual Analysis

Consequence: The findings of this research require empirical validation through a study of the living Qur'an that examines how Muslims understand and apply the concept of the *Rûh* in their daily lives. Without empirical validation, there is a risk of a gap between theological and philosophical discourse and real-life practices.

Limited Source Coverage

Consequence: The generalizability of the findings is limited to the Sunni tradition, which is heavily influenced by Peripatetic philosophy (Ibn Sina, al-Farabi) and moderate Sufism (al-Ghazali). Further research should expand to Shia perspectives (Mulla Sadrâ, al-Majlisi) and esoteric Sufism (al-Hallâj, al-Suhrawardî) to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the diversity of discourses on the *Rûh* in Islam.

Limited Irfani Approach

Consequence: The dimensions of spiritual experience (*dhawq, kashf, musyâhadah*) of the *Rûh* in the Sufi tradition have not been fully revealed, as this research emphasises textual analysis rather than the phenomenological study of mystical experience. Further research, utilising the phenomenology of religion, could deepen our understanding of the Irfani dimension of the *Rûh*.

Lack of In-depth Dialogue with Neuroscience

Consequence: The potential for knowledge integration between the Islamic concept of the *Rûh* and contemporary neuroscience findings on consciousness has not been fully realised. Further research involving interdisciplinary collaboration between Muslim scholars, philosophers, and neuroscientists could produce a more robust integration framework and contribute to the development of Islamic cognitive science.

Based on these four limitations, several recommendations for further research that can fill the existing gaps, given the urgency of this theme, are:

Empirical Study: Survey of the community's understanding of the Spirit in five large Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) in Indonesia (Gontor, Tebuireng, Lirboyo, Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo, al-Munawwir Krapyak) with a sample of 500 students and 50 *ustadz* using mixed methods (questionnaire + in-depth interviews).

Comparative Study: Analysis of the concepts of the Spirit (Islam), soul (Christianity-Judaism), and *âtman* (Hinduism) in three Abrahamic and Dharmic religions using the phenomenology of religion framework (Eliade, Otto) to identify convergences and divergences in religious anthropology.

Interdisciplinary Study: Workshop on dialogue between scholars and neuroscientists on consciousness and the Spirit with the following agenda: (a) Presentation of neuroscientific findings on consciousness; (b) Presentation of the concept of the Spirit in Islam; (c) Panel discussion on the possibility of epistemological integration; (d) Publication of workshop proceedings as a contribution to the field of Islamic cognitive science.

Bioethics Study: A fatwa panel on organ donation based on the understanding of the Spirit involving the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), the Central Board of Nahdlatul Ulama (PBNU), Muhammadiyah, Muslim doctors, and Islamic bioethics experts with the following agenda: (a) Study of the concept of death in Islam; (b) Evaluation of organ donation practices in Muslim hospitals; (c) Formulation of a fatwa that balances the principles of *maslahah* (benefit) and *hurumah al-mayyit* (respect for the dead).

Advanced Textual Study: Analysis of 100 hadith about the Spirit in the Kutub al-Sittah (six authentic hadith books) using content analysis and thematic coding methods to explore dimensions of the Spirit that have not been addressed in exegetical and philosophical discourses.

Conclusion

This interdisciplinary discourse yields a comprehensive definition of the *Rûh* that integrates the perspectives of Islamic interpretation, philosophy, and theology. The *Rûh* is defined as an immaterial substance that is hadith (created) and originates directly from God's command (*min amri Rabbi*). It functions as the body's animator and source of life, connects humans to the divine dimension, possesses cognitive powers and spiritual awareness, is not composed of material elements, and is eternal, according to the metaphor (it does not die with the death of the body).

Despite the diversity of terminology and emphasis among classical scholars of tafsir (al-Razi, al-Alusi, Ibn Qayyim) and Islamic philosophers (Ibn Sina, al-Farabi, Ibn 'Arabi, al-Ghazali), there is a fundamental consensus that the *Rûh* is an independent, immaterial substance, created (hadith) by God, eternal after the death of the body, and distinct from the nafs in its function and character (Napitupulu, 2020; Ali, 2021).

The integration of Islamic epistemology, encompassing *bayānī* (analysis of the Qur'an and hadith texts), *burhānī* (philosophical reasoning), and *'irfānī* (spiritual experience), has proven essential to producing a holistic, non-reductionist understanding of the *Rûh* (Aswandi & Dewi, 2025). This research also successfully presents counter-discourse from the perspective of Sufi metaphysics (Ibn 'Arabi), the kalam debate (Mu'tazilite vs. Ash'ari), and dialogue with contemporary neuroscience, demonstrating that the discourse on the *Rûh* in Islam is plural and dynamic, not monolithic.

The implications of this research for Islamic creed, Islamic bioethics, and contemporary Islamic psychology are significant. From a *aqidah* perspective, understanding the eternal *Rûh* provides a theological foundation for belief in resurrection. From a bioethical perspective, the concept of the Spirit provides a framework for addressing contemporary issues such as the definition of death, organ transplantation, and euthanasia. From an educational perspective, a comprehensive understanding of the Spirit necessitates the development of an Islamic psychology curriculum grounded in the anthropology of the *Rûh-nafs-aql*. From the perspective of science-religion dialogue, this research provides an integrative framework that bridges neuroscience and the concept of the *Rûh*, serving as a basis for interdisciplinary collaborative research.

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