

RĀTIB AL-ḤADDĀD AND ALTERNATIVE HEALING: A Living Qur'an Study at the Miftahut Taubah Dhikr Assembly Deli Serdang

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Abstrak

Maraknya praktik pengobatan berbasis Islam di tengah masyarakat dihadapkan pada dilema antara pragmatisme pengobatan alternatif dan pengabaian risiko penyimpangan teologis akibat minimnya analisis tekstual terhadap amalan yang digunakan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji keterkaitan antara pembacaan *Ratib al-Haddad* di Majelis Dzikir Miftahut Taubah, Desa Sukamandi, Deli Serdang. Penelitian ini menggunakan kualitatif jenis studi kasus dengan pendekatan *Living Qur'an* melalui teknik pengumpulan data observasi partisipatif, wawancara mendalam terhadap praktisi dan jamaah, serta dokumentasi teks dan aktivitas majelis. Hasil penelitian menemukan bahwa pembacaan *Ratib al-Haddad* di Majelis Dzikir Miftahut Taubah, memiliki landasan normatif yang kuat dan terlegitimasi secara syariat dari al-Quran, hadis dan pendapat para ulama. Efikasi penyembuhan penyakit medis maupun non-medis yang dirasakan jamaah bertumpu pada peningkatan kesadaran tauhid, *faḍīlah* teks, serta prinsip *takḥṣiṣ al-isti'māl* melalui Surah Al-Fatihah, *Al-Mu'awwidhat*, zikir, doa, dan salawat yang menjadi isi pembacaan ratib al-haddad, sedangkan penggunaan media air diposisikan sebagai ikhtiar syar'i yang efikasnya disandarkan mutlak kepada Allah. Implikasi kajian ini berargumen bahwa pengobatan alternatif-spiritual berbasis Islam tidak boleh hanya berfokus pada validitas aspek kesembuhan fisik, melainkan harus mengedepankan re-orientasi spiritual sebagai bentuk penegasan Al-Qur'an sebagai *Asy-Syifā'* yang menjamin kemurnian akidah penganutnya.

Kata Kunci: *Ratib al-Haddad*, Pengobatan Alternatif, *Living Qur'an*, Majelis Dzikir

Abstract

The proliferation of Islamic-based healing practices among the public presents a dilemma between the pragmatism of alternative medicine and the potential risk of theological deviation resulting from a lack of textual analysis regarding the practices employed. This study aims to examine the integration and textual foundation of the recitation of *Rātib al-Ḥaddād* at the *Majelis Dzikir Miftahut Taubah* in Sukamandi Village, Deli Serdang. Employing a qualitative case study design with a Living Qur'an approach, data were gathered through participant observation, in-depth interviews with practitioners and congregants, and textual-activity documentation of the assembly. The findings reveal that the recitation of *Rātib al-Ḥaddād* at *Majelis Dzikir Miftahut Taubah* possesses a robust normative foundation, fully legitimized under Islamic jurisprudence (*shari'ah*) through evidence from the Qur'an, Hadith, and scholarly consensus. The perceived therapeutic efficacy for both somatic and non-somatic ailments relies on an elevated consciousness of Islamic monotheism (*tawḥīd*), the intrinsic virtues (*faḍīlah*) of the texts, and the principle of *takḥṣiṣ al-isti'māl* embedded within Sūrah al-Fātiḥah, *al-Mu'awwidhatayn*, specific supplications (*dhikr* and *du'ā*), and blessings upon the Prophet (*ṣalawāt*). Furthermore, the use of water as a therapeutic medium is positioned purely as a permissible physical endeavor (*ikhtiyār shar'i*), with ultimate efficacy attributed solely to God (*Allāh*). This study argues that Islamic spiritual-alternative healing must transcend mere physical recovery to prioritize spiritual re-orientation, thereby reaffirming the Qur'an as *al-Shifā'* (the healing source) while safeguarding the theological purity of the practitioners' faith (*'aqidah*).

Keywords: *Rātib al-Ḥaddād*, Alternative Healing, Living Qur'an, Dhikr Assembly

INTRODUCTION

The proliferation of Islamic-based healing practices in contemporary Muslim societies reflects not only the persistence of religious traditions but also the transformation of spiritual values into practical responses to increasingly complex health challenges. Alongside advances in modern medicine, many Muslim communities continue to seek complementary forms of treatment rooted in religious teachings, particularly those derived from the Qur'an, prophetic traditions, and devotional practices. This tendency illustrates that health is not understood merely as a biological condition but also as a spiritual and psychological state requiring holistic intervention. Consequently, Qur'anic verses, supplications (*du'ā*), and prophetic blessings (*ṣalawāt*) are increasingly perceived not only as ritual expressions of worship but also as therapeutic resources believed to facilitate healing and strengthen psychological resilience. Such a perception reflects an enduring confidence in the transformative power of divine revelation within everyday religious life (Kamaludin, Hakim, and Nisrina S. 2022).

The practical expressions of Islamic healing have developed into a wide spectrum of therapeutic models that accommodate both textual traditions and local religious experiences. These practices range from *ruqyah shar'iyah*, spiritual recovery sessions, collective remembrance (*dhikr*), and devotional recitations to the utilization of physical media such as water, salt, olive oil, and traditional herbal preparations accompanied by Qur'anic recitation (Munandar and Harahap 2025). For many believers, these practices do not compete with biomedical treatment but rather complement it by addressing dimensions of illness that are perceived to transcend physical pathology. As a result, Islamic spiritual healing has evolved into a holistic framework in which physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing are understood as interconnected realities. This development further demonstrates how religious teachings continue to adapt to contemporary social needs while maintaining their theological orientation, thereby reinforcing the close relationship between Islamic doctrine and community healthcare practices (Mohd Hamdan, M. Azizan, and Bichk Koyak 2025).

Despite its growing acceptance, the expansion of Islamic alternative healing simultaneously raises important theological and academic questions regarding the legitimacy of the devotional practices employed as therapeutic media. The increasing popularity of various healing methods has generated diverse interpretations concerning which forms of spiritual treatment are genuinely rooted in Islamic teachings and which merely reflect cultural accretions lacking sufficient religious justification. Within this context, the normative framework of Islamic law (*shari'ah*) becomes an indispensable reference for evaluating the permissibility of therapeutic rituals. Every specification of Qur'anic verses, supplications, *dhikr*, or devotional litanies intended for healing purposes requires a clear theological foundation supported by authoritative religious sources. Such scrutiny is essential because Islamic scholarship consistently differentiates legitimate spiritual treatment from magical practices that potentially contain elements of polytheism (*shirk*), superstition (*takbayyul*), and myth (*keburāfāt*) (Ghaly 2008). Accordingly, classical Islamic scholarship establishes several fundamental principles governing permissible

healing practices, including the exclusive use of the Word of God (*kalām Allāh*) or authentic prophetic supplications, the avoidance of expressions containing theological ambiguity, and the conviction that healing ultimately originates from Allah alone rather than from the recited texts themselves (Al-Shāfi'ī). Within this epistemological framework, the recitation of selected Qur'anic verses or devotional texts should not be interpreted as possessing autonomous supernatural efficacy but rather as a form of legitimate religious effort (*ikhtiyār*) accompanied by sincere reliance upon divine will (Ahmad, Ramli, and Rahman 2016). Therefore, examining the theological legitimacy of Islamic healing practices is not merely a doctrinal exercise but also an important academic endeavor to understand how religious texts are interpreted, appropriated, and practiced within contemporary Muslim communities while safeguarding the integrity of Islamic belief.

One of the most significant analytical perspectives for examining this phenomenon is provided by the Living Qur'an approach, which emphasizes the dynamic interaction between Qur'anic texts and the lived experiences of Muslim society. Rather than limiting the study of the Qur'an to textual interpretation, the Living Qur'an perspective explores how Qur'anic teachings are received, embodied, negotiated, and transformed into everyday religious practices. Through this approach, devotional activities involving Qur'anic recitation are understood as social expressions of faith that reflect continuous interactions between scriptural authority, communal tradition, and contemporary realities. Consequently, healing practices based on Qur'anic recitation cannot be examined solely through textual analysis or jurisprudential discourse; they must also be understood as living manifestations of the community's engagement with the sacred text. This perspective provides an appropriate conceptual foundation for investigating how devotional practices such as the recitation of *Rātib al-Haddād* function simultaneously as acts of worship, expressions of collective spirituality, and perceived therapeutic media within contemporary Muslim communities.

The phenomenon of integrating devotional recitations into therapeutic practices is clearly reflected in the activities of the *Majelis Dzikir Miftabut Taubah* (*Majelis Dzikir Miftabut Taubah*) in Sukamandi Village, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra. Unlike many Islamic religious assemblies that primarily emphasize scriptural learning, public preaching, and social activities, *Majelis Dzikir Miftabut Taubah* has developed a distinctive religious identity through the regular recitation of *Rātib al-Haddād*. This devotional gathering attracts participants from diverse backgrounds who not only seek spiritual enrichment but also believe that the recitation possesses therapeutic value for overcoming physical illnesses, psychological distress, and disturbances perceived to have metaphysical dimensions. The persistent participation of congregants indicates that the ritual has evolved beyond a routine act of collective remembrance into a socially recognized medium of alternative healing. Such a phenomenon provides an important empirical setting for examining how devotional texts are continuously interpreted, experienced, and reproduced within the lived religious practices of Muslim communities.

The religious significance of *Rātib al-Ḥaddād* itself extends beyond its popularity as a devotional litany. Compiled by Al-Imām Al-Ḥabīb ‘Abd Allāh bin ‘Alawī al-Ḥaddād, the litany consists of carefully selected Qur'anic verses, prophetic supplications, invocations, and blessings that have long been incorporated into the spiritual traditions of many Muslim societies. Its widespread acceptance has encouraged scholars to investigate its educational, psychological, and spiritual dimensions from various disciplinary perspectives. Existing studies consistently demonstrate that the recitation of *Rātib al-Ḥaddād* contributes positively to character formation, the enhancement of spiritual intelligence, emotional stability, and the reduction of social anxiety through structured devotional engagement (Aliya 2025; Fadillah 2023; Jaharuddin, Nasrullah, and Khairudin 2026; Jaini and Suwanto 2025; Maula 2024; Zami and Hawasyi 2025). These findings confirm that the litany functions not merely as a religious ritual but also as a significant medium through which Islamic values are internalized and translated into individual and collective wellbeing.

Nevertheless, a closer examination of previous scholarship reveals that existing studies predominantly emphasize the sociological, educational, and psychological impacts of *Rātib al-Ḥaddād*, while comparatively little attention has been devoted to the internal theological architecture of the litany itself. Most investigations describe how communities practice and experience the recitation, yet they seldom analyze why particular Qur'anic verses, supplications, *dhikr*, and blessings were systematically selected and arranged within the composition of *Rātib al-Ḥaddād*. Consequently, the relationship between the textual structure of the litany and its perceived therapeutic functions remains insufficiently explored. Likewise, although many studies employ the Living Qur'an perspective to understand the reception of Qur'anic texts within society, relatively few integrate this perspective with a rigorous theological examination capable of explaining how scriptural authority informs contemporary healing practices. This imbalance leaves an important scholarly gap between empirical descriptions of religious practice and critical analysis of the textual foundations that shape those practices.

Responding to this gap, the present study seeks to examine the relationship between the recitation of *Rātib al-Ḥaddād* and the discourse of Islamic alternative healing through the analytical lens of the Living Qur'an. Rather than merely documenting the existence of healing practices, this research investigates how the structural composition of *Rātib al-Ḥaddād*—including the sequential arrangement of *istighfār*, Qur'anic passages, prophetic supplications, and other devotional formulas—constructs theological meanings that are subsequently interpreted and practiced by the congregation of *Majelis Dzikir Miftabul Taubah*. By integrating textual analysis with field-based investigation, this study aims to bridge the often-separated domains of scriptural interpretation and lived religious experience. Such an approach offers a more comprehensive understanding of how sacred texts acquire practical significance within contemporary Muslim communities while remaining anchored to Islamic theological principles. Accordingly, this research contributes not only to the enrichment of Living Qur'an scholarship but also to broader

discussions concerning Islamic spirituality, religious healing, and the dynamic interaction between scriptural authority and social practice in contemporary Islam.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore the religious meanings underlying the recitation of *Rātīb al-Ḥaddād* as a form of spiritual endeavor (*ikhtiyār*) in Islamic alternative healing. A qualitative case study was considered appropriate because it enables an in-depth investigation of religious practices within their natural social and cultural contexts while capturing participants' interpretations and lived experiences. The research was conducted at the *Majelis Dzikir Miftahut Taubah* (*Majelis Dzikir Miftahut Taubah*) in Suka Mandi Hilir Village, Pagar Merbau District, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra, where the regular recitation of *Rātīb al-Ḥaddād* constitutes a central devotional activity associated with spiritual healing practices.

Data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Participant observation was undertaken during the weekly *Rātīb al-Ḥaddād* gatherings to examine the sequence of rituals, congregational participation, and the social context in which the recitation was performed. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the assembly's spiritual leader (*kiai*) and selected congregants who actively participated in the ritual and possessed direct experience regarding its perceived therapeutic functions. Documentary sources, including the text of *Rātīb al-Ḥaddād*, organizational records, and photographs of religious activities, were also examined to enrich contextual understanding and support data triangulation. Informants were selected using purposive sampling based on their active involvement, knowledge of the recitation tradition, and willingness to share their experiences.

The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model of qualitative analysis, comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing with continuous verification throughout the research process. To enhance the credibility of the findings, triangulation of data sources and collection techniques was employed by comparing information obtained through observations, interviews, and documentary evidence. This study adopts the Living Qur'an approach as its analytical framework to examine how Qur'anic verses, *dhikr*, supplications (*du'ā*), and blessings upon the Prophet (*ṣalawāt*) contained in *Rātīb al-Ḥaddād* are received, interpreted, and embodied within the religious practices of the congregation. Accordingly, the study does not seek to assess the clinical effectiveness of *Rātīb al-Ḥaddād* as a medical treatment. Instead, it aims to analyze the construction of religious meaning surrounding its recitation and to examine the jurisprudential legitimacy of its application as a form of Islamic spiritual healing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Profile of the Miftahut Taubah Dhikr Assembly

The *Majelis Dzikir Miftahut Taubah* is an Islamic study group that operates within the *An-Nahdliyyin* religious tradition under the auspices of *Nahdlatul Ulama*, located in Suka Mandi Hilir

Village, Pagar Merbau District, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra. The assembly routinely conducts Islamic proselytization (*da'wah*) adhering to *An-Nabdhliyyin* values through litanies (*dhikr*), prophetic blessings (*ṣalawāt*), and classical Islamic textual studies (*pengajian kitab*) aimed at enhancing spiritual devotion and strengthening communal social bonds. The name "Miftahut Taubah," derived from Arabic, translates to "the key to repentance," symbolizing the assembly's core objective of seeking divine forgiveness, fostering self-improvement, and drawing closer to God Almighty (Kyai 2026).

The organizational structure of *Majelis Dzikir Miftahut Taubah* is led by Kyai Syahrul Ambada, who serves as the primary leader of the *dhikr* recitations and frequently bestows spiritual authorization (*ijāzah*) for the litanies to the congregants. *Majelis Dzikir Miftahut Taubah*'s proselytization efforts are actively supported by various preachers (*ustādh*) and scholars (*kyai*), each fulfilling distinct roles to advance religious education within the community. In executing its mission, the executive leadership is further assisted by an advisory board, assembly chairpersons, a treasurer, and a secretarial committee (Kyai 2026).

The overarching vision of *Majelis Dzikir Miftahut Taubah* encompasses two primary pillars: conducting regular collective *dhikr* and supplications to cultivate peace and spiritual blessings (*barakah*) for the Muslim community—particularly for its congregants—and hosting classical text studies and religious lectures to expand knowledge while promoting a moderate Islamic understanding (*wasatiyyah*). As an assembly focused on spiritual proselytization, *Majelis Dzikir Miftahut Taubah* routinely organizes weekly and monthly spiritual gatherings featuring litanies such as *Rātib al-Ḥaddād*, *Rātib al-‘Atṭās*, and *Istighāthah*. A specialized monthly gathering is held on the night of *Legi* according to the Javanese calendar, attracting a steady attendance composed predominantly of male congregants (Kyai 2026).

In addition to *dhikr* practices, the assembly engages in the systematic study of foundational Islamic texts covering jurisprudence (*fiqh*), ethics (*akhlāq*), Sufism (*taṣawwuf*), and prophetic biography (*ṣirah nabawīyyah*). Furthermore, *Majelis Dzikir Miftahut Taubah* actively celebrates major Islamic commemorations, including the birth of Prophet Muhammad (*Mawlid*), the Night Journey and Ascension (*Isrā' and Mi'rāj*), and collective prayers welcoming the holy month of Ramadan. Beyond ritualistic activities, the assembly maintains an active social agenda, providing charitable assistance to orphans, the economically underprivileged (*du'afā'*), and needy community members in the surrounding area.

The assembly is open to the general public, welcoming adults, adolescents, and children alike. The majority of *Majelis Dzikir Miftahut Taubah*'s congregants belong to the local agricultural and plantation labor force. *Majelis Dzikir Miftahut Taubah* enjoys high societal respect and experiences virtually no opposition within the community, partly due to the presence of a significant Javanese minority population that broadly aligns with *Nahdatul Ulama* cultural-religious ethos. Its gentle, inclusive, and adaptive approach to proselytization facilitates the assembly's widespread acceptance across diverse socio-economic strata in Deli Serdang, encompassing both rural and urban dwellers (Kyai 2026).

The Practice of Reciting Rātīb al-Ḥaddād

Rātīb al-Ḥaddād derives its name from its compiler, Al-Imām ‘Abd Allāh bin ‘Alawī al-Ḥaddād, who was born on Monday night, the 5th of Ṣafar 1044 AH, in Hadhramaut, Yemen. Upon his birth, he was metaphorically dubbed "the rising sun." Al-Ḥaddād is widely recognized as a prominent Islamic reformer (*mujaddid*) (Joll 2019, 73). Despite losing his sight at the age of three, his profound asceticism (*ẓuhd*), scrupulous piety (*wara’*), and rigorous devotion to following the Prophetic *Sunnah* earned him widespread recognition as a distinguished Sufi master. Over the course of his life, notwithstanding his physical limitation, Al-Ḥaddād authored numerous seminal works, including *Al-Naṣā’ih al-Diniyyah wa al-Waṣāyā al-Imāniyyah*, *Al-Da’wah al-Tamma*, *Risālat al-Mudhakarāh ma’a al-Ikhwān wa al-Muḥibbīn*, *Al-Fuṣūl al-‘Ilmiyyah*, *Al-Ḥikam*, *Risālat Ādāb Sulūk al-Murīd*, *Sabīl al-Iddhikār*, *Risālat al-Mu’āwanah*, *Ittiḥāf al-Sa’il bi-Ajwibat al-Masā’il*, and *Al-Durr al-Manẓūm al-Jāmi’ li al-Ḥikam wa al-‘Ulūm*. Al-Ḥaddād passed away at the age of 89 and was interred at the Zanbal Cemetery in Tarim, Hadhramaut, Yemen (Joll 2019, 81).

Among his compiled supplications and litanies, *Rātīb al-Ḥaddād* remains the most celebrated and globally renowned. Honorifically titled *Al-Rātīb al-Shahīr* (The Renowned Litany), it was composed under divine inspiration on the night of *Laylat al-Qadr*, the 27th of Ramadan 1071 AH (corresponding to May 26, 1661 CE). The litany was compiled to fulfill a request by one of his disciples, ‘Āmir from the Banū Sa’d family residing in Shibam, Hadhramaut. ‘Āmir requested a daily litany (*wirid*) for his fellow villagers to safeguard their community against the theological deviations encroaching upon Hadhramaut at the time (Joll 2019, 97).

The first public recitation of the *rātīb* took place in ‘Āmir's village in Shibam, following the explicit authorization (*ijāzah*) granted by Al-Imām ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥaddād himself. Subsequently, the litany was regularly recited at Al-Imām Al-Ḥaddād's mosque in Al-Ḥawī, Tarim, in 1072 AH (1661 CE). Conventionally, it was recited in congregation along with its accompanying supplications and voluntary prayers (*nāfilah*) following the ‘*Ishā*’ prayer. During the holy month of Ramadan, the recitation was moved to prior to the ‘*Ishā*’ prayer to prevent time constraints for the night prayers (*Tarāwīḥ*). According to Al-Imām al-Ḥaddād, regions where *Rātīb al-Ḥaddād* was consistently practiced were, by divine permission, preserved from heterodox influences.

When Al-Imām al-Ḥaddād performed the Pilgrimage (*Ḥajj*), the recitation of *Rātīb al-Ḥaddād* spread to Mecca and Medina. To this day, the litany is recited nightly at Bāb al-Ṣafā in Mecca and Bāb al-Raḥmah in Medina. Habib Ahmad bin Zain Al-Habsyi notably asserted that whoever recites *Rātīb al-Ḥaddād* with unwavering faith and conviction—continuing the declaration of faith (*Lā ilāha illā Allāh*) up to a hundred times rather than the standard fifty—may be granted extraordinary spiritual experiences (Assegaf 2024).

At the *Majelis Dzikir Miftabut Taubah*, the procedural sequence of the *Rātīb al-Ḥaddād* recitation is structured into a series of functional stages. These gatherings are held openly in the courtyards of inviting congregants or hosted on a rotating basis among participating members of *Majelis Dzikir Miftabut Taubah* (Kyai 2026).

The session opens with a master of ceremonies reading the agenda, followed by an introductory discourse by Kyai Syahrul Ambada. Kyai Syahrul highlights the spiritual virtues (*faḍīlah*) of reciting *Rātīb al-Ḥaddād*, outlines the primary intentions (*niyyah*) of the gathering, and leads the congregants in expressing their specific spiritual and worldly requests (*ḥājah*). The recitation officially commences with *tawaṣṣul*—a foundational intercessory practice within *Nahdlatul Ulama* tradition—sending blessings and prayers for specific intentions through the recitation of *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* (Kyai 2026).

The congregation then recites *Rātīb al-Ḥaddād* unisons using printed booklets provided to new members, under the guidance of the *kyai*. All present recite the litany aloud. Upon completing the text, the *kyai* delivers a closing supplication (*du‘ā*), during which the congregants fervently voice their agreement (*āmin*) (Kyai 2026).

Following the primary supplication, the assembly engages in supplementary devotional recitations, including three repetitions each of *Ṣalawāt Burdah*, *Ṣalawāt Nūr al-Mubīn*, *Ṣalawāt Tibb al-Qulūb*, *Ṣalawāt Ayyghil*, and *Sūrah al-Inshirāḥ* (*‘Alam Nashrah*), petitioning God for protection against plagues, trials, and calamities. The formal proceedings conclude with a religious sermon (*maw‘izah ḥasanah*) delivered by the *kyai*, focusing on Islamic ethics (*akhlāq*), jurisprudence (*fiqh*), or Sufism (*taṣawwuf*). The entire program typically runs from after the *‘Ishā’* prayer until approximately 10:00 PM (Kyai 2026).

The gathering concludes with a communal meal provided by the host or committee as an act of voluntary charity (*ṣadaqah*). The atmosphere remains serene and solemn, with participants seated cross-legged on the floor. Following the formal program, congregants generally remain behind to engage in informal discussions, sharing personal struggles and expressing specific intentions for communal prayer (Kyai 2026). Thus, *Majelis Dzikir Miftahut Taubah* preserves the historical, collective practice of *Rātīb al-Ḥaddād* recitation while integrating the local cultural tradition of sharing food—a customary mechanism employed to obtain spiritual blessings (*barakah*) in communal gatherings.

The Living Qur'an in *Rātīb al-Ḥaddād*

Rātīb al-Ḥaddād was meticulously compiled from Qur'anic verses, supplications (*du‘ā*), litanies (*dhikr*), and prophetic blessings (*ṣalawāt*), all excerpted directly from the Qur'an and the Hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad. Each supplication is typically recited three times to maintain an odd-numbered count (*witr*), following the explicit recommendation of Al-Imām al-Ḥaddād. He strategically arranged short, repetitive litanies to facilitate ease of recitation for the practitioner. Consistent, daily practice (*istiḳāmah*) of these concise litanies is deemed superior to the sporadic recitation of lengthier prayers. *Rātīb al-Ḥaddād* differs from other litanies composed by Al-Imām al-Ḥaddād, as it was specifically designed for collective, congregational recitation.

Minor variations exist across various printed editions of *Rātīb al-Ḥaddād*, particularly following the final *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*, where certain reciters have appended supplementary

supplications. The late Al-Ḥabīb Aḥmad Mashhūr bin Ṭāhā al-Ḥaddād granted authorization (*ijāzah*) for its recitation and recommended its practice beyond standard schedules, especially during times of adversity and hardship.

Sūrah al-Fātiḥah

The therapeutic application of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah as a spiritual incantation (*ruqyah*) is firmly grounded in Prophetic Hadiths. This is demonstrated by Al-Imām al-Bukhārī, who compiled the Hadith narrated by Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī across several distinct chapters in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, including *Kitāb al-Ṭibb* (Book of Medicine), *Kitāb al-Ijārah* (Book of Hiring), and *Kitāb Faḍā’il al-Qur’ān* (Book of Virtues of the Qur’an) (Al-Bukhārī n.d.). This thematic repetition underscores that the Hadith not only addresses medical practice but also touches upon the intrinsic virtues of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah and its jurisprudential implications in Islamic law (*fiqh*) (Ahmad et al. 2016).

According to Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, Al-Bukhārī’s categorization of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah as a form of *ruqyah* is based on the Prophet’s tacit approval (*taqrīr*) of the Companions’ practice rather than an explicit command. Meanwhile, Ibn al-Qayyim asserts that Sūrah al-Fātiḥah holds a unique distinction because it encapsulates the foundational tenets of Qur’anic teachings—including monotheism (*tawḥīd*), supplication, guidance, and servitude to God—thereby imbuing it with spiritual value as a therapeutic medium. Ibn Baṭṭāl further emphasizes that Sūrah al-Fātiḥah is the greatest chapter in the Qur’an and serves as an indispensable pillar (*rukn*) in every unit of prayer (*rak‘ah*), which further solidifies its position within Islamic jurisprudence (Al-Bakri 2003).

Based on these Hadiths and scholarly commentaries, it can be concluded that utilizing Sūrah al-Fātiḥah for *ruqyah* is a legitimate practice in Islam. This legitimacy rests not only on the actions of the Companions but is also reinforced by the tacit approval of the Prophet Muhammad and the preeminence of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah as the essence of Qur’anic revelation. Therefore, its application as a spiritual healing medium aligns with jurisprudential principles, while maintaining the firm conviction that ultimate healing originates solely from God Almighty (Reno Yulianda 2024).

Āyat al-Kursī

Āyat al-Kursī (Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]: 255) is venerated as the supreme verse in the Qur’an (*a’zam āyah fi Kitāb Allāh*). This designation stems from an authentic Hadith narrated by Ubayy bin Ka‘b, wherein the Prophet Muhammad asked him which verse was the greatest in the Qur’an, subsequently confirming Ubayy’s response that it was Āyat al-Kursī (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim). The preeminence of Āyat al-Kursī lies not only in its status as the most exalted verse, but also in its profound theological content, which comprehensively encapsulates the principles of divine monotheism (*tawḥīd*). Consequently, numerous scholars designate Āyat al-Kursī as a primary recitation for spiritual protection and legitimate incantation (*ruqyah shar‘iyyah*).

A central aspect emphasized by classical exegetes (*mufasssīrīn*) is the invocation of two divine names: *Al-Ḥayy* (The Ever-Living) and *Al-Qayyūm* (The Self-Subsisting Sustainer). Ibn

Kathīr explains that these two names are among the most exalted names of God (*al-Isim al-A'zam*), as they demonstrate the absolute perfection of His life and sovereign governance over all creation. The attribute of *Al-Qayyūm* asserts that the entire universe remains under divine sustenance and order; thus, all forms of illness, affliction, and disturbance can only be dispelled by His leave. Within the framework of *ruqyah*, reciting Āyat al-Kursī is understood not as a direct cause of physical healing, but rather as a form of spiritual intercession (*tawassul*) through God's revealed Word, grounded in the firm conviction that absolute power to heal belongs solely to God.

Another crucial dimension is the affirmation of God's unceasing vigilance, as stated in the verse: "*Lā ta'khudhubū sinatun wa-lā nawm*" (Neither drowsiness overtakes Him nor sleep). Al-Rāzī in *Mafātih al-Ghayb* explains that this phrase illustrates the uninterrupted perfection of divine protection. Sayyid Quṭb in *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān* similarly emphasizes that this attribute instills a spiritual awareness that a believer's life resides perpetually under divine guardianship. In the context of *ruqyah*, this conviction yields significant psychological benefits: it fosters a sense of security, alleviates anxiety, and reinforces internal tranquility when facing somatic ailments or metaphysical disturbances.

Furthermore, scholars highlight the function of Āyat al-Kursī as an impenetrable fortress of protection (*hiṣn ḥaṣīm*). Al-Qurṭubī notes that the monotheistic content of Āyat al-Kursī attracts divine protection for the servant against various forms of harm. This understanding is supported by an authentic Hadith in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* narrated by Abū Hurayrah, which states that whoever recites Āyat al-Kursī before sleeping will receive continuous protection from God, preventing Satan from approaching them until morning. This Hadith serves as a normative foundation for Āyat al-Kursī as a protective recitation, particularly against satanic influences, even though the Qur'an does not explicitly label it as a verse for somatic healing (Natalia, Yusuf, and Suhana 2022).

Q.S. al-Baqarah 285–286

The final two verses of Sūrah al-Baqarah (Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]: 285–286), known as *Khawātīm al-Baqarah*, hold a distinguished position in Islamic tradition. Their virtue is grounded in several authentic Hadiths, including the statement of the Prophet Muhammad that whoever recites these two verses at night, "*kafatah*" (they will suffice him) (Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim). Additionally, a narration in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* notes that the conclusion of Sūrah al-Baqarah represents one of two special lights (*nūr*) granted exclusively to the Prophet Muhammad. These Hadiths establish the normative basis for these verses as a protective recitation and comprehensive supplication.

According to Al-Imām al-Nawawī, the expression *kafatah* carries broad significance: it suffices a person against all evils, provides protection throughout the night, or stands in place of night worship (*qiyām al-layl*). This exegesis indicates that the primary function of these two verses is to seek divine protection; hence, in *ruqyah shar'iyah* practices, they are frequently utilized as protective litanies based on sound textual evidence.

From an exegetical perspective, Verse 285 affirms the perfection of faith in God, His angels, His scriptures, and His messengers, culminating in the expression "*Sami'nā wa-aṭa'nā*" (We hear and we obey) alongside a plea for divine forgiveness. Ibn Kathīr and Hamka explain that this verse portrays the apex of a believer's submission to God's decree. In Islamic healing, this attitude of trust (*tawakkul*), obedience, and seeking forgiveness (*istighfār*) cultivates inner serenity, which serves as a vital foundation for spiritual recovery.

Meanwhile, Verse 286 establishes the principle that God does not burden a soul beyond its capacity. Al-Rāzī clarifies that this verse underscores divine justice in every religious obligation (*taklīf*) and trial imposed upon humanity. For an individual facing illness, this message offers hope that every affliction remains within the predetermined limits of human capacity. The verse concludes with a series of supplications encompassing requests for forgiveness, alleviation of burdens, mercy, and divine assistance. Consequently, scholars regard the conclusion of Sūrah al-Baqarah not merely as a declaration of faith, but as a comprehensive prayer that fortifies a believer's spiritual, psychological, and devotional resilience.

Based on sound Hadiths and scholarly exegesis, it can be concluded that applying the final two verses of Sūrah al-Baqarah in *ruqyah shar'iyah* is rooted in their preeminence as protective litanies and supplications that synthesize theological fortification, pleas for forgiveness, and hope for divine relief. Thus, their therapeutic efficacy is understood not as an inherent mechanical power within the phrasing, but because the verses serve as a medium of prayer and devotion to God Almighty as the sole grantor of healing.

Litanies and Prophetic Blessings (Dhikr and Ṣalawāt)

The recitation of *Ratib al-Haddād* incorporates litanies (*dhikr*) and blessings upon the Prophet (*ṣalawāt*) that possess direct foundations in Qur'anic verses, as detailed in the following table:

Scriptural Foundation	Litany and Prophetic Blessing	Frequency
Q.S. al-Nisā' [4]: 106 & Q.S. Hūd [11]: 90	رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ	3 times
Q.S. al-Aḥzāb [33]: 56	اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ، اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمْ	3 times
Q.S. Āl 'Imrān [3]: 19	رَضِينَا بِاللَّهِ رَبًّا وَبِالْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا وَمُحَمَّدٍ نَبِيًّا	3 times
Q.S. al-Taḥrīm [66]: 8	أَمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ تُبْنَا إِلَى اللَّهِ بَاطِنًا وَظَاهِرًا	3 times
Q.S. al-Nisā' [4]: 106	يَا رَبَّنَا وَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَامْحُ الْذَّنْبَ كَانَ مِنَّا	3 times
Q.S. Āl 'Imrān [3]: 19	يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ أَمِنَّا عَلَى دِينِ الْإِسْلَامِ	7 times
Q.S. al-Isrā' [17]: 110	يَا سَمِيعُ يَا بَصِيرُ يَا لَطِيفُ يَا خَبِيرُ . يَا عَلِيُّ يَا كَبِيرُ يَا عَلِيمُ يَا قَدِيرُ	3 times
Q.S. al-Nisā' [4]: 106 & Q.S. Hūd [11]: 90	أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ رَبَّ الْبَرَايَا أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ مِنَ الْخَطَايَا	4 times

The sequence of litanies and prophetic blessings in *Rātib al-Ḥaddād* maintains an intrinsic connection with Qur'anic teachings. The majority of the recitations consist of direct Qur'anic verses, scriptural supplications, or Hadith-based litanies. Consequently, *Rātib al-Ḥaddād* functions not as an isolated collection of chants, but as a systematic compilation built upon divine revelation and Prophetic tradition. This indicates that the therapeutic value of *Rātib al-Ḥaddād* relies not on the mechanical arrangement of words, but on the deep theological content embedded within each verse and litany.

This argument acquires normative legitimacy through Q.S. al-Nisā' [4]: 106 and Q.S. Hūd [11]: 90, which consistently link seeking forgiveness (*istighfār*) with divine mercy, pardon, and spiritual return to God. These verses not only command repentance but also establish a paradigm wherein a believer's recovery begins with an acknowledgment of human vulnerability before God. In Ibn Kathīr's exegesis, *istighfār* represents an expression of *inābah*—the sincere turning of a servant toward God—thereby drawing down His abundant mercy. This interpretation reveals that the primary function of *istighfār* is not merely erasing past transgressions, but transforming one's inner disposition from an illusion of self-sufficiency toward the recognition that all relief and healing rest entirely with God. Thus, the relationship between *istighfār* and healing is not a mechanical causal link, but a profound theological relationship that redirects human consciousness back to the principle of monotheism (*tawḥīd*) as the foundation of Islamic healing.

This perspective is further reinforced by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah in *Zād al-Ma'ād*, where he asserts that spiritual diseases of the heart—such as anxiety, fear, and existential alienation—exacerbate human physical suffering. According to Ibn al-Qayyim, true healing must target not only the physical body but also the heart, which serves as the spiritual center of a believer's existence. Therefore, *istighfār* is understood as a process of spiritual purification (*taṣkiyat al-nafī*) that clears the inner veils (*ḥijāb*) obstructing divine mercy. In the structure of *Rātib al-Ḥaddād*, positioning *istighfār* at the onset of the litany reflects a systematic spiritual hierarchy: the believer is first guided through inner purification before proceeding to subsequent litanies containing blessings, monotheistic affirmations, petitions for protection, and prayers for recovery. This deliberate arrangement demonstrates that healing in *Rātib al-Ḥaddād* is achieved through a structured, multi-tiered process of spiritual transformation rather than an arbitrary recitation of chants.

From Rātib al-Ḥaddād Recitation to Alternative Healing

The recitation of *Rātib al-Ḥaddād* at *Majelis Dzikir Miftabut Taubah*, which incorporates elements of divine plea (*istighāthah*), is not merely practiced as a collective litany ritual; it has also evolved into a recognized mode of alternative spiritual healing among the community. This functional transformation stems from the empirical experiences of congregants who reported improvements in their health conditions after participating regularly in the recitations. These individual experiences were subsequently transmitted across the broader community,

constructing a social reality that *Rātib al-Ḥaddād* possesses therapeutic value for diverse health issues—encompassing both somatic illnesses and ailments unexplainable by clinical medicine (Jamaah 2026). Consequently, this therapeutic practice developed not through formal institutional doctrine, but through the continuous transmission and reproduction of lived religious experiences within the congregants' social life.

Prior to the commencement of the *Rātib al-Ḥaddād* session, congregants seeking physical or spiritual relief typically consult with the *kyai* who leads the assembly (Jamaah 2026). At this stage, the *kyai* does not position *Rātib al-Ḥaddād* as a substitute for clinical medicine; rather, it is framed as a spiritual endeavor (*ikhtiyār*) designed to fortify prayer, deepen reliance on God (*tawakkul*), and petition God Almighty for health restoration. If a condition requires medical intervention, congregants are explicitly advised to undergo clinical examination and treatment. This approach demonstrates that healing practices utilizing *Rātib al-Ḥaddād* are built upon an integrative principle, synthesizing physical-medical efforts (*al-akhdh bi al-asbāb*) with spiritual endeavors through litanies (*dhikr*), supplications (*duʿā*), prophetic blessings (*ṣalawāt*), and the recitation of Qur'anic verses.

A central element of the therapeutic practice during *Rātib al-Ḥaddād* is the utilization of water as a physical medium. Congregants commonly bring bottled water and place it before them throughout the recitation ritual. In specific cases, particularly concerning physical complaints such as joint pain, open wounds, or other bodily ailments, coarse salt is mixed into the water prior to use. Following the completion of the entire sequence of litanies, the water is applied or consumed as a therapeutic medium according to individual needs (Jamaah 2026).

The *kyai* emphasizes that water is not regarded as possessing autonomous healing power; instead, it serves as a medium that acquires religious efficacy through the accompanying recitations of Qur'anic verses, supplications, blessings, and litanies. In other words, healing efficacy is attributed not to the water itself, but to the divine blessings (*barakah*) of prayer and God's mercy invoked through the *Rātib al-Ḥaddād* recitation (Kyai 2026).

Congregants seeking recovery do not merely participate in a single session; they are encouraged to practice the litany consistently (*istiqāmah*) and report progress in their health conditions. Accounts from *Majelis Dzikir Miftahut Taubah* participants reveal positive changes, including pain reduction, enhanced psychological tranquility, and a heightened conviction that ailments previously resistant to clinical explanation were gradually improving (Jamaah 2026).

These perceived health improvements are understood not as direct clinical proof validating the medical efficacy of *Rātib al-Ḥaddād*, but rather as a religious experience that shapes a collective perception regarding the therapeutic function of *dhikr*. This practice aligns with Prophetic Hadith literature, which is not strictly confined to the application of *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* or *al-Muʿawwidhatayn* (*Sūrah al-Iklāṣ*, *al-Falaq*, and *al-Nās*) (Mardhatillah 2017).

In *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Al-Imām al-Bukhārī designated a chapter titled *Bāb al-Ruqāʾ bi al-Qurʾān wa al-Muʿawwidhatayn* (Chapter on Incantations with the Qur'an and Protective Surahs). The general mention of "the Qur'an" prior to specifying *al-Muʿawwidhatayn* signals a methodological

principle: therapeutic incantations (*ruqyah*) may, in principle, utilize the Qur'an in its entirety, whereas *al-Mu'awwidhatayn* are explicitly highlighted due to their specific virtues emphasized in Prophetic traditions. This chapter structure indicates that verses explicitly named in Hadiths do not restrict therapeutic practice, but rather highlight specific texts of preeminent virtue (Al-Qurtubi 1372).

This interpretation is reinforced by Al-Qurṭubī, who asserts that if Islamic jurisprudence permits the use of *al-Mu'awwidhatayn* for healing, all Qur'anic verses can fundamentally serve as alternative therapeutic media. This holds true because the entire Qur'an represents the Word of God (*kalām Allāh*), containing guidance, divine mercy, and spiritual blessing for believers.

This perspective aligns with research by Khadher Ahmad, who concludes that utilizing Qur'anic verses in *ruqyah* need not be restricted to a single specific chapter. A practitioner (*peruqyah*) may recite an entire surah, combine multiple surahs, or select a thematic sequence of verses tailored to the therapeutic objective. Such practices remain fully compliant with Islamic law, provided they are grounded in the Qur'an and free from theological deviations that undermine monotheism (*tawḥīd*) (Ahmad et al. 2016).

The Qur'anic foundation for this view is anchored in Q.S. al-Isrā' [17]: 82: "*We send down of the Qur'an that which is healing and mercy for the believers.*" This verse demonstrates that the healing capacity (*shifā'*) is an intrinsic attribute of the Qur'an in its entirety, rather than an exclusive property of select verses. Therefore, all Qur'anic verses possess potential efficacy for alternative healing, even though specific verses are more frequently employed due to sound Hadith support or direct contextual relevance to the illness being addressed.

Accordingly, the selection of specific verses in alternative healing is best understood as a form of specialized application (*takhsīṣ al-isti'māl*), rather than a limitation on the universal healing capacity of the Qur'an. For instance, *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* is selected due to its direct Hadith authorization as a *ruqyah* recitation; *Āyat al-Kursī* is recited for spiritual protection; *al-Mu'awwidhatayn* are utilized to ward off satanic disturbances; and verses addressing sorcery, mercy, patience, or inner peace are selected based on the spiritual needs of the individual. Thus, the application of specific verses is based on thematic appropriateness (*munāsabat al-ma'nā*) and jurisprudential guidance, rather than an assumption that other verses lack therapeutic capacity (Hasan 2020).

Framing *Rātib al-Ḥaddād* as a therapeutic medium also derives legitimacy from classical Islamic scholarship. Shaykh 'Abd Allāh bin Aḥmad Bāsūdān al-Kindī explains that the essence of litanies (*ḥizb*, *wirid*, and *rātib*) comprises compilations of *dhikr*, supplications, and spiritual orientation (*tawajjuh*) structured to remember God, seek protection from harm, attain good, and cultivate complete heart presence before God. This explanation indicates that the primary orientation of *Rātib al-Ḥaddād* is not mere physical recovery, but the cultivation of spiritual consciousness as the bedrock of a believer's life.

This position is further reinforced by Shaykh Abū Bakr bin Aḥmad al-Malībārī in *Al-Imdād bi-Sharḥ Rātib al-Ḥaddād*, who recommends the consistent practice of *Rātib al-Ḥaddād*, particularly following the *‘Ishā’* and *Fajr* prayers. Consistency in reciting the litany is viewed as a means to attain divine protection, life blessings, inner tranquility, and divine assistance across all circumstances. Exegetical commentaries on *Rātib al-Ḥaddād* note that those who habituate its recitation obtain protection from perils, blessings in life, and a favorable end to life (*ḥusn al-akhāimah*). Although these assertions reside within the normative-religious realm, they illustrate that *Rātib al-Ḥaddād* was conceptually understood from its inception as a medium for spiritual fortification that yields tangible well-being.

Ultimately, healing practices through the recitation of *Rātib al-Ḥaddād* cannot be reduced to the mechanical use of litanies to treat diseases. Instead, they represent an internalization of Qur’anic values, supplications, and litanies into the lived experience of Muslim communities, synthesizing theological, psychological, and social dimensions. Within *Majelis Dzikir Miftabul Taubah*, this phenomenon demonstrates how sacred texts move beyond static liturgical recitations to become living religious practices—understood as a spiritual endeavor (*ikhtiyār*) for inner peace, protection, and recovery, all anchored in the firm belief that ultimate healing originates solely from God Almighty (Hidayah and Firdausi 2021).

CONCLUSIONS

This study demonstrates that the use and recitation of *Rātib al-Ḥaddād* as a medium of spiritual healing are grounded in an authentic scriptural foundation and are fully legitimized within the framework of Islamic jurisprudence (*sharī‘ah*). The perceived therapeutic benefits for both somatic and non-somatic ailments among the congregants are fundamentally attributed to an increased sense of spiritual closeness (*taqarrub*) to Allah. These healing effects are understood to arise from the intrinsic virtues (*faḍīlah*) of the recited texts and the principle of context-specific application (*takhsīṣ al-isti‘māl*), accompanied by sincere devotion and specific spiritual intentions (*ḥājāt*). Healing is sought directly from Allah through the recitation (*tawassul*) of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah, the *al-Mu‘awwidhāt* (Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ, al-Falaq, and al-Nās), together with prescribed litanies (*dhikr*), supplications (*du‘ā*), and blessings upon the Prophet (*ṣalawāt*). Furthermore, the use of intermediary media, such as water, is not regarded as possessing inherent supernatural power but rather as a permissible physical means (*ikhtiyār shar‘ī*) within the healing process. Its effectiveness ultimately depends on the principle of *tawḥīd* and the firm conviction that Allah alone is *al-Shāfi* (the Ultimate Healer). The principal implication of this study is the establishment of a clear epistemological framework that distinguishes legitimate Islamic spiritual healing from practices that may lead to polytheism (*shirk*), myth (*khurāfāt*), or superstition (*takhayyul*). By adhering to the normative principles derived from the Qur’an, authentic Hadith, and scholarly consensus (*ijmā‘*), the recitation of *Rātib al-Ḥaddād* preserves the theological integrity of the practitioner’s faith (*‘aqidah*). Consequently, the discourse on Islamic medicine should extend beyond an exclusive

concern with physical recovery to emphasize spiritual transformation, thereby reaffirming the Qur'an's essential role as *al-Shifā'*, the ultimate source of healing.

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