



The Performative Power of the Quran: A Phenomenological Study of I'jaz Ta'thiri in Ruqyah Shar'iyah Practices in Bandung, West Java

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Abstract: This study investigates *I'jaz Ta'thiri*, understood as the miraculous or transformative influence of the Qur'an, within the perspective of the Living Quran, particularly through the subjective experiences of patients undergoing Ruqyah Shar'iyah in Bandung, West Java. Employing a qualitative research design and phenomenological approach, the study explores how individuals from different social and professional backgrounds—including musicians, academics, and housewives—experience and interpret the Qur'an during ruqyah practices. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews and analyzed to identify patterns in participants' experiences and meanings. The research demonstrates that the Qur'an is perceived not only as a sacred text to be read and understood but also as a performative force that operates within embodied, psychological, and spiritual experiences. Three principal dimensions of its influence were identified. First, **somatic resonance** refers to bodily responses experienced by participants, including sensations and perceived physical healing that occurred without direct medical intervention. Second, **metaphysical visualization** describes intense inner experiences, such as memories or flashbacks related to past sins and symbolic visions of *Nur* (divine light), which participants associated with their spiritual condition. Third, **psychospiritual transformation** reflects profound changes in emotional and spiritual states, particularly the movement from anxiety, fear, and inner unrest toward tranquility and *Sakinah*. These findings indicate that Ruqyah Shar'iyah practices in Bandung provide a significant example of the Living Quran, in which Qur'anic verses become dynamically integrated into lived religious experiences. The Qur'an consequently functions as an active source of physical, psychological, and spiritual transformation, demonstrating how its meaning and power are continuously constructed through embodied religious practice and individual experience.

Keywords: i'jaz ta'thiri; living quran; ruqyah shar'iyah; phenomenology; spiritual healing.

Introduction

In the diverse and dynamic landscape of Nusantara Islam, the interaction between Muslims and the Qur'an extends far beyond the boundaries of doctrinal exegesis and textual memorization. The scripture is perceived not merely as a passive object of study but as a "living entity" that interacts continuously with the social, psychological, and spiritual realities of believers. This distinct mode of interaction implies that the text is not silent; it speaks, acts, and influences the daily lives of its adherents in tangible ways.

This phenomenon, widely conceptualized by scholars as the "Living Qur'an," highlights the functional reception of the text, distinguishing it from mere exegetical understanding. In this

framework, Quranic verses are utilized for pragmatic purposes such as protection (*hifz*), blessing (*tabarruk*), and, most notably, healing (*syifa*) (Mansur, 2007). Within the Indonesian context, the Qur'an is understood to possess an ontological agency—a spiritual power that can intervene in the physical world to resolve human problems. One of the most prominent and rapidly growing manifestations of this functional reception in contemporary Indonesia is the practice of *Ruqyah Shar'iyah*. Historically viewed primarily as a traditional ritual for exorcism to expel jinn, *Ruqyah* has undergone a significant transformation in the post-Reformasi era (Kelk, 2013). It has evolved from a marginal practice into a systematized alternative therapy, gaining broad acceptance across various social strata. This shift is particularly visible in urban centers like Bandung, West Java, a city known for its creative industries and intellectual institutions. In this specific urban setting, *Ruqyah* is no longer confined to rural traditionalism but has been embraced by the modern middle class. The demographic of patients has diversified significantly, ranging from academicians and medical professionals to musicians and artists who seek spiritual solutions for their ailments (Howell, 2001; Liem, 2020).

The increasing reliance on *Ruqyah* in Bandung signals a "spiritual turn" where urban Muslims are disillusioned by the limitations of conventional medicine in treating psychosomatic illnesses and existential distress. Amidst rapid urbanization and rising cases of anxiety and depression, the Islamic framework offers a comforting narrative. It reframes these struggles not just as medical pathologies, but as spiritual tests, encouraging believers to seek healing through faith and scripture (Elshamy et al., 2023; Razali et al., 2018). Despite the sociological prevalence and clinical significance of these practices, academic discourse on the *I'jaz* (miraculous nature) of the Qur'an has remained somewhat rigid. Traditional and contemporary scholarship has overwhelmingly focused on *I'jaz Bayani* (linguistic inimitability). For instance, recent studies have meticulously analyzed the rhetorical eloquence in the story of Maryam or the grammatical precision of Quranic narratives to prove its divine origin (Nurhayat et al., 2025).

Similarly, another dominant stream of scholarship focuses on *I'jaz Ilmi* (scientific compatibility). These studies attempt to correlate Quranic verses with modern discoveries in fields such as embryology, astronomy, or geology (Mustafti, 2021). While these approaches are valuable for apologetic purposes, they tend to intellectualize the Qur'an, treating it as a source of information rather than a source of transformation. Consequently, there is a significant scarcity of research addressing *I'jaz Ta'thiri*—the miraculous influence of the Qur'an on the human soul (psyche) and body (soma). The performative dimension—how the sound, rhythm, and meaning of the verses impact the listener's consciousness—remains a marginal topic in Quranic studies. The psychological and emotional impacts, such as the ability to evoke feelings of peace or induce somatic reactions, are often overlooked in favor of linguistic analysis.

The concept of *I'jaz* in Quranic studies has traditionally been dominated by *I'jaz Bayani* (linguistic inimitability) and *I'jaz Ilmi* (scientific compatibility). However, *I'jaz Ta'tsirī* represents a distinct dimension that refers to the unique emotional and psychological impact of the Qur'anic verses on the human soul (*nafs*). Unlike the linguistic approach that focuses on the structure of the text, *I'jaz Ta'tsirī* emphasizes the reception of the text—how it profoundly influences the feelings, mental state, and spiritual perception of listeners, leading to experiences of serenity (*Sakinah*), contemplation, and a connection with the Divine (Rusdi et al., 2024). Scholars argue that this impact is not merely cognitive but somatic and emotional. The rhythmic recitation (*Tajweed*) acts as an acoustic driver that engages the listener's heart and mind, creating a resonance that is difficult to replicate through other forms of communication (Nayef & Wahab, 2018). This auditory experience suggests a strong correlation between Qur'anic recitation and positive psychological outcomes, serving as a non-pharmacological intervention for mental distress (Rozali et al., 2022). Therefore, *I'jaz Ta'tsirī* is not just about the "beauty" of the language, but its "power" to act as a healing agent (*Syifa*), addressing the cognitive, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of human experience (Ghazali et al., 2024).

To analyze the mechanism of this impact, this study synthesizes William James's theory of *Religious Experience* with J.L. Austin's concept of *Performativity*. William James, in his seminal work *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, provides a pragmatic framework to validate the subjective experiences of believers. James posits that religious experiences should be judged not by their dogmatic origins but by their "fruits"—their practical effects on personal well-being.

Central to this study is James's concept of "Noetic Quality," which refers to states of insight where individuals perceive deep truths or revelations (such as visualizations of sins or divine light) that carry a sense of authority and reality (James, 1902). Furthermore, James's notion of "Passivity" explains the phenomenon where the subject feels their will is held in abeyance by a superior power (Dein, 2010), a common feature in *Ruqyah* where patients experience involuntary somatic reactions.

Complementing James, J.L. Austin's *Speech Act Theory* explains how the recitation functions as a healing mechanism. Austin distinguishes between "constative" utterances (describing reality) and "performative" utterances (doing something with words) (Austin, 1962). In the context of *Ruqyah*, reciting verses is not merely reading a text; it is an illocutionary act of "curing" or "protecting." This theoretical lens allows us to understand *Ruqyah* not just as a prayer, but as a performative event where the *Living Quran* actively restructures the patient's reality, transforming psychological distress into spiritual fortitude (Murtadlo et al., 2023). The practice of *Ruqyah Shar'iyah* in Indonesia serves as a prime example of the "Living Quran"—a concept where the scripture is functionally received and practiced in daily life beyond textual exegesis (Mansur, 2007). In the specific context of urban centers like Bandung, *Ruqyah* has evolved from a traditional ritual associated with rural shamanism into a popular alternative therapy integrated with modern mental health needs. This shift reflects a sociological phenomenon where the urban middle class seeks to reconcile medical ailments with spiritual solutions (Rahmani & Aziz, 2024).

In this urban landscape, *Ruqyah* is viewed as a functional engagement where the Quran is treated as a living entity capable of interacting with the believer's life. The practice involves a "thematic reception," where specific verses are selected to address specific psychological or physical issues, reinforcing the belief that the Quran possesses an ontological agency to heal. This context creates a unique psychospiritual ecosystem where community bonds are strengthened, and mental health struggles are reframed through a theological lens, providing patients with a culturally coherent pathway to recovery (Annisa et al., 2025; Suteja et al., 2024).

This gap is problematic because it ignores the lived reality of millions of Muslims who experience the Qur'an not as a linguistic puzzle, but as a vibrating force that heals. To date, phenomenological studies that document the subjective experiences of individuals engaging with the Qur'an are relatively scarce (Subu et al., 2022). There is a pressing need to shift the analytical focus from the text's literary structure to its phenomenological reception, exploring the *Erlebnis* (lived experience) of the subjects themselves (Saibin et al., 2024). This study aims to bridge this academic gap by analyzing the performative power of the Qur'an within the *Ruqyah* praxis in Bandung. Using a phenomenological approach, this research argues that the Qur'an functions as an active agent that restructures the subject's internal reality. By examining in-depth interview data from patients with diverse backgrounds, this study identifies three core dimensions of Quranic influence: somatic resonance (bodily reactions), metaphysical visualization (mental imagery), and psychospiritual transformation (the shift to *Sakinah*), thereby framing *I'jaz Ta'thiri* as an empirical phenomenon in the Living Qur'an.

Method

This study employs a qualitative research design with a phenomenological approach to explore the subjective nature of *I'jaz Ta'thiri* (the miraculous influence of the Quran). Phenomenology was selected as the most appropriate framework because the primary objective is to capture the "lived experience" (*Erlebnis*) of the subjects, focusing on how they perceive, internalize, and make sense of the Quranic recitation during the healing process. By adopting this approach, the researcher attempts to describe the essence of the phenomenon by bracketing (*epoché*) personal preconceptions, allowing the consciousness of the *Ruqyah* patients to manifest authentically (Creswell, 2015; Moustakas, 1994).

The research was conducted in Bandung, West Java, a strategic locus chosen to represent the dynamics of urban Muslim society where traditional healing practices intersect with modern lifestyles. The participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, adhering to

specific criteria: (1) individuals who have undergone *Ruqyah Shar'iyah* therapy, (2) individuals who reported significant somatic or psychospiritual reactions, and (3) willingness to articulate their internal experiences. This sampling strategy ensures that the selected informants possess the specific knowledge and experience relevant to the research questions (Patton, 2002; Sugiyono, 2013).

The study involved 10 key informants from diverse socio-economic and educational backgrounds, ranging in age from 21 to 56 years. This demographic diversity is crucial to demonstrate that the reception of *Ruqyah* cuts across social strata. The subjects include Academic Professionals (Informant SP, teacher and writer with anxiety), Creative Industry Professionals (Informant JP, a musician suffering from stroke), Private Sector Employees (Informant OUA, DW, ANFA, HA), Entrepreneurs (Informant MOS, ABU), and Housewives (Informant ET). This variety provides a comprehensive dataset reflecting the "Urban Sufism" phenomenon in Bandung (Liem, 2020).

Data collection was carried out through in-depth, semi-structured interviews and participatory observation during *Ruqyah* sessions. The interview protocol was designed to probe three specific temporal phases: the *pre-ruqyah* condition (medical and psychological state), the *intra-ruqyah* experience (somatic sensations, metaphysical visualizations, and emotional responses during recitation), and the *post-ruqyah* transformation (behavioral changes and spiritual states). All interviews were recorded, transcribed verbatim, and cross-verified with the participants to ensure the accuracy of the narrative data (Kvale, 1996; Yin, 2018).

Data Analysis The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of three concurrent flows of activity: Data Condensation, Data Display, and Conclusion Drawing/Verification. In the condensation phase, raw transcripts were focused and abstracted to identify core themes related to *I'jaz Ta'thiri*, such as somatic resonance and visual imagery. These themes were then displayed in narrative matrices to visualize patterns across different respondents. Finally, conclusions were drawn and verified through triangulation of sources to ensure the trustworthiness and transferability of the findings (Miles et al., 2014).

Results and Discussion

Drawing on phenomenological findings obtained through in-depth interviews with ten respondents, this study shows that *Ruqyah Shar'iyah* practices in Bandung reveal the Qur'anic recitation as a performative religious practice that extends beyond the conventional transmission and interpretation of sacred texts. For the participants, Qur'anic verses were not experienced merely as verbal expressions conveying religious meaning, but as active elements capable of generating tangible bodily, psychological, and spiritual responses. These experiences illustrate the manifestation of *I'jaz Ta'thiri*, namely the perceived miraculous influence of the Qur'an as encountered within lived religious experience. The findings indicate that this influence can be understood through three interconnected dimensions.

First, **Somatic Resonance** refers to bodily reactions that emerge during or after the recitation of Qur'anic verses, including sensations of discomfort, relief, changes in bodily condition, and perceived physical responses. Second, **Metaphysical Visualization** concerns participants' experiences of vivid inner perceptions, symbolic images, memories, or spiritual impressions that arise during the *ruqyah* process. Such experiences are interpreted by participants as manifestations of an unseen dimension encountered through Qur'anic recitation. Third, **Psychospiritual Transformation** describes changes in participants' emotional and spiritual conditions, particularly the transition from fear, anxiety, psychological distress, or inner tension toward feelings of calmness, reassurance, and spiritual peace. Collectively, these dimensions demonstrate that Qur'anic recitation within *Ruqyah Shar'iyah* operates as an embodied and transformative practice. The Qur'an is therefore encountered not solely as a written or spoken text, but as a living source of meaning whose perceived influence unfolds through bodily sensations, inner experiences, and profound spiritual transformation. This phenomenon reinforces the relevance of the Living Quran perspective in understanding how sacred scripture functions within contemporary Muslim religious practices.

The Somatic Resonance: Body Reaction to the Sacred Text

The first dimension of *I'jaz Ta'thiri* identified in this study is somatic resonance, referring to the physical and bodily responses experienced by participants during the recitation of Qur'anic verses in *Ruqyah Shar'iyah*. The phenomenological data indicate that participants did not experience the Qur'an solely through intellectual understanding or emotional reflection. Instead, the recitation was accompanied by various immediate bodily sensations, including warmth, coldness, trembling, changes in muscular tension, sensations of internal movement, nausea, and other involuntary physical reactions. Within the participants' interpretations, these bodily experiences represented an important manifestation of the perceived transformative power of the Qur'an. Thus, Qur'anic recitation appeared to operate not merely as a verbal transmission of sacred meaning but also as an embodied religious experience (Ghiasi & Keramat, 2018).

One significant example is provided by respondent JP, a musician who had experienced a stroke accompanied by paralysis. During the *Ruqyah Shar'iyah* sessions, JP described a distinctive sensation in his body, particularly around his brain and heart. He explained that the recitation made these parts of his body feel as though they were being "massaged," accompanied by a sense of warmth. According to his account, these sensations became meaningful when considered alongside the gradual improvement he experienced throughout the treatment process. By the fourth session, he reported being able to walk without relying on a cane. From his perspective, the physical changes were closely associated with his experience of Qur'anic recitation during the ruqyah process. Although such an account represents a subjective experience rather than clinical evidence of medical causation, it demonstrates how participants construct meaning around the relationship between sacred recitation and bodily transformation.

The experience of respondent JP illustrates the way in which the Qur'an may be understood within the framework of *Syifa*, or healing. In Islamic tradition, the Qur'an is frequently associated with healing and restoration, particularly in relation to spiritual and psychological conditions. In the context of this study, however, the concept of *Syifa* is not limited to an abstract theological proposition. It becomes part of the lived experience of participants who perceive bodily changes while listening to or receiving Qur'anic recitation. The sound of the verses becomes an important medium through which participants experience the sacred text. Consequently, the Qur'an is encountered as something that can be heard, felt, and embodied rather than merely read or interpreted.

A comparable experience was reported by respondent Ibu ET, aged 62. During the ruqyah process, she described experiencing an intense sensation of heat that she characterized as almost unbearable. This sensation changed dramatically when the *Raqi* recited verses associated by her with divine mercy. She subsequently experienced a feeling similar to being splashed with cold water. The transition from excessive heat to physical coolness was interpreted by the respondent as a meaningful bodily response to the Qur'anic verses being recited. What is important phenomenologically is not to establish the objective medical origin of the sensation, but to understand how the participant experienced and interpreted it. For ET, the bodily transformation became part of her perception of the Qur'an as an active and spiritually meaningful presence within the ruqyah ritual (Moulaei et al., 2023).

A similar pattern emerged in the experience of respondent SP. Before and during the initial stages of ruqyah, SP reported sensations of moving heat accompanied by trembling. These physical reactions were connected to the anxiety that he experienced. As the recitation continued, however, the sensations gradually diminished and were replaced by a feeling of coolness and tranquility. This transition illustrates the close relationship between bodily sensations and emotional states in the participants' experiences. The body became a significant site through which psychological and spiritual changes were perceived. Rather than separating physical experience from emotional and religious experience, participants understood them as interconnected dimensions of the same process.

These findings suggest that somatic resonance in *Ruqyah Shar'iyah* involves a complex interaction between bodily perception, emotional condition, religious belief, and the ritual context of Qur'anic recitation. The participants' accounts demonstrate that the body is not merely a passive recipient of religious practice. It becomes an active medium through which sacred experience is recognized and interpreted. The physical reactions reported by participants also

vary considerably. Some experienced warmth or coldness, while others reported trembling, nausea, internal movement, or changes in bodily tension. Such diversity indicates that the perceived influence of Qur'anic recitation does not follow a single uniform pattern. Instead, its manifestation is shaped by each participant's individual condition, history, expectations, and interpretation (Saged et al., 2020).

This dimension can also be connected to William James's discussion of religious experience, particularly the phenomenon of passivity, in which individuals experience certain religious states as occurring beyond their conscious control. In the context of the present study, several participants described bodily reactions that appeared involuntary. Respondent HA, for example, experienced sensations associated with vomiting during the ruqyah process. Rather than deliberately producing the reaction, the participant perceived it as something that emerged spontaneously in response to the recitation. Similarly, respondent ABU described a bodily experience that he interpreted as a weakening or paralysis of an arrogant bodily posture. These experiences were understood by the participants as signs that something beyond ordinary conscious intention was occurring within them.

From the phenomenological perspective, such experiences are important because they reveal how participants perceive the Qur'an as possessing a form of agency within their lived religious world. The text is not experienced simply as an object that is read by a subject. Instead, the relationship becomes dynamic: the subject listens to the Qur'an, responds bodily to the recitation, interprets those responses, and subsequently reconstructs the meaning of the experience. In this sense, *I'jaz Ta'thiri* becomes visible through the reciprocal relationship between sacred text, ritual performance, bodily sensation, and subjective interpretation. Nevertheless, the findings should not be interpreted as establishing a direct biomedical mechanism through which Qur'anic sound mechanically produces cellular healing. The expressions concerning sound vibration, the nervous system, or internal organs are better understood within the participants' experiential and interpretive frameworks unless independently supported by medical or physiological evidence. The principal significance of these findings lies in demonstrating how Qur'anic recitation is experienced as physically consequential within the religious practice of ruqyah. The body becomes a site where sacred meaning is perceived, negotiated, and embodied (Zarea Gavvani et al., 2022).

Therefore, somatic resonance represents an important manifestation of *I'jaz Ta'thiri* in the Living Quran. Through experiences of warmth, coolness, trembling, nausea, bodily relaxation, and perceived physical recovery, participants encounter the Qur'an as a living and performative scripture. These experiences demonstrate that the Qur'an, within *Ruqyah Shar'iyah*, is not confined to textual or doctrinal dimensions. It becomes embedded in bodily experience and contributes to the participants' understanding of healing, spiritual intervention, and transformation. The somatic dimension consequently illustrates how the Living Quran operates through the embodied experiences of believers, where sacred recitation acquires significance through what the body feels, undergoes, and ultimately interprets as meaningful transformation.

Visualizing the Unseen: From 'Flashback' of Sins to 'Nur'

A significant dimension identified in this study is metaphysical visualization, namely the emergence of intense inner imagery and *noetic* experiences during the practice of *Ruqyah Shar'iyah*. The phenomenological accounts indicate that several respondents encountered vivid images, symbolic scenes, and spiritual figures that were experienced as more than ordinary imagination. For the participants, these experiences possessed a strong sense of reality and meaning, and some interpreted them as a form of spiritual unveiling (*kasyf*). In this context, visualization became an important medium through which participants interpreted their spiritual condition, confronted their past behavior, and experienced a renewed relationship with the sacred. Two major patterns emerged from the data: the visualization and objectification of personal sins and the manifestation of sacred imagery, particularly experiences associated with *Nur* or divine light and revered religious figures (Irmawati et al., 2020).

The first pattern concerns the objectification of sins through visual imagery. Several participants, particularly HA and JP, reported experiencing vivid representations of events from their past during the ruqyah process. These memories did not appear simply as ordinary

recollections. Instead, participants described them as highly structured sequences resembling a slideshow, film, or moving images. Respondent HA, for instance, explained that the scenes appeared in an organized manner rather than as random or confused images. He particularly recalled scenes associated with arrogance and other behaviors that he subsequently recognized as sinful. The experience created an impression that his past actions were being presented before him as if he were observing his own history from an external position.

Phenomenologically, this experience is significant because the visualization transformed an abstract moral concept into an immediate and emotionally compelling experience. Sin, which may ordinarily be understood through religious teachings, sermons, or intellectual reflection, became something that participants could symbolically “see.” The past was therefore reconstructed as a visible moral landscape. Through this process, participants were encouraged to confront aspects of themselves that they might previously have ignored, minimized, or forgotten. The visualization functioned as a kind of mirror of the soul, allowing individuals to encounter their own moral history and recognize the consequences of their behavior.

This process is closely related to the concept of *Tawbah*, or repentance, in Islamic spirituality. Repentance requires recognition of wrongdoing, remorse, and an orientation toward transformation. The visualization of past sins appears to contribute to this process by intensifying self-awareness. Rather than merely knowing intellectually that certain actions were wrong, participants experienced their past behavior in a more immediate and emotionally charged form. The resulting awareness could generate feelings of regret, humility, and the desire to correct one’s relationship with God. In this sense, metaphysical visualization may be understood as a mechanism through which religious knowledge becomes existentially meaningful (Rababa et al., 2025).

The second pattern involves the manifestation of sacred imagery, particularly experiences involving *Nur* or light. Respondent ANFA, aged 22, reported experiencing a vision of what he described as a natural or extraordinary light. The experience was perceived as more beautiful and meaningful than worldly forms of material wealth. The imagery subsequently influenced his understanding of worldly desires and spiritual priorities. Rather than being attracted by symbolic representations of wealth, such as palaces, the participant experienced a movement toward the divine presence. This experience was associated with the spiritual expression *Ilahi Anta Maqsudi*, which conveys the orientation of the seeker toward God as the ultimate object of desire.

The significance of this experience lies in the transformation of value perception. Material wealth, which ordinarily carries social and psychological attraction, became comparatively insignificant in relation to the perceived sacred light. The visualization therefore did not remain at the level of visual sensation. It generated a reinterpretation of what the participant considered valuable and desirable. In this respect, *Nur* functioned as a symbolic representation of divine presence, guidance, purity, and spiritual orientation. The experience contributed to a shift from attachment to worldly representations toward a stronger desire for transcendence. An even more profound form of metaphysical visualization appeared in the experiences reported by respondents MOS, Ibu ET, and HA, who described encounters with a figure that they intuitively associated with Prophet Muhammad SAW. Respondent Ibu ET, for example, reported seeing a figure described as a handsome and perfect man with shoulder-length hair. Rather than generating fear, the encounter produced an intense feeling of peace and emotional security. Respondent MOS similarly described seeing a silhouette that he interpreted as the Prophet sitting and praying. The experience was accompanied by an overwhelming feeling of love, safety, and spiritual reassurance (Jayus et al., 2017).

These accounts demonstrate how sacred imagery may operate as an emotionally transformative experience. The participants did not simply report seeing a visual figure; they attached profound religious meaning to the experience. The imagery became inseparable from feelings of peace, love, protection, and spiritual closeness. As a result, visualization functioned as a bridge between perception and belief. The perceived encounter reinforced the participants’ emotional connection to Islamic sacred figures and contributed to a transformation in their spiritual state. From a phenomenological perspective, it is important to distinguish between evaluating the objective existence of these visual experiences and understanding their subjective meaning. Phenomenological analysis does not require the researcher to establish whether a

particular image objectively occurred in the external world. Instead, the central question concerns how the experience appeared to consciousness, how it was interpreted by the participant, and what consequences it produced in the person's lived world. Therefore, the participants' experiences should not be reduced automatically to hallucination or dismissed as imagination. Within their own experiential frameworks, the images possessed a strong sense of reality and spiritual significance (Nasiri et al., 2017).

The concept of *noetic* experience is particularly useful in this context because it refers to experiences perceived as carrying knowledge or insight. The participants frequently interpreted their visual experiences as revealing something about their spiritual condition. The visualization of sins generated moral awareness, while experiences of *Nur* or sacred figures generated feelings of divine proximity, peace, and renewed faith. Thus, the imagery was not merely decorative or sensory. It was understood as meaningful knowledge that had consequences for the participants' beliefs and behavior. Nevertheless, the designation of these experiences as "veridical hallucinations" requires careful methodological consideration. The term should not be used to establish the objective truth of the visions, particularly when such claims cannot be independently verified. A more cautious phenomenological formulation is to describe them as lived imaginal experiences or spiritually interpreted visual experiences. What can be established from the interview data is that participants experienced these images with considerable intensity and interpreted them as spiritually authoritative. Their significance therefore lies in their transformative effect rather than in an empirical determination of their external ontological status (Aburuz et al., 2023).

Within the framework of the Living Quran, metaphysical visualization illustrates how Qur'anic recitation can generate experiences that extend beyond textual comprehension. The Qur'an becomes a catalyst for encounters with personal memory, moral consciousness, symbolic imagery, and sacred meaning. Through the visualization of sins, participants confront their past and move toward repentance; through the experience of *Nur*, they reconsider worldly values; and through perceived encounters with sacred figures, they experience heightened feelings of love, peace, and spiritual security. Consequently, metaphysical visualization constitutes a significant manifestation of *I'jaz Ta'thiri*. It demonstrates that the perceived influence of Qur'anic recitation may operate through the imaginative and noetic dimensions of consciousness, transforming how individuals perceive themselves, their past, worldly values, and their relationship with the sacred. In the context of *Ruqyah Shar'iyah*, these experiences reveal the Qur'an as a living scripture whose meaning is continually actualized through embodied consciousness, spiritual interpretation, and profound personal transformation (Nursyah & Apriliawati, 2025).

Psychospiritual Transformation: From Anxiety to Sakinah

The third and most profound dimension of *I'jaz Ta'thiri* identified in this study is psychospiritual transformation, which refers to the restructuring of the subject's psychological, emotional, and spiritual condition following the experience of Qur'anic recitation in *Ruqyah Shar'iyah*. Unlike the first dimension, which is primarily manifested through bodily sensations, and the second, which emerges through vivid inner imagery and metaphysical visualization, this dimension concerns the deeper transformation of the individual's inner orientation. The phenomenological data demonstrate a recurring movement from emotional distress, fear, anxiety, anger, and psychological tension toward tranquility, patience, confidence, spiritual awareness, and *Sakinah*. Within the participants' experiences, Qur'anic recitation was not merely understood as a religious utterance but as a performative practice capable of reshaping how they experienced themselves, their emotions, and their relationship with God (Riedenauer, 2019).

One of the clearest examples can be found in the experience of respondent SP, who previously struggled with severe anxiety and an intense fear of death. His condition had significantly influenced his everyday life, including his ability to travel and sleep peacefully. During the ruqyah process, however, SP experienced a gradual reduction in the intensity of his fear. Qur'anic recitation became associated with a sense of emotional release and inner security. According to his account, the fear that had previously dominated his thoughts gradually lost its power, enabling him to travel and sleep with greater calmness. He interpreted this transformation

as a significant change in his worldview. The experience demonstrates that the impact of ruqyah was not confined to the immediate ritual setting but extended into ordinary activities and patterns of daily life (Rafiq, 2021).

From a phenomenological perspective, the importance of this experience lies in the transformation of the participant's lived world. Anxiety is not simply an isolated emotion; it can shape how an individual perceives time, space, relationships, bodily sensations, and future possibilities. A person dominated by fear of death may interpret ordinary circumstances as potential threats and consequently restrict everyday activities. When that fear decreases, the world may become experienced as more open, manageable, and secure. In SP's case, the reported ability to travel and sleep peacefully suggests that the transformation affected his practical engagement with the world. The Qur'anic recitation was therefore experienced as contributing to a restructuring of his emotional orientation toward life. A similar transformation was observed in relation to anger or *ghadab*. Respondents ET and JP reported changes in the way they responded to emotionally provoking situations after participating in ruqyah. Respondent ET, in particular, described a shift from reacting to anger with anger toward remaining silent and practicing patience. This change was associated by the respondent with the recitation of verses concerning the restraint of anger, particularly the Qur'anic expression *wal-kāzīmīna al-ghayẓ*, referring to those who restrain their anger. The significance of this account is that the effect of Qur'anic recitation was perceived not only as an internal emotional sensation but also as a transformation of behavioral patterns (Dawson, 2004).

The experience of ET demonstrates the relationship between Qur'anic meaning and performative transformation. The verse concerning the restraint of anger was not merely understood as a moral instruction. Through repeated recitation and ritual experience, it became incorporated into the participant's emotional response. Instead of automatically reproducing anger through verbal retaliation, the participant reported developing a tendency toward silence, patience, and emotional restraint. The sacred text consequently became operational in everyday conduct. This illustrates how the Living Quran can be studied not only through what people say about the Qur'an but also through what the Qur'an is perceived to make them do (Ali, 2015). The emergence of *Sakinah* constitutes the central feature of this psychospiritual transformation. Participants did not describe tranquility merely as the absence of negative emotion. Rather, they portrayed it as a distinct experiential state characterized by inner stillness, security, acceptance, and spiritual connectedness. Respondent HA offered a particularly insightful distinction between *lapang*, or a sense of inner spaciousness, and *tenang*, or tranquility. According to his description, tranquility was comparable to water that had ceased to ripple. This metaphor indicates a profound phenomenological quality: the mind is no longer dominated by agitation, conflict, or emotional turbulence. Instead, consciousness enters a state of relative stillness (Bronkhorst, 2022).

This distinction is theoretically important because it demonstrates that psychospiritual transformation cannot be reduced simply to "feeling better." The participants described qualitative changes in their consciousness. *Lapang* suggested an expansion or release from psychological pressure, whereas *tenang* represented a deeper stabilization of the inner self. The latter was associated with *Sakinah*, a condition in which emotional disturbance subsides and the individual experiences a stronger sense of security. The experience was frequently accompanied by feelings of being loved, protected, or guided by a transcendent presence. The sense of being "loved" and "guided" further demonstrates the spiritual dimension of the transformation. Participants did not interpret tranquility solely in psychological terms. Instead, they connected their new emotional state to a renewed relationship with God. The experience of *Sakinah* therefore involved both affective and theological dimensions. Emotional calmness became evidence, within the participants' interpretive frameworks, of divine care and spiritual direction. This illustrates the inseparability of psychological experience and religious meaning in the lived practice of *Ruqyah Shar'iyah* (Louchakova-Schwartz, 2022).

An additional dimension of transformation appears in the account of respondent ABU, who reported experiencing what he understood as *Ilham*, or intuitive spiritual insight. According to his experience, he gained a new understanding of certain Qur'anic verses that he had previously found difficult to comprehend. This suggests that the perceived influence of Qur'anic recitation was not limited to emotional regulation but could also involve changes in cognitive

and spiritual clarity. The participant experienced an increased capacity to perceive meaning within verses that had previously appeared obscure. The experience of *Ilham* should, however, be approached carefully within academic analysis. Phenomenologically, the researcher can establish that the participant experienced a sudden or intuitive sense of understanding and attributed that understanding to the spiritual process. The researcher does not necessarily need to determine whether the knowledge originated from a supernatural source. What is analytically important is that the participant experienced the insight as meaningful and transformative. The experience consequently contributed to a stronger sense of connection with the Qur'an and reinforced the perception that Qur'anic recitation can affect consciousness at multiple levels (DeRoo, 2018).

When the three dimensions identified in this study are considered together, a broader pattern of transformation becomes visible. The process may begin with somatic resonance, in which the body reacts to Qur'anic recitation through sensations such as warmth, coldness, trembling, or other involuntary responses. It may then develop into metaphysical visualization, through which participants confront images of their past sins or encounter sacred imagery such as *Nur*. Finally, these experiences may culminate in psychospiritual transformation, characterized by emotional regulation, moral reflection, cognitive clarity, and the emergence of *Sakinah*. These dimensions are therefore not necessarily isolated phenomena but can be understood as interconnected stages within participants' lived experiences. This pattern can be interpreted as a process of deconstruction and reconstruction of the self. At the initial stage, bodily discomfort and involuntary reactions may disrupt the individual's ordinary sense of control. The visualization of sins subsequently confronts the individual with aspects of the self that require acknowledgment and repentance. The experience of *Nur*, sacred imagery, and divine guidance then provides a symbolic framework for reconstructing identity around new spiritual values. Finally, the emergence of *Sakinah* represents the stabilization of this transformed self in a state of greater emotional and spiritual equilibrium (Cole-Turner, 2021).

From the perspective of the Living Quran, these findings demonstrate that the Qur'an functions as a living and performative text within the practice of *Ruqyah Shar'iyah*. Its significance is not exhausted by its textual content or exegetical interpretation. Rather, its verses become active within ritual practice, bodily experience, consciousness, emotional regulation, and behavioral transformation. The Qur'an is experienced as something that does not merely communicate meaning but also produces consequences in the lives of those who engage with it. This interpretation can be connected to the performative theory of J. L. Austin, particularly the idea that certain utterances do not merely describe reality but participate in bringing about an action or transformation. In the context of this research, Qur'anic recitation is experienced as having performative consequences because it is perceived to alter the subject's bodily condition, emotional state, moral awareness, and spiritual orientation. Nevertheless, the concept should be applied analytically rather than as proof of a supernatural causal mechanism. The empirical contribution of the study lies in demonstrating how participants themselves experience and interpret the recitation as transformative (Cottingham, 2023).

Thus, *I'jaz Ta'thiri* within *Ruqyah Shar'iyah* can be understood as a lived process through which the Qur'an becomes dynamically present in the believer's consciousness and everyday life. The movement from *huzn* and *khauf* toward *Sakinah* illustrates the deepest form of transformation reported by the participants. The Qur'an is experienced as dismantling destructive emotional patterns, confronting the ego, encouraging repentance, regulating behavior, and cultivating spiritual tranquility. In this sense, the Bandung ruqyah experience provides a significant example of how the Qur'an operates as a Living Text: not simply as an object of reading and interpretation, but as a sacred discourse whose recitation is perceived by believers to participate actively in the reconstruction of their psychological, moral, and spiritual reality.

Conclusion

This phenomenological study confirms that the practice of *Ruqyah Shar'iyah* in Bandung serves as a vivid manifestation of the *Living Quran*, where the scripture functions not merely as a text to be read but as an ontological agency that actively intervenes in the believer's reality. The research

validates the existence of *I'jaz Ta'thiri* (miraculous influence) through three observable dimensions: somatic resonance, where the recitation acts as an acoustic driver triggering biological reactions without physical intervention; metaphysical visualization, where subjects experience "noetic" imagery ranging from the objectification of sins to encounters with the sacred (*Nur*); and psychospiritual transformation, which facilitates a profound shift from anxiety to *Sakinah* (tranquility). Theoretically, these findings challenge the secular demarcation between text and experience. By validating the subjects' narratives through William James's framework of religious experience and J.L. Austin's performativity, this study argues that Quranic recitation is a "performative act" that restructures human consciousness. In the urban context of Bandung, *Ruqyah* has transcended its traditional role as exorcism to become a holistic alternative therapy. It offers a spiritual sanctuary for modern individuals—from academicians to musicians—who seek to reconcile medical ailments and psychological distress with their faith. Consequently, this study implies that the miracle of the Quran is not confined to its linguistic structure (*Bayani*) or scientific compatibility (*Ilmi*), but is perpetually renewed through its therapeutic impact on the human soul. While this research is limited to a phenomenological inquiry within a specific demographic, it opens avenues for future interdisciplinary studies, particularly in neurotheology, to scientifically measure the physiological correlates of these spiritual transformations.

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