



# Reconstructing the Concept of *Syifa'* in the Quran: A Comparative Analysis of Spirituality and Holistic Health

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## Article Information:

Received May 7, 2026

Revised June 8, 2026

Accepted July 2, 2026

**Keywords:** *Syifa'*, *Quranic healing*, *spirituality*, *holistic health*, *comparative exegesis*

## Abstract

The concept of *syifa'* (healing) occupies a significant place in the Quran and remains highly relevant to contemporary discussions on spirituality, mental well-being, and holistic health. Although the Quran explicitly presents itself as a source of *syifa'*, Muslim exegetes have offered diverse interpretations regarding the nature, scope, and function of healing within the Quranic framework. This article aims to reconstruct the concept of *syifa'* in the Quran through a comparative analysis of the interpretations of M. Quraish Shihab in *Tafsir Al-Mishbah* and Wahbah al-Zuhaili in *Tafsir Al-Munir*. Employing a qualitative approach with *content analysis* and the *tafsir muqaran* (comparative exegesis) method, the study examines Quranic verses containing the term *syifa'* alongside relevant exegetical and scholarly sources. The analysis reveals that both exegetes regard Allah as the ultimate source of healing and conceptualize *syifa'* as a comprehensive process encompassing physical, psychological, spiritual, and moral dimensions. However, their interpretive emphases differ: Quraish Shihab highlights the psychosocial and spiritual aspects of healing, whereas Wahbah al-Zuhaili places greater emphasis on its normative and educational dimensions. These findings demonstrate that *syifa'* represents a holistic and integrative Quranic model of healing, contributing to the growing scholarship on Quranic healing and offering a conceptual framework for strengthening spirituality, holistic health, and human well-being in contemporary society.

## INTRODUCTION

For Muslims, the Quran serves not only as a source of teachings on faith, Sharia, and morality, but also as a guide that provides inner peace, spiritual guidance, and solutions to various problems in human life (Husna et al., 2025). One important concept that reflects this function is *syifa'*, which is explicitly mentioned in the Quran to describe the healing dimension contained in Allah's revelation (Fateha & Mansur, 2025; Padilah et al., 2024). From a Quranic perspective, healing is not merely understood as physical recovery but also encompasses psychological, spiritual, and

## How to cite:

Prasetya, R., Mutathahirin, M., Saidi, N. S. B. (2026). Reconstructing the Concept of *Syifa'* in the Quran: A Comparative Analysis of Spirituality and Holistic Health. *Al-Fanar: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir*, 9(2), 78-88.

## E-ISSN:

2622-4658

## Published by:

The Department of Qur'anic Exegesis of the Faculty of Usuluddin and Dakwa, Institut Ilmu Al-Qur'an (IIQ) Jakarta

moral aspects that are closely linked to human well-being as a whole (Ihsan & Bramasta, 2026). Therefore, the concept of *syifa'* is highly relevant in contemporary discourse, which is increasingly focusing on the relationship between spirituality, mental health, and holistic health (Al-Qattan et al., 1992; Fuad, 2016).

Linguistically, *syifa'* derives from the root *syafa-yasyfi-syifa'an*, which means to heal, to cure a disease, or to restore a disturbed condition. In its usage within the Quran, this term appears in various contexts that demonstrate the breadth of its meaning and the scope of its function. Some verses associate *syifa'* with physical healing, while others position the Quran as a healer of ailments of the heart, doubt, anxiety, and moral deviations (Supriadi et al., 2026). This diversity of contexts indicates that the concept of *syifa'* cannot be reduced to merely medical aspects but must be understood as a multidimensional concept that integrates physical, psychological, spiritual, and social health into a unified Islamic worldview (Munawwir, 1997; Nugraheni & Hayati, 2025).

The urgency of this study is growing amid the rise of various mental health issues, a crisis of life's meaning, social stress, and spiritual alienation in modern society. Various contemporary scientific approaches indicate that the spiritual dimension makes a significant contribution to psychological resilience and the quality of human life. In this context, the concept of *syifa'* offers an alternative perspective that does not separate physical health from inner well-being. Therefore, a reexamination of the concept of *syifa'* in the Quran is essential for developing a more comprehensive understanding of the healing model offered by divine revelation and its relevance to issues of holistic health in the contemporary era.

Among the various contemporary exegetical works, Tafsir Al-Mishbah by M. Quraish Shihab and Tafsir Al-Munir by Wahbah az-Zuhaili are two works that have had a significant influence on the development of modern Quranic studies. Tafsir Al-Mishbah is known for its contextual *adabi ijtimai*' approach, which is oriented toward the social realities of Indonesian society, whereas Tafsir Al-Munir combines linguistic, social, and fiqh approaches in a more systematic manner, consistent with Wahbah az-Zuhaili's academic background as a scholar and expert in Islamic law (Kholisah & Azkya, 2025). The differences in the social, cultural, and epistemological backgrounds of these two exegetes have the potential to result in differing emphases in understanding the concept of *syifa'*, making it an interesting topic to examine through a comparative approach.

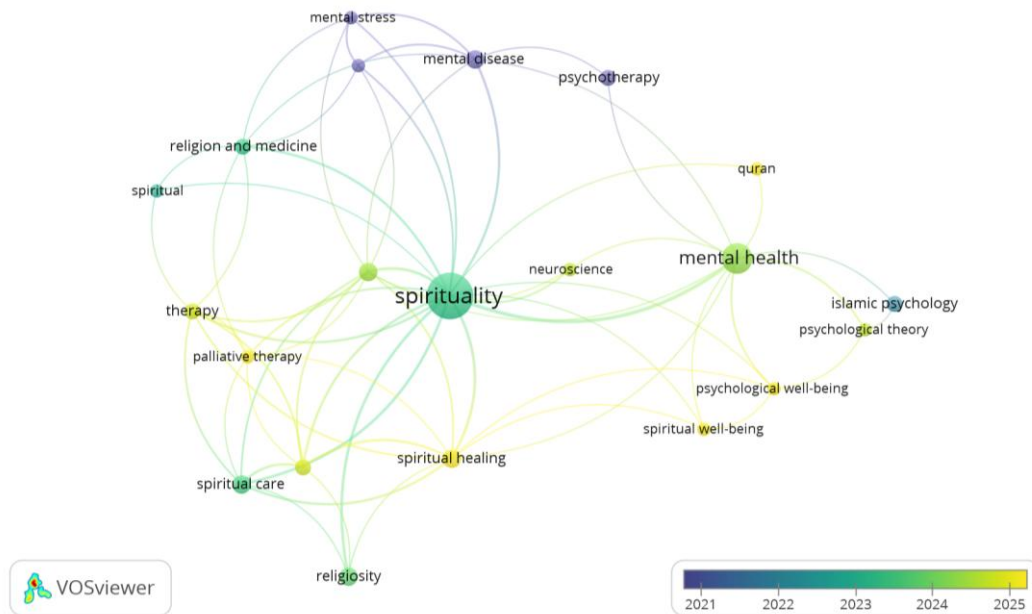
In fact, there have been numerous studies on the concept of *syifa'* in the Quran. Research on the concept of the Quran as *syifa'* according to Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyah indicates that the Quran is viewed as a means of healing both physical and spiritual ailments, particularly those related to psychological and spiritual disorders (Haromain et al., 2025; Wildanun, 2026). Amin et al., (2026) examined the concept of *syifa'* from a Quranic perspective, focusing on the healing dimensions contained within the revelation. Meanwhile, Sulaiman et al., (2026) conducted a comparative study of the concept of *syifa'* in Tafsir Al-Mishbah and Tafsir Al-Maraghi, while Basrian et al., (2026) examined the meaning of *syifa'* through a thematic exegetical approach based on modern exegesis. These various studies indicate that the concept of *syifa'* has garnered significant attention from scholars, whether from a semantic, thematic, or comparative perspective.

Nevertheless, most previous studies have focused on thematic approaches or on comparing Tafsir Al-Mishbah with other exegetical works distinct from Tafsir Al-Munir. Furthermore, these studies generally emphasize the aspect of spiritual healing or the textual meaning of *syifa'* without explicitly linking it to the discourse on spirituality and holistic health that has emerged in contemporary scholarship. In fact, developments in modern health studies indicate a need to develop an integrative model of health that encompasses the physical, mental, social, and spiritual

dimensions.

Previous studies have examined the concept of *syifa'* from thematic, semantic, and comparative perspectives; however, there remain limitations in analyzing this concept through a comprehensive comparison of Tafsir Al-Mishbah and Tafsir Al-Munir with regard to all verses containing the term *syifa'*. Furthermore, previous research has not extensively linked the interpretive frameworks of these two exegetes to the evolving discourse on spirituality and holistic health, which is currently a focus in the fields of religious studies, psychology, and health. Consequently, the relationship between the Quranic concept of *syifa'*, mental health, and holistic well-being remains incompletely mapped out.

Based on a search of the Scopus database, a study on the comparison between spirituality and holistic health in the Quran identified 59 documents from 2021 to 2026. This analysis clearly shows that no studies related to the concept of *Syifa'* in the Quran have been found. Below is a visualization of the VOSviewer bibliometric analysis based on the theme of Quran, healing, and spirituality.



**Fig. 1. Visual analysis using Vosviewer regarding *Syifa's* study in the Quran based on the keywords Quran, healing, and spirituality (Base data Scopus 2021-2026)**

The novelty of this article lies in its effort to reconstruct the concept of *syifa'* in the Quran through a comparative analysis of the interpretations of M. Quraish Shihab and Wahbah az-Zuhaili, utilizing content analysis and comparative exegesis. Unlike previous studies, this article not only compares the two exegetes' interpretations of the verses on *syifa'* but also relates them to the conceptual framework of spirituality and holistic health. Thus, this study produces a more integrative interpretive model regarding the relationship between Quranic healing, mental health, and human well-being.

The findings of this article are expected to enrich the body of comparative exegesis and studies on Quranic healing, particularly in the development of theories regarding the relationship between revelation, spirituality, and health. In practical terms, the results of this study can serve as a reference for academics, health practitioners, counselors, educators, and the general public in understanding the contribution of Quranic values to the strengthening of mental health and spiritual well-being. Furthermore, this study can serve as a foundation for the development of a holistic health approach that integrates physical, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions into contemporary society.

## METHODS

This article aims to reconstruct the concept of *syifa'* in the Quran through a comparative analysis of the interpretations offered by M. Quraish Shihab in *Tafsir Al-Mishbah* and Wahbah az-Zuhaili in *Tafsir Al-Munir*. To achieve this objective, the study employs a qualitative approach that allows for an in-depth exploration of the meaning, context, and interpretive frameworks developed by both exegetes. The study focuses on examining exegetical texts and verses related to *syifa'*, employing content analysis as the primary analytical framework and comparative exegesis as the method to identify similarities, differences, and the intellectual characteristics of both scholars. Through this approach, the study is expected to yield a more comprehensive understanding of the concept of *syifa'* in the Quran and its relevance to discourses on spirituality and holistic health in a contemporary context.

### Methods and Types

This article employs a qualitative approach using content analysis as the research type and *muqaran* (comparative) interpretation as the method. This approach was chosen because the study focuses on the analysis of meaning, the construction of interpretation, and a comparison of the views of exegetes regarding the verses on healing (*syifa'*) in the Quran. In exegetical studies, the comparative method allows researchers to identify similarities, differences, methodological tendencies, and the intellectual frameworks underlying the interpretation of a verse, thereby yielding a more comprehensive understanding of the subject under study (Alatise & Akinfolarin, 2025; Anidar et al., 2026; Aryasutha et al., 2025; Az-Zuhaili, 2015; Engkizar et al., 2026; Muhlasin et al., 2026). Meanwhile, content analysis is used to systematically examine the text's content in order to identify patterns of meaning, themes, and interpretive orientations that emerge in both exegetical works.

### Data Sources

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data consists of verses from the Quran containing the term *syifa'* along with their interpretations in *Tafsir Al-Mishbah* by M. Quraish Shihab and *Tafsir Al-Munir* by Wahbah az-Zuhaili. Secondary data were obtained from various books, journal articles, undergraduate theses, master's theses, doctoral dissertations, and other academic literature related to the concept of *syifa'*, comparative exegesis *tafsir muqaran*, spirituality, mental health, holistic health, and studies on Quranic healing. The use of these two types of data sources aims to strengthen the argumentation and broaden the analytical perspective on the research subject.

### Instruments

In qualitative research, the researcher acts as the primary instrument (human instrument), playing a role in the processes of data collection, selection, interpretation, and analysis. To support the research process, supplementary instruments were used, including a copy of the Quran, the *Tafsir Al-Mishbah* and *Tafsir Al-Munir* commentaries, an Arabic dictionary, a Quranic verse search tool, and various relevant scholarly works. These instruments are used to help the researcher identify verses of healing (*syifa'*), explore the interpretations of exegetes, and conduct systematic comparative analysis.

### Data Analysis Tools

The analytical tools used in this study are content analysis and comparative exegesis. Content analysis was used to identify themes, concepts, and interpretive orientations related to *syifa'* in each exegetical work. Furthermore, the comparative exegesis method was used to compare the construction of meaning, the foundations of argumentation, the intellectual context, and the interpretive implications developed by M. Quraish Shihab and Wahbah az-Zuhaili. Through a combination of these two approaches, this study was able to reveal the conceptual similarities and

differences between the two exegetes in greater depth (Eltoukhi et al., 2025; Engkizar et al., 2025; Shihab, 2007).

### Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through documentation techniques by tracing, cataloging, and classifying all verses containing the term *syifa'* in the Quran. Subsequently, the researcher gathered the interpretations of these verses by the two exegetes from the designated primary sources. Supporting data from various academic sources were then compiled to strengthen the analysis and provide a relevant theoretical context. All collected data were subsequently grouped based on themes, interpretive focus, and the intellectual orientation of each exegete.

### Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted in several stages. First, identifying and cataloging all verses containing the term *syifa'* in the Quran. Second, examining the interpretations of these verses in Tafsir Al-Mishbah and Tafsir Al-Munir. Third, the main themes emerging from the interpretations of the two exegetes are classified, such as the physical, psychological, spiritual, moral, and social dimensions of the concept of *syifa'*. Fourth, a comparative analysis is conducted to identify similarities, differences, methodological tendencies, and factors influencing each exegete's interpretation. Fifth, to develop a conceptual synthesis regarding the meaning of *syifa'* in the Quran and its relevance to spirituality and holistic health in a contemporary context. Through these stages, this study produces a systematic understanding of the construction of the concept of *syifa'* in the two contemporary exegetical works under study. For clarity, the author will present the methodological stages in the following diagram.

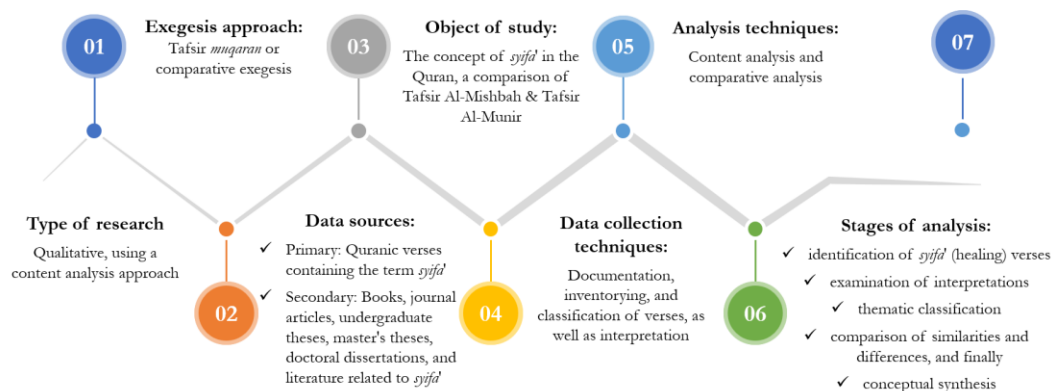


Fig 1. Stages of the research method

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Allah SWT as the Primary Source of Healing from the Perspectives of Quraish Shihab and Wahbah Az-Zuhaili

Research findings indicate that both M. Quraish Shihab and Wahbah Az-Zuhaili share a very strong common ground in viewing Allah SWT as the primary source of all forms of healing. From their perspectives, healing is not understood as the result of medicine, therapy, or specific means alone, but rather as a manifestation of the will and mercy of Allah SWT. The Quran, prayer, *ruqyah*, honey, and various forms of medical treatment serve only as *wasilah* or intermediaries that connect humans to healing, which in essence originates from Allah. This perspective reveals a theocentric character in the interpretation of the verses on healing, namely, the positioning of Allah as both the center and the source of all human recovery processes.

This similarity is clearly evident when both exegetes interpret Quranic Surah As-Syu'ara' [26]: 80: "*And when I am sick, it is He who heals me.*" Quraish Shihab emphasizes that Prophet Ibrahim attributed his illness to himself and his healing to

Allah as a form of propriety and acknowledgment of His power. Wahbah Az-Zuhaili also interprets this verse within the same framework, emphasizing that both illness and healing are within Allah's will, although healing is specifically mentioned to demonstrate His mercy and assistance toward humanity (Lestari et al., 2026). Thus, both exegetes view the human relationship with healing as extending beyond the medical realm and rooted in a spiritual connection with God as Al-Syafi (The All-Healer).

This perspective indicates that the concept of healing in the Quran is neither secular nor materialistic. Healing is understood as a process that involves a divine dimension; thus, the success of treatment is determined not only by the effectiveness of the methods used but also by the will of Allah SWT (Niswah et al., 2025). Therefore, medical and spiritual efforts are not positioned as mutually exclusive but rather as complementary. These findings demonstrate that both exegetes integrate aspects of faith with human effort in the healing process.

### ***Syifa'* as a Holistic and Integrative Concept of Healing**

The research findings also indicate that both exegetes understand *syifa'* as a concept with a broad scope of meaning that is not limited to physical healing alone. Based on an analysis of the six verses regarding *syifa'* in the Quran, both Quraish Shihab and Wahbah Az-Zuhaili observe that Quranic healing encompasses physical, psychological, spiritual, and moral dimensions simultaneously. Thus, *syifa'* refers not only to the elimination of physical illness but also to the restoration of one's inner state, the strengthening of faith, the cultivation of moral character, and the improvement of one's life orientation.

The physical dimension is evident in the interpretation of QsS. An-Nahl [16]: 69, which explains the benefits of honey as a means of healing (Musyafa, 2025). Both exegetes acknowledge that this verse points to a material aspect within the concept of *syifa'*. Quraish Shihab explains the composition of honey based on a modern scientific approach, while Az-Zuhaili reinforces this through the Prophet's hadiths regarding the use of honey as medicine. This commonality indicates that both do not separate revelation from empirical reality and acknowledge the importance of medical efforts in maintaining human health (Isqi et al., 2025; Sahra & Ruspita, 2025).

Furthermore, the psychological dimension is particularly prominent in the interpretation of Surah At-Taubah [9]: 14 and Surah Yunus [10]: 57. Both exegetes understand that the Quran is capable of healing restlessness, fear, anxiety, and various inner disturbances that hinder human peace of mind (Imasakin, 2026). Heart ailments such as doubt, despair, hatred, and anxiety are viewed as conditions requiring healing (Melati et al., 2025; Umiyana et al., 2025). In this context, the Quran serves as a source of peace, hope, and mental strength that helps people cope with life's various challenges (Fuad, 2016).

Furthermore, the spiritual dimension is the most dominant aspect in the entire verse on healing. Both Shihab and Az-Zuhaili interpret spiritual illness as a condition that includes shirk, hypocrisy, doubt regarding the truth, and a weak relationship between humans and Allah. The Quran is understood as a means of purifying the heart and restoring humans to their natural state (Aqhillah et al., 2025; Ifa et al., 2024). This spiritual healing not only brings inner peace but also fosters a stronger religious consciousness, enabling individuals to live their lives in accordance with divine guidance.

Furthermore, research has found that the concept of *syifa'* also encompasses a moral dimension. Healing in the Quran is not merely freedom from illness but also a behavioral transformation toward a better life (Isdianto et al., 2025). When the Quran heals ignorance, misguidance, and moral deviation, this process is, in fact, a form of moral healing. Thus, *syifa'* not only restores an individual's condition but also shapes character and ethics in harmony with Islamic values.

This finding confirms that the concept of *syifa'* in the Quran is holistic and integrative. The healing offered by the Quran encompasses all aspects of humanity, ranging from the body, mind, and soul to behavior. Therefore, *syifa'* can be understood as a Quranic model of healing that views the human being as a whole (a “whole person” approach), rather than as a collection of separate parts.

### **Differences in Interpretive Orientations: Psychospiritual and Normative-Educational**

Although they share fundamental similarities in understanding the concept of *syifa'*, this study found differences in interpretive emphasis between the two exegetes. These differences are primarily influenced by their intellectual backgrounds, social environments, and the methodological approaches each employs. Quraish Shihab tends to emphasize the psychospiritual aspect, while Wahbah Az-Zuhaili places greater emphasis on the normative and educational aspects.

In Tafsir Al-Mishbah, Quraish Shihab often relates the “verses of healing” to the psychological state of modern humans. His explanations go beyond the textual meaning of the verses, focusing instead on how the Quran provides peace of mind, reduces anxiety, strengthens hope, and fosters mental well-being. When interpreting Surah At-Taubah [9]: 14, for example, he views *syifa'* as the healing of emotional wounds and the emotional distress experienced by believers. Similarly, in Surah Al-Isra' [17]: 82, he places greater emphasis on the Quran's function as a form of psychological therapy capable of fostering peace and optimism in human life.

This approach demonstrates that Shihab strives to highlight the relevance of the Quran to contemporary psychological issues. For him, *syifa'* is not merely a theological concept but also a practical solution to the mental and spiritual crises faced by modern humans. Therefore, his interpretation highlights many internal aspects of the human being, such as consciousness, inner peace, mental health, and the quality of one's relationship with Allah.

In contrast, Wahbah Az-Zuhaili tends to develop a more normative and educational interpretation. In Tafsir Al-Munir, discussions of *syifa'* are often linked to sharia guidelines, the Prophet's hadiths, and the moral lessons that can be drawn from the verses. When explaining Surah Al-Isra' [17]: 82, for example, Az-Zuhaili outlines various scholarly opinions regarding *ruqyah* and healing practices rooted in Islamic teachings. He not only explains the healing function of the Quran but also provides a normative framework for how the Quran should be understood and put into practice.

This educational orientation is also evident when Az-Zuhaili links the concept of *syifa'* to the cultivation of faith, the strengthening of moral character, and religious education. According to him, healing is not only intended to eliminate illness but also to educate people to have correct beliefs, good behavior, and a strong commitment to Islamic teachings. Thus, *syifa'* is understood as an instrument of individual transformation that leads not only to spiritual health but also to adherence to religious values.

Overall, these differences indicate that the two exegetes move in complementary directions. Quraish Shihab places greater emphasis on the dimensions of inner experience and psychospiritual well-being, while Wahbah Az-Zuhaili places greater emphasis on the normative and educational functions of the Quran. Nevertheless, both converge on the conclusion that *syifa'* is a comprehensive concept of healing rooted in divine guidance.

### **Implications of the Findings for the Development of Qur'anic Healing Studies**

The findings of this study demonstrate that the concept of *syifa'* developed by both exegetes has strong relevance to the development of contemporary Quranic healing studies (Arifin, 2020). The understanding that healing encompasses physical,

psychological, spiritual, and moral aspects indicates that the Quran offers a holistic health paradigm. This paradigm aligns with developments in modern health science, which increasingly emphasize the importance of integrating physical, mental, spiritual, and social conditions in achieving human well-being.

Thus, the results of this study confirm that *syifa'* is not merely a theological concept in exegetical studies, but rather a holistic and integrative Quranic model of healing. This concept makes an important contribution to the development of Quranic healing studies, particularly in efforts to establish a health approach that balances medical, psychological, spiritual, and moral dimensions (Nazirah et al., 2025). This finding also reinforces the abstract's conclusion that the difference between Quraish Shihab and Wahbah Az-Zuhaili lies in the emphasis of their interpretations, while both remain grounded in the shared view that Allah SWT is the primary source of healing and that *syifa'* is a comprehensive concept of healing for human life.

## CONCLUSION

This article has achieved its objective of reconstructing the concept of *syifa'* in the Quran through a comparative analysis of the interpretations of M. Quraish Shihab in *Tafsir Al-Mishbah* and Wahbah al-Zuhaili in *Tafsir Al-Munir*. The analysis demonstrates that both exegetes understand *syifa'* as a holistic concept that encompasses physical, psychological, spiritual, and moral dimensions of healing. They also share the view that Allah is the ultimate source of healing, while the Quran and human efforts function as means through which divine healing is realized. Furthermore, both scholars emphasize that faith plays a central role in enabling the transformative function of *syifa'* in human life.

The novelty of this article lies in its reconstruction of the concept of *syifa'* by situating Quranic healing within the contemporary discourse of spirituality and holistic health through a comparative exegetical approach. The study reveals that while Quraish Shihab tends to emphasize the contextual and psychospiritual dimensions of healing, Wahbah al-Zuhaili places greater emphasis on its normative, educational, and scientific aspects. These findings contribute to the advancement of comparative Quranic exegesis and *Quranic healing* studies by offering a more integrative understanding of the relationship between revelation, spirituality, and human well-being. In practical terms, this study provides a conceptual framework for developing holistic approaches to health that integrate physical, psychological, and spiritual dimensions, while also opening avenues for future interdisciplinary research linking *syifa'* with psychology, mental health, and medical sciences.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to everyone who contributed to the success of this research.

## DECLARATIONS

### Author contribution

**Randi Praselia:** data curation, writing-original draft preparation, analysis, **Mutathahirin:** conceptualization, methodology, **Nuha Sufina Binti Saidi:** visualization, and editing.

### AI Statement

The data and the grammatical structure in this article have been validated and verified by English language experts and no AI-generated sentences are included in this article.

### Funding statement

The author(s) declare that no financial support was received for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

### Conflict of interest

The authors declare that this research was conducted without any conflict of interest in the research.

### Ethical clearance

The research company has agreed to carry out the research and is willing if the results of this research are published.

### Publisher's and Journal's Note

The Department of Qur'anic Exegesis of the Faculty of Usuluddin and Dakwa, Institut Ilmu Al-Qur'an (IIQ) Jakarta in collaboration with Asosiasi Ilmu al-Qur'an dan Tafsir (AIAT) as the publisher and Editor of Al-Fanar: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir state that there is no conflict of interest towards this article publication.

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Al-Fanar: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir

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