



LIVING THE QUR'AN THROUGH DHIKR: ATTITUDES OF THE KHALWATIYAH SHAYKH YUSUF AL-MAKASSARI ORDER TOWARD THE RECITATION OF *LĀ ILĀHA ILLALLĀH* IN *RATIB AL-'AṬṬĀS*

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Abstrak

The study of Living Qur'an has increasingly expanded beyond textual interpretation to investigate how Qur'anic values are embodied in the everyday religious practices of Muslim communities. Among these practices, dhikr occupies a distinctive position as a ritual through which Qur'anic teachings are continuously internalized and experienced. Despite the growing body of scholarship on Living Qur'an, relatively limited attention has been devoted to understanding how specific Qur'anic invocations function not only as devotional expressions but also as mechanisms for constructing religious attitudes and collective spiritual identity within Sufi communities. This study addresses this gap by examining the attitudes of the followers of the Khalwatiyah Shaykh Yusuf al-Makassari Order toward the recitation of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* within *Ratib al-'Aṭṭās*. Employing qualitative field research within the Living Qur'an paradigm, this study integrates phenomenological and social psychological approaches to investigate how Qur'anic values are interpreted, practiced, and internalized through ritual remembrance. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews with murshids and disciples, and documentation of ritual practices. The collected data were analyzed thematically through processes of data reduction, categorization, interpretation, and triangulation. The findings reveal that the recitation of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* functions simultaneously as a theological affirmation, a spiritual discipline, and a social practice that shapes the religious worldview of the Khalwatiyah community. Rather than being understood merely as repetitive verbal worship, the invocation constitutes a continuous process of internalizing Qur'anic teachings concerning *tawḥīd*, purification of the soul, reliance upon God, and moral transformation. The ritual practice of *Ratib al-'Aṭṭās* strengthens individual spirituality while simultaneously reinforcing collective religious identity through shared devotional experience. The study further demonstrates that the attitudes developed by practitioners encompass cognitive conviction, emotional attachment, and behavioral commitment, thereby illustrating how Qur'anic values become living realities within everyday religious life. Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of Living Qur'an scholarship by proposing that Qur'anic reception should be understood not only through textual interpretation but also through the interaction between sacred text, ritual performance, spiritual experience, and communal religious identity. The findings also enrich contemporary discussions on

Qur'anic embodiment, Sufi spirituality, and the anthropology of Islamic devotional practices.

Keywords: Living Qur'an, Lā Ilāha Illallāh, Ratib al-'Aṭṭās, Khalwatiyah Shaykh Yusuf.

INTRODUCTION

During the last two decades, the field of Qur'anic studies has experienced a significant methodological transformation. While classical Qur'anic scholarship predominantly concentrated on textual interpretation, linguistic analysis, legal derivation, and theological discourse, contemporary researchers increasingly recognize that the Qur'an cannot be understood solely as a written scripture.¹ Rather, it exists as a living reality continuously interpreted, performed, embodied, and negotiated within diverse Muslim societies. This paradigm shift has contributed to the emergence of Living Qur'an studies, a field that examines how Qur'anic verses function beyond textual exegesis by becoming integral components of social practices, religious rituals, cultural traditions, and everyday Muslim life.²

The Living Qur'an perspective departs from the assumption that the meaning of the Qur'an is not exhausted within written interpretation. Instead, the Qur'an continuously generates meaning through its interaction with human experience.³ Muslim communities receive Qur'anic teachings not only through reading and interpretation but also through ritual performance, oral transmission, collective memory, devotional practices, symbolic expressions, and social institutions.⁴ Consequently, the Qur'an becomes "alive" because it is continuously reproduced within the lived experiences of believers. This perspective broadens Qur'anic studies by integrating insights from anthropology, sociology of religion, phenomenology, and religious psychology, allowing researchers to investigate how sacred texts shape social realities while simultaneously being interpreted through those realities.⁵

Among the numerous manifestations of Living Qur'an practices, *dhikr* represents one of the most enduring and universal expressions of Qur'anic embodiment. The Qur'an repeatedly commands believers to remember Allah abundantly, portraying remembrance (*dhikr*) as the foundation of spiritual consciousness, moral discipline, and psychological tranquility. Verses such as Q.

¹ Talib Adnan Abood and others, 'Authority and Interpretation in Qur'anic Studies: Re-Examining Classical Tafsīr in Contemporary Islamic Scholarship', *Global Islamic Research Journal*, 2.1 (2026), 1–17.

² Ahmad Rafiq, 'Living Qur'an: Its Texts and Practices in the Function of the Scripture', *Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis*, 22.2 (2021), 469–84.

³ Muh. Awaluddin A and others, 'The Aesthetic Reception of the Qur'an in Contemporary Music: A Case Study of Bersenja Gurau and Digital Audience Engagement Analysis', *Religia: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmi Keislaman*, 27.2 (2024), 233–50.

⁴ Nurun Nisaa Baihaqi and Aty Munshihah, 'Resepsi Fungsional Al-Qur'an: Ritual Pembacaan Ayat Al-Qur'an Dalam Tradisi Nyadran Di Dusun Tundan Bantul Yogyakarta', *NALAR: Jurnal Peradaban Dan Pemikiran Islam*, 6.1 (2022), 1–14.

⁵ Egi Tanadi Taufik, 'Dilema Living Qur'an: Teori, Fenomena, Atau Wacana?', in *Al-Qur'an, Hadis, Dan Sosial-Budaya: Apresiasi Atas Gagasan Prof. Dr. Saifuddin Zuhri Qudsy, S.Th., MA., ed. by Mahbub Ghazali* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2023), p. 7.

13:28 affirm that hearts attain serenity through the remembrance of Allah, while Q. 33:41 instructs believers to remember God abundantly.⁶ These Qur'anic commands have inspired various forms of devotional remembrance throughout Islamic history, ranging from personal supplications to highly structured collective rituals developed within Sufi traditions.

Within Islamic spirituality, *dhikr* is far more than repetitive vocal recitation. Classical Muslim scholars describe it as a comprehensive spiritual discipline that integrates verbal remembrance, cognitive awareness, emotional purification, and ethical transformation.⁷ For scholars such as al-Ghazālī, Ibn al-Qayyim, and later Sufi masters, remembrance constitutes the central mechanism through which the heart gradually becomes detached from worldly distractions and oriented entirely toward God.⁸ Thus, *dhikr* functions simultaneously as worship, spiritual education, psychological training, and moral cultivation.

The centrality of *dhikr* becomes particularly evident within Islamic mysticism (*taṣawwuf*), where remembrance occupies the highest position in the spiritual journey (*sulūk*) toward divine proximity. Throughout the history of Sufism, numerous ṭuruq (Sufi orders) have developed distinctive methods, sequences, and pedagogical systems of remembrance.⁹ Although these traditions differ regarding formulas, numerical repetitions, bodily movements, and ritual procedures, they share a common theological objective: realizing the practical implications of *tawḥīd* through continuous remembrance of Allah.

One of the most influential invocations within Sufi traditions is the declaration *Lā Ilāha Illallāh*. As the foundational testimony of Islamic monotheism, this phrase represents the essence of Qur'anic theology by negating every form of false divinity while affirming the absolute oneness of God.¹⁰ Within Sufi epistemology, however, the declaration extends beyond doctrinal affirmation. It becomes an instrument of spiritual purification through which practitioners gradually remove worldly attachments, discipline the ego (*nafs*), cultivate divine awareness, and internalize the reality of *tawḥīd* within every dimension of life.¹¹

This multidimensional understanding explains why *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* occupies a privileged position within numerous Sufi traditions across the Muslim world. The

6 Mohd Haidhar Kamarzaman and others, 'The Role of Dhikr in Attaining Ma'rifah and Tawhid: A Hermeneutical Approach to Islamic Spirituality', *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 9.1 (2025), 2754–64.

7 Ardianto Ardianto and others, 'Konsep Zikir Dalam Tarekat Qadiriyyah Naqshabandiyah Dan Implikasinya Terhadap Pembentukan Kepribadian Spiritual', *Attadrib: Jurnal Pendidikan Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyyah*, 9.1 (2026), 62–75.

8 M Ghufroon and R Anam, 'Transformation Of Soul Education In The Digital Era: A Synthesis Of Al-Ghazali And Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah's Thought', *Urwatul Wutsqo: Jurnal Studi Kependidikan Dan Keislaman*, 15.1 (2026), 50–63.

9 Marc Applebaum, 'Dhikr as Mindfulness: Meditative Remembrance in Sufism', *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 65 (2023), 409–30.

10 S Afrashteh, 'Dhikr in Islamic Sufism A Case Study: The Order of Kubrawiyya', *Üsküdar Üniversitesi Tasavvuf Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 3.1 (2024), 20–35.

11 June-Ann Greeley, 'Sufi Turning and the Spirituality of Sacred Space', *Journal for the Study of Spirituality*, 12 (2022), 108–19.

invocation is not merely recited as an obligatory formula but is carefully integrated into systematic spiritual exercises supervised by qualified *murshids*. Through repetitive remembrance, disciples seek not only to pronounce theological truths but also to transform those truths into lived spiritual realities.¹² Consequently, *dhikr* becomes an educational process that reshapes cognition, emotion, and behavior simultaneously.

Within the Indonesian context, the interaction between Qur'anic teachings and local religious traditions has generated diverse forms of Living Qur'an practices.¹³ Indonesia possesses one of the richest Sufi landscapes in the Muslim world, where devotional rituals, collective recitations, Qur'anic gatherings, and spiritual assemblies remain central components of communal religious life. Rather than existing as isolated mystical activities, these traditions contribute significantly to shaping religious authority, communal solidarity, ethical values, and local Islamic identity.¹⁴

Among the numerous Sufi traditions flourishing in Indonesia, the Khalwatiyah Shaykh Yusuf al-Makassari Order occupies a distinctive historical and intellectual position. Rooted in the spiritual legacy of Shaykh Yusuf al-Makassari, whose influence extends across Southeast Asia, South Africa, and the broader Indian Ocean world, the order emphasizes the harmonious integration of Islamic law (*sharī'ah*), spiritual discipline (*ṭarīqah*), inner realization (*ḥaqīqah*), and experiential knowledge (*ma'rifah*). Within this framework, *dhikr* serves not merely as devotional worship but as the principal mechanism for cultivating spiritual refinement and ethical transformation.¹⁵

An essential component of devotional life within this order is the collective recitation of *Ratib al-'Aṭṭās*. Compiled by the renowned Hadrami scholar al-Imam al-Habib Umar bin Abd al-Rahman al-'Aṭṭās, the *Ratib* consists of selected Qur'anic verses, prophetic supplications, declarations of faith, and invocations systematically arranged for regular recitation.¹⁶ For followers of the Khalwatiyah Shaykh Yusuf tradition, participation in *Ratib al-'Aṭṭās* extends beyond ritual observance. It constitutes a structured spiritual practice through which Qur'anic teachings concerning remembrance, reliance upon God, repentance, divine protection, and moral purification are continuously embodied within communal religious life.

The significance of *Ratib al-'Aṭṭās* within the Khalwatiyah Shaykh Yusuf tradition illustrates an important dimension of Living Qur'an scholarship. The

12 Joseph Lumbard, 'Aḥmad Al-Ghazālī's Al-Tajrīd Fī Kalimat Al-Tawḥīd: "A Primer on the Statement of Tawḥīd"', *Journal of Sufi Studies*, 13 (2024), 109–54.

13 Didi Junaedi, 'Living Qur'an: Sebuah Pendekatan Baru Dalam Kajian Al-Qur'an (Studi Kasus Di Pondok Pesantren As-Siroj Al-Hasan Desa Kalimukti Kec. Pabedilan Kab. Cirebon)', *Journal of Qur'an and Hadith Studies*, 4.2 (2015), 169–90.

14 St. Rahmah, Akhmad Hasan Saleh, and Sri Nur Rahmi, 'The Influence of Sufism on Social Practices in Contemporary Muslim Societies: A Case Study in Indonesia', *Journal of Noesantara Islamic Studies*, 1.4 (2024), 214–32.

15 Syamsuddin Arif, 'Shaykh Yūsuf of Makassar (d. 1111 AH/1699 CE): A Bio-Bibliographical and Doctrinal Survey', *Intellectual Discourse*, 32.1 (2024), 55–79.

16 Mohd Azman Mohsin and others, 'Ratib Al-Attas Menurut Perspektif Al-Quran Dan Hadis', *Sains Humanika*, 8.3 (2016), 101–7.

Qur'anic verses incorporated into the *Ratib* are not merely recited as liturgical texts but are experienced as living sources of spiritual strength, divine protection, ethical guidance, and existential meaning. Through continuous repetition, these verses gradually become embedded within the practitioners' consciousness, influencing how they perceive themselves, understand their relationship with God, and respond to various challenges in everyday life. Consequently, the *Ratib* serves as an interpretive bridge between the revealed text and lived religious experience, demonstrating that the Qur'an functions simultaneously as scripture, ritual, and social practice.¹⁷

This dynamic relationship between sacred text and religious experience has become one of the principal concerns of contemporary Living Qur'an scholarship. Recent studies emphasize that the reception of the Qur'an should not be limited to exegetical interpretation (*tafsīr*) but should also encompass performative, aesthetic, ritual, and sociocultural dimensions. In this perspective, Muslims continuously interpret the Qur'an not only through intellectual engagement but also through devotional actions that reproduce Qur'anic meanings in concrete historical contexts.¹⁸ The concept of "living" therefore signifies an ongoing interaction in which the Qur'an shapes human behavior while human communities simultaneously construct culturally meaningful expressions of Qur'anic teachings.¹⁹

The theoretical development of Living Qur'an studies has benefited considerably from interdisciplinary approaches. Anthropological perspectives emphasize ritual performance as a form of symbolic communication through which communities negotiate religious identity and collective memory. Sociological analyses highlight how Qur'anic practices generate social cohesion and institutional legitimacy. Phenomenological approaches investigate the subjective experiences of believers who encounter the sacred through devotional practices, whereas psychological perspectives explore the influence of religious rituals upon emotional stability, cognitive orientation, and moral development. Integrating these perspectives enables researchers to examine the Qur'an as a multidimensional phenomenon that transcends the boundaries of textual interpretation.²⁰

Within this interdisciplinary framework, *dhikr* emerges as one of the most appropriate objects for Living Qur'an research because it simultaneously embodies textual reception, ritual performance, emotional experience, theological conviction, and communal participation. Every recitation of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* represents more than verbal remembrance; it constitutes an act of interpreting Qur'anic monotheism

17 Tabsyir Masykar, "Ratib and Zikir" in Traditional and Modern Dayahs: A Living Qur'an Study in the Southwestern Region of Aceh', TAFSE: Journal of Qur'anic Studies, 9.1 (2024), 75–83.

18 Fathurrosyid, 'Tipologi Ideologi Resepsi Al-Qur'an Di Kalangan Masyarakat Sumenep Madura', El Harakah, 17.2 (2015), 218–39.

19 Siti Masyita Syahrudin, M Yusuf, and M Mahfudz, 'Relasi Teks Dan Konteks: Pola Interaksi Al-Qur'an Dengan Tradisi Masyarakat Dalam Bingkai Living Qur'an', Hamalatul Qur'an : Jurnal Ilmu Alqur'an, 6.2 (2025), 157–68.

20 Fatira Wahidah, Abdul Muiz Amir, and Fuad Fansuri, 'Methodological Challenges in Living Qur'an Studies from Academic Publication in Indonesian Islamic University', Al-Izzah: Jurnal Hasil-Hasil Penelitian, 19.2 (2024), 65–79.

through bodily performance, spiritual concentration, and ethical commitment. Repeated over extended periods, the invocation gradually forms habitual patterns of thought and behavior, illustrating how religious rituals function as mechanisms for the internalization of sacred values.²¹

Contemporary scholarship on Sufi devotional practices has demonstrated that repetitive ritual activities contribute significantly to the formation of religious dispositions. Rather than producing mechanical repetition, structured remembrance often cultivates disciplined attention, emotional regulation, resilience, humility, and social solidarity.²² These findings challenge earlier assumptions that ritual repetition lacks intellectual depth. Instead, ritual practices may represent sophisticated pedagogical systems through which religious knowledge is embodied rather than merely conceptualized. Within Sufi communities, theological doctrines become meaningful precisely because they are continuously enacted through ritual discipline.²³

Despite these important developments, existing scholarship concerning *dhikr* generally concentrates on one of three dominant themes. The first investigates the theological foundations of remembrance within the Qur'an and Prophetic traditions. Such studies explain the doctrinal significance of *dhikr* as an expression of *tawhīd*, obedience, gratitude, and spiritual purification.²⁴ While these contributions clarify the normative basis of remembrance, they frequently remain within the realm of textual interpretation and rarely examine how believers translate theological concepts into everyday religious practices.

The second category consists of psychological and educational studies that investigate the influence of *dhikr* upon emotional well-being, mental health, spiritual intelligence, and moral character. Numerous empirical investigations conclude that regular remembrance contributes positively to psychological tranquility, stress reduction, emotional resilience, and ethical self-control.²⁵

21 Saúde. Saúde, Kamridah Kamridah, and Saad Boulahnane, 'Living Sufism: The Transformation of Dhikr Practices in Indonesian Majelis Ta'lim', *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun*, 14.1 (2026), 439–60.

22 Siti Aisah, 'Sufism and Sustainable Mental Well-Being: A Psychospiritual Approach to Inner Peace', *Profetika: Jurnal Studi Islam*, 27.1 (2026), 279–98; Tuba Işık, 'Chanting Şalawāt as a Form of Self-Cultivation', *Religions*, 16.9 (2025), 1–17.

23 Adlan Sanur Tarihoran and K Kaharuddin, 'Irfani Epistemology and the Practice of Sholat 40: Intuitive Knowledge in the Syattariyah Tariqah of West Sumatra', *Jurnal Fuaduna : Jurnal Kajian Keagamaan Dan Kemasyarakatan*, 9.1 (2025), 100–112.

24 S Acim, 'Investigating the Foundations of Sufism-Based Education in the Qur'an and Hadith', *Widya Balina*, 7.1 (2022), 400–412; R Rahmawati, Kasim Yahiji, and Mustakimah Mustakimah, 'Makna Zikir Bagi Jemaah Tarekat Naqshabandiyah Khālidiyah Majelis Pengkajian Tauhid Tasawuf Indonesia Di Kota Gorontalo', *TEOSOFI: Jurnal Tasawuf Dan Pemikiran Islam*, 8.2 (2018), 325–50; Andi Najamuddin and others, 'The Implementation of Moral Values in Islamic Learning: Overview The Teachings of the Khalwatiyah Samman Order', *ETDC: Indonesian Journal of Research and Educational Review*, 3.4 (2024), 118–28.

25 Dina Haya Sufya, 'Islamic Spiritual Practice as a Pathway to Psychological Well-Being: Evaluating the Impact of Devotional Remembrance (Dhikr) on Stress', *Motiva: Jurnal Psikologi*, 8.2 (2025), 152–161; Muhammad Furkon and others, 'The Role of Dhikr-Based Mindfulness in Reducing Test Anxiety among Senior High School Students in Indonesia', *Darussalam: Journal of Psychology*

Although these studies demonstrate important practical benefits, they generally treat *dhikr* as an individual therapeutic practice without sufficiently exploring its communal, ritual, and socio-religious dimensions.

The third category comprises anthropological and sociological investigations of Sufi orders. These studies primarily focus on institutional history, charismatic leadership, organizational structures, chains of spiritual transmission (*silsilah*), and socio-political influence.²⁶ While they successfully document the historical development of Sufi communities, they often devote relatively little attention to the lived meanings that practitioners themselves attribute to specific devotional rituals. Consequently, the interaction between ritual practice, Qur'anic reception, and the formation of religious attitudes remains insufficiently explored.

This limitation is also evident in previous studies concerning *Ratib al-'Aṭṭās*. Existing research generally demonstrates that regular recitation strengthens spirituality, encourages ethical behavior, and promotes emotional calmness among practitioners.²⁷ Other investigations describe the historical development of the *Ratib*, its textual composition, or its dissemination throughout Southeast Asia.²⁸ Although these studies provide valuable descriptive information, they rarely analyze how the recitation of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* within the *Ratib* becomes an instrument through which Qur'anic values are internalized into enduring cognitive, affective, and behavioral attitudes.

Similarly, studies on the Khalwatiyah Shaykh Yusuf Order have predominantly emphasized the historical legacy of Shaykh Yusuf al-Makassari, his intellectual contributions to Islamic spirituality, and the institutional development of the order across Indonesia.²⁹ Comparatively little scholarly attention has been directed toward understanding how specific devotional practices function as Living Qur'an phenomena that continuously reproduce Qur'anic meanings within the everyday experiences of contemporary disciples. Consequently, the relationship between ritual remembrance, Qur'anic embodiment, and the construction of religious attitudes remains an important area requiring further investigation.

and Educational, 4.1 (2025), 94–103; Nurul Aisatul Masita and Cholil, 'Dhikr as an Adaptive Spiritual Strategy', *Istisjarah: Jurnal Bimbingan Konseling Islam*, 1.1 (2025), 38–44.

26 Iskandar Arnel, 'THE POLITICS OF PIETY: Sufism, Power, and Network Formations in Asia-Pacific Islam', *Asia-Pacific Journal on Religion and Society*, 8.2 (2025), 85–97; Mesut Zavalisiz, 'Sufi Orders and the Social Transformation of the Indian Subcontinent: A Theoretical Assessment', *Trabzon İlahiyat Dergisi*, 12 (2025), 281–304; Hammam Al Marisma, 'Literary Reception and Religious Transformation in the Reading of the Manāqib of the Qadiriyya Wa Naqshbandiyya Order in Lamongan', *Al-Jadwa: Jurnal Studi Islam*, 5.2 (2026), 268–89.

27 Mohd Shafiq Sahimi and Norazlina Zakaria, 'Kesan Zikir Rātīb Al- Aṭṭās Ke Atas Akhlak Pengamalnya (The Effect of Rātīb Al- Aṭṭās Chanting on the Morality of The Chanters)', *UMRAN - International Journal of Islamic and Civilizational Studies*, 8.3 (2021), 91–105.

28 A Peacock, *Arabic Literary Culture in Southeast Asia in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (New York: Brill, 2023), h. 353-393.

29 Muzdalifah Sahib and others, 'Diaspora and Implementation of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassari's Religious Moderation Teachings in South Sulawesi and Kalimantan', *Jurnal Adabiyah*, 24.1 (2024), 1–26; N Moosa, 'Debunking Prevailing Scholarly Views Pertaining to the Apostasy of Alleged Descendants of Shaykh Yusuf of Makassar', *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 58.1 (2020), 103–70..

The present study seeks to address these gaps by shifting analytical attention from the textual legitimacy of *dhikr* toward its lived significance within a particular Sufi community. Rather than asking whether the practice is doctrinally permissible, this study investigates how practitioners understand, experience, and embody the Qur'anic message through the ritual recitation of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh*. This perspective enables a richer understanding of how sacred texts become active social realities through repetitive devotional performance.

More specifically, this research argues that the attitudes developed by members of the Khalwatiyah Shaykh Yusuf Order cannot be adequately explained through theological doctrines alone. Their convictions concerning divine protection, spiritual tranquility, sustenance (*rizq*), trust in God (*tawakkul*), and moral responsibility emerge through continuous interaction between Qur'anic verses, ritual repetition, spiritual instruction provided by the *murshid*, and shared communal experience. In other words, religious attitudes are socially and spiritually constructed through a dynamic process of Qur'anic internalization rather than being acquired exclusively through formal religious instruction.

The novelty of this study lies in three principal contributions. First, it reconceptualizes *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* not merely as a theological declaration but as a Living Qur'an practice through which Qur'anic teachings become embodied within everyday religious life. Second, it integrates phenomenology, social psychology, and Living Qur'an studies into a single analytical framework for examining devotional rituals. Third, it proposes that religious attitudes should be understood as the cumulative outcome of interactions among sacred texts, ritual performance, spiritual experience, and communal religious identity.

Accordingly, this article addresses the following research questions: (1) How is *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* understood within the Khalwatiyah Shaykh Yusuf al-Makassari Order? (2) How is the recitation of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* practiced within *Ratib al-'Aṭṭās*? and (3) How does this ritual contribute to the formation of the religious attitudes of its practitioners? These questions are designed to move beyond descriptive accounts toward a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms through which Qur'anic teachings become living practices that shape both individual spirituality and collective religious identity.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the expanding discourse of Living Qur'an by demonstrating that Qur'anic reception should be understood as an integrated process involving textual meaning, ritual enactment, emotional experience, ethical transformation, and communal participation. Rather than separating scripture from practice, the study illustrates that sacred texts achieve their fullest significance when they are continuously embodied within the lived realities of believers.

From the perspective of Islamic spirituality, the findings enrich contemporary discussions concerning Sufi pedagogy by illustrating how repetitive devotional practices function as systems of moral formation and spiritual education. They further suggest that ritual remembrance should not be interpreted as passive repetition but as an active process through which theological principles gradually become internalized dispositions guiding everyday behavior.

Finally, this article is organized into four principal sections. Following this introduction, the second section explains the qualitative methodology and analytical framework employed in the research. The third section presents and discusses the empirical findings concerning the meaning, ritual practice, and attitudinal formation associated with *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* within *Ratib al-'Aṭṭās*. The final section concludes by summarizing the principal findings, discussing their theoretical implications for Living Qur'an scholarship, acknowledging the study's limitations, and proposing directions for future research concerning Qur'anic embodiment within contemporary Muslim societies.

METHOD

This study employed qualitative field research to investigate the lived experiences of the followers of the Khalwatiyah Shaykh Yusuf al-Makassari Order in practicing the recitation of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* within *Ratib al-'Aṭṭās*. A qualitative design was considered the most appropriate because the objective of the research was not to measure the frequency of ritual practices or quantify religious attitudes, but rather to understand the meanings, interpretations, experiences, and values that practitioners attribute to the ritual. Such meanings are socially constructed through interaction, religious learning, and spiritual experience, requiring an interpretive rather than a positivistic methodological orientation.

The study was situated within the Living Qur'an paradigm, which conceptualizes the Qur'an as a living source of meaning manifested through religious practices, rituals, traditions, and everyday Muslim life. Instead of focusing exclusively on textual exegesis, the Living Qur'an approach investigates how Qur'anic teachings are embodied, interpreted, transmitted, and reproduced within particular social and cultural contexts. Within this framework, the recitation of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* in *Ratib al-'Aṭṭās* was understood as a form of Qur'anic reception through which the doctrine of *tawḥīd* becomes an experiential and communal reality.

To enrich this perspective, the study integrated phenomenological and social psychological approaches. The phenomenological approach facilitated an exploration of how participants consciously experienced the ritual and interpreted its spiritual significance from their own perspectives. Rather than imposing external theoretical assumptions, phenomenology seeks to understand the essence of religious experience as expressed by practitioners themselves. Complementarily, the social psychological approach was employed to analyze the formation of religious attitudes, emphasizing the interaction between cognitive beliefs, emotional attachment, and behavioral commitment emerging from sustained participation in collective devotional practices.³⁰

This study was conducted within the Khalwatiyah Shaykh Yusuf al-Makassari community, where *Ratib al-'Aṭṭās* is practiced as part of regular devotional activities.

30 A Lindseth and A Norberg, 'Elucidating the Meaning of Life World Phenomena. A Phenomenological Hermeneutical Method for Researching Lived Experience.', *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences*, 36 (2021), 883–90.

The site was selected purposively because it represents a living religious tradition in which the recitation of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* functions as both a spiritual discipline and a communal practice.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on their knowledge and direct involvement in the ritual. They included senior murshids, local religious leaders, long-term disciples, and regular members of the congregation. This selection aimed to obtain rich and diverse perspectives on theological understanding, ritual practice, spiritual experience, and the formation of religious attitudes. Interviews were conducted until thematic saturation was reached.

Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Observation was used to examine the implementation of *Ratib al-ʿAṭṭās*, including its ritual sequence, collective interaction, bodily expressions, and spiritual atmosphere. Interviews explored participants' understanding of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh*, its theological and spiritual meanings, experiences during collective *dhikr*, and its influence on daily religious life. Documentation included liturgical texts, organizational documents, instructional materials, historical records, photographs, and field notes to support and verify field data.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis inspired by the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.³¹ The analysis involved transcription, repeated reading, coding, categorization, and theme development. Emerging themes were interpreted through the perspectives of Living Qur'an, phenomenology, and social psychology to explain how the repeated recitation of Qur'anic invocations contributes to the internalization of *tawḥīd*, spiritual consciousness, communal participation, and religious attitude formation.

The trustworthiness of the study was ensured through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was strengthened through prolonged engagement, triangulation, and member checking. Transferability was supported by providing detailed contextual descriptions, while dependability and confirmability were maintained through an audit trail, reflexive analysis, and grounding interpretations in empirical field data.

Ethical considerations were observed throughout the research process. Participants provided informed consent after receiving clear information about the purpose and procedures of the study. Their identities were anonymized, and confidentiality was maintained. Considering the sacred nature of Sufi devotional practices, the researcher upheld cultural sensitivity, respected ritual etiquette, and ensured that the research process did not disturb the community's religious activities.

31 Muhammad Naeem and others, 'A Step-by-Step Process of Thematic Analysis to Develop a Conceptual Model in Qualitative Research', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 22 (2023), 1–18.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Understanding of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* in the Khalwatiyah Shaykh Yusuf Tradition

The findings reveal that the followers of the Khalwatiyah Shaykh Yusuf al-Makassari Order perceive the recitation of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* as the principal devotional practice within their spiritual journey. Rather than understanding the phrase merely as the first pillar of Islam or a verbal affirmation of faith, participants consistently described it as the foundation upon which their entire spiritual life is constructed. For them, the declaration represents a continuous process of renewing *tawhīd*, purifying the heart, and strengthening awareness of God's absolute sovereignty over human existence.³² Consequently, the practice of *dhikr* is regarded not simply as repetitive worship but as a lifelong discipline aimed at cultivating an enduring consciousness of divine presence.

Interviews with participants further indicate that the theological meaning of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* extends beyond doctrinal affirmation into the realm of spiritual transformation. The informants repeatedly emphasized that the negation (*lā ilāha*) symbolizes the rejection of every attachment capable of diverting the heart from God, including excessive dependence upon wealth, social status, personal ambition, and worldly desires. Conversely, the affirmation (*illallāh*) signifies the complete orientation of one's inner life toward Allah as the sole source of existence, protection, sustenance, and ultimate purpose. This understanding demonstrates that the declaration functions simultaneously as a theological confession and as a practical guide for everyday spiritual discipline.

These findings illustrate that the practitioners interpret *tawhīd* not as an abstract theological doctrine but as an existential principle continuously realized through ritual remembrance. Such an interpretation corresponds with the Living Qur'an perspective, which argues that Qur'anic teachings acquire their fullest significance when embodied in lived religious practices rather than remaining confined to textual interpretation.³³ Within the Khalwatiyah tradition, the repeated recitation of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* becomes a practical mode of receiving and internalizing Qur'anic teachings concerning the oneness of God, thereby transforming scriptural concepts into everyday spiritual realities.

The participants also explained that the effectiveness of the *dhikr* does not depend solely upon verbal repetition but upon the sincerity (*ikhhlās*), concentration (*ḥuḍūr al-qalb*), and consistency (*istiqāmah*) with which it is performed. According to the *murshids*, the remembrance gradually purifies the heart from spiritual distractions, enabling disciples to develop greater awareness of God's continuous presence in every aspect of life. This process reflects a classical Sufi understanding that genuine remembrance is not limited to the movement of the tongue but

32 Aminah Azis and others, 'Socio-Sufism Practices within the Indonesia's Tariqah Practitioners', *International Journal of Religion*, 5.1 (2024), 170–78.

33 Muh Alimin and others, 'The Performative Reception of The Qur'an in Mappasuru' Tradition: A Living Qur'an Study in Tampumia Village', *Al Muhafidz: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir*, 6.1 (2026), 94–108.

ultimately becomes the remembrance of the heart (*dhikr al-qalb*) and, at its highest level, the remembrance of the entire existence.

An important finding emerging from the fieldwork is the central role of the *murshid* in shaping participants' theological understanding of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh*. The transmission of meaning occurs not only through formal religious instruction but also through *talqīn*, spiritual guidance, exemplary conduct, and continuous supervision during collective devotional gatherings.³⁴ Participants frequently acknowledged that their understanding of *tawhīd* deepened gradually through sustained interaction with the *murshid*, whose explanations connected Qur'anic teachings with the practical realities of everyday life. This pedagogical relationship demonstrates that Qur'anic reception within the Khalwatiyah Order is fundamentally relational, involving continuous interaction between sacred text, spiritual authority, and religious experience.

From the perspective of phenomenology, these findings indicate that the meaning of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* emerges through lived experience rather than purely intellectual reflection. Participants do not merely explain the theological significance of the declaration; they describe how its repeated recitation transforms their perception of themselves, their relationship with God, and their interpretation of life's uncertainties. Consequently, *tawhīd* becomes an existential experience characterized by trust, humility, gratitude, and spiritual dependence upon Allah rather than simply an object of doctrinal knowledge.

These empirical findings also resonate with classical Sufi thought, which views *dhikr* as the primary instrument for the purification of the soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs*). Continuous remembrance gradually weakens egocentric tendencies while strengthening awareness of divine reality. The participants' narratives demonstrate that this process remains highly relevant within contemporary Muslim communities. Although they live amid rapid social change and increasing material pressures, the repeated recitation of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* enables them to maintain spiritual equilibrium by consistently reorienting their consciousness toward Allah. Thus, the ritual functions as a mechanism of both theological affirmation and psychological stabilization.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that participants perceive the recitation of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* as inseparable from ethical responsibility. They repeatedly emphasized that genuine remembrance should produce visible changes in moral conduct, interpersonal relationships, and social responsibility.³⁵ A person who continuously remembers Allah is expected to become more honest, patient, compassionate, disciplined, and sincere in fulfilling religious obligations. Such perspectives indicate that the Khalwatiyah understanding of *dhikr* rejects any dichotomy between spirituality and morality. Instead, spiritual purification is

34 Ahmad Luqman Hakim and Muhammad Arif Syihabuddin, 'Socio-Religious Values in Community-Based Islamic Education: A Case Study of Majlis Dzikir in Indonesia', *Journal of Education and Religious Studies*, 6.1 (2026), 58–66.

35 Teten Jalaludin Hayat Teten and others, 'Sufi Ethics and Religious Moderation through a Revisit of Miftāḥ Al-Ṣudūr for Contemporary Social Harmony', *Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan*, 23.1 (2025), 211–44.

considered authentic only when it generates ethical transformation within everyday social interactions.

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that the theological understanding of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* among the followers of the Khalwatiyah Shaykh Yusuf al-Makassari Order represents a multidimensional process of Qur'anic internalization. The declaration functions simultaneously as a confession of faith, a spiritual methodology, a pedagogical instrument, and a moral framework that continuously shapes believers' perceptions, emotions, and behaviors. From the perspective of Living Qur'an studies, this illustrates that the reception of Qur'anic teachings occurs not only through interpretation of the written text but also through sustained ritual practice that enables the message of *tawhīd* to become an enduring component of personal spirituality and communal religious identity.

Ritual Practice of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* within *Ratib al-'Aṭṭās*: A Living Qur'an Perspective

The field findings demonstrate that the recitation of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* within *Ratib al-'Aṭṭās* is not performed as an incidental or individual devotional activity but constitutes a structured spiritual discipline that is systematically maintained within the Khalwatiyah Shaykh Yusuf al-Makassari Order. Participants consistently emphasized that the ritual is conducted regularly under the guidance of a *murshid*, either collectively (*jamā'ah*) during organized gatherings or individually (*munfaridan*) as part of one's personal spiritual exercises. This continuity reflects the conviction that spiritual growth cannot be achieved through sporadic religious observance but requires disciplined, repetitive, and guided engagement with the remembrance of Allah. Consequently, the ritual serves as a sustained educational process through which the values of *tawhīd* are gradually internalized into the everyday lives of practitioners.

Unlike ordinary devotional recitations, *Ratib al-'Aṭṭās* follows a carefully prescribed liturgical sequence consisting of selected Qur'anic verses, prophetic supplications, invocations, and repeated declarations of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh*.³⁶ Participants explained that this systematic arrangement is not arbitrary but represents a pedagogical structure developed by earlier Muslim scholars to facilitate gradual spiritual refinement. The placement of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* within this sequence reinforces its role as the theological center of the ritual, continuously directing the practitioners' consciousness toward the absolute oneness of Allah while integrating other Qur'anic prayers and supplications into a unified devotional experience.

The findings further indicate that the authority of the *murshid* constitutes an indispensable element in the implementation of the ritual. Participants repeatedly stressed that the effectiveness of the *dhikr* is inseparable from spiritual guidance received through *talqīn*, continuous supervision, and ethical instruction. The *murshid* is not perceived merely as a ritual leader but as the transmitter of a living

36 Muhammad Afif Assegaf, 'Pembacaan Dzikir Ratib Al-Attas Dan Al-Haddad Di Pesantren Modern Al-Qur'an Pekalongan: Studi Living Qur'an', *Journal of Islamic Scriptures in Non-Arabic Societies*, 1.1 (2024), 76–87.

spiritual tradition whose role is to ensure that disciples understand both the external procedures and the inner meanings of remembrance. Through this pedagogical relationship, the recitation of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* becomes more than the repetition of sacred words; it develops into a process of spiritual formation grounded in discipline, sincerity, and moral responsibility.

Collective recitation occupies a particularly significant place within the Khalwatiyah tradition. Informants consistently described congregational *dhikr* as creating a spiritual atmosphere that strengthens concentration, emotional engagement, and solidarity among participants. The synchronized repetition of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* generates a shared religious experience in which individual devotion becomes inseparable from communal spirituality. Participants frequently expressed that they experienced greater tranquility, humility, and spiritual motivation when performing the ritual collectively than when reciting individually. These observations indicate that collective remembrance functions not only as personal worship but also as a mechanism for reinforcing communal identity and social cohesion.

Nevertheless, the study also reveals that individual recitation (*munfaridan*) remains an equally important component of spiritual practice. Participants reported that personal *dhikr* enables them to maintain continuity of remembrance beyond formal religious gatherings. Many practitioners described incorporating *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* into their daily routines while working, traveling, or engaging in household activities. Such practices demonstrate that the ritual is not confined to sacred spaces or scheduled religious assemblies but extends into the ordinary rhythms of everyday life. This continuity illustrates one of the defining characteristics of Living Qur'an phenomena, namely the integration of Qur'anic values into habitual social practice rather than their restriction to formal acts of worship.³⁷

From the perspective of Living Qur'an studies, these findings demonstrate that *Ratib al-'Aṭṭās* functions as a medium through which Qur'anic teachings are continually received, interpreted, and embodied within a specific religious community. The Qur'an is experienced not solely as a written scripture requiring intellectual interpretation but also as a living source of spiritual guidance expressed through repetitive devotional performance.³⁸ Every recitation of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* represents an act of receiving the Qur'anic doctrine of *tawḥīd*, while every repetition reinforces the participants' awareness of Allah's sovereignty over human life. Consequently, the ritual itself becomes a dynamic process of Qur'anic interpretation enacted through religious practice.

The field data further reveal that participants rarely distinguished between reciting the Qur'an and practicing *dhikr*. Instead, they viewed both activities as complementary expressions of remembering Allah. According to the informants, Qur'anic verses provide the doctrinal foundation, whereas *dhikr* enables those

37 Wirda Afriani and others, 'Living Qur'an as A Method to Turn on Quranization in the Community', GIC Proceeding, 1.1 (2023), 408–14.

38 Rachana Rao Umashankar, 'The Multisensory Engagement with the Qur'an: Teaching the Qur'an beyond the Written Word', Teaching Theology and Religion, 23 (2020), 231–39.

teachings to penetrate the heart through continuous repetition. Such perceptions suggest that scriptural understanding within the Khalwatiyah tradition is inseparable from devotional practice. Knowledge of the Qur'an is considered incomplete unless it produces sustained remembrance capable of transforming one's character and behavior.

This finding supports contemporary theories of embodied religion, which argue that religious knowledge is acquired not only through intellectual cognition but also through repeated bodily practices that cultivate habitual dispositions. Ritual repetition gradually shapes perception, emotion, and ethical orientation because the body itself becomes a medium through which religious meanings are internalized.³⁹ Within the Khalwatiyah tradition, the disciplined recitation of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* illustrates precisely this process: theological concepts become embodied through vocal articulation, rhythmic repetition, attentive listening, and sustained communal participation. The body therefore functions as an active participant in the construction of religious consciousness rather than merely as an instrument for performing ritual actions.

The findings also resonate with ritual theory, particularly the proposition that repetitive religious performances generate symbolic meanings extending far beyond the immediate ritual setting.⁴⁰ Through continual participation in *Ratib al-'Aṭṭās*, practitioners gradually develop shared symbols, collective memories, and common spiritual narratives that strengthen their communal identity. The repeated declaration of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* becomes a symbolic affirmation of belonging to a spiritual tradition whose members are united by a common commitment to *tawḥīd*, ethical conduct, and obedience to Allah. In this sense, ritual performance simultaneously reproduces both personal spirituality and collective religious culture.

Another important finding concerns the temporal continuity of the ritual. Participants consistently emphasized that spiritual benefits emerge not from isolated recitations but from long-term consistency (*istiḳāmah*). The value of *dhikr* therefore lies less in the numerical quantity of recitations than in the gradual transformation produced through sustained practice over months and years. This understanding reflects the educational character of Sufi spirituality, where moral refinement is regarded as a lifelong process requiring discipline, patience, and perseverance. Repetition functions not as mechanical redundancy but as a pedagogical strategy through which Qur'anic values become increasingly embedded within the practitioner's consciousness.

Furthermore, the ritual demonstrates a dynamic interaction between individual agency and communal tradition. Although each participant experiences *dhikr* personally, the meanings attached to the practice are continuously shaped by collective participation, spiritual instruction, and inherited religious traditions.

39 Patty Van Cappellen and M Edwards, 'Embodiment of Worship', *Journal for the Cognitive Science of Religion*, 6.1 (2021), 56–79.

40 Nicholas Hobson and others, 'The Psychology of Rituals: An Integrative Review and Process-Based Framework', *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 22 (2018), 260–84.

Individual spirituality therefore develops within a broader communal framework rather than in isolation. This interaction explains why the ritual has remained resilient across generations: its continuity depends not only upon written liturgical texts but also upon ongoing processes of transmission, imitation, and shared religious experience.⁴¹

Taken together, these findings suggest that the practice of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* within *Ratib al-'Atṭās* should be understood as far more than a devotional ritual. It represents a comprehensive process of Living Qur'an through which sacred text, ritual performance, spiritual authority, embodied practice, and communal participation interact to produce enduring religious meanings. The Qur'an is therefore not merely interpreted intellectually but continually enacted through disciplined remembrance, allowing the doctrine of *tawḥīd* to become an experiential reality that shapes both personal spirituality and collective religious identity. This dynamic process constitutes one of the most significant contributions of the Khalwatiyah Shaykh Yusuf tradition to the broader discourse of Living Qur'an, illustrating how Qur'anic teachings remain vibrant and transformative through sustained ritual practice in contemporary Muslim society.

Religious Attitude Formation through Collective Dhikr

One of the most significant findings of this study concerns the way in which the continuous recitation of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* contributes to the formation of religious attitudes among the followers of the Khalwatiyah Shaykh Yusuf al-Makassari Order. The field data demonstrate that participants do not perceive the *dhikr* merely as an act of ritual devotion but as a transformative spiritual practice that shapes their beliefs, emotions, and daily behavior. Their attitudes toward the recitation are reflected in a strong conviction that the remembrance of Allah serves as a means of attaining divine assistance, facilitating sustenance (*rizq*), protecting believers from misfortune, and cultivating unwavering trust in Allah. These beliefs are not understood as magical expectations detached from Islamic theology but as manifestations of a deeply internalized doctrine of *tawḥīd*, according to which every aspect of human life ultimately remains under the absolute authority of Allah.

Participants consistently emphasized that the recitation of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* reinforces their awareness that sustenance originates solely from Allah rather than from human effort alone. Although they fully acknowledged the necessity of working diligently and fulfilling worldly responsibilities, they viewed material endeavors as secondary causes (*asbāb*), while Allah remained the ultimate provider of all provisions. Consequently, regular *dhikr* nurtures a balanced religious attitude in which perseverance and hard work coexist harmoniously with complete dependence upon divine providence. This understanding reflects a holistic interpretation of Islamic teachings, where human agency and divine sovereignty are regarded as complementary rather than contradictory realities.

41 Paulo Pinto and Liza Dumovich, 'Introduction: Ritual Performance and Religious Identity', *Anthropology of the Middle East*, 19.1 (2024), 1–7.

A similar pattern emerged concerning participants' belief that *dhikr* functions as protection against adversity (*tolak bala*). Informants repeatedly explained that the recitation does not eliminate life's difficulties nor guarantee immunity from hardship. Rather, they believed that continuous remembrance strengthens their spiritual resilience, enabling them to confront trials with patience, confidence, and hope in Allah's wisdom. Many participants interpreted divine protection not simply as the absence of calamity but as the presence of inner strength, clarity of mind, and steadfast faith when facing unavoidable challenges. Such perspectives reveal that protection is understood primarily as spiritual preservation rather than merely physical security.

These findings indicate that the attitudes developed by practitioners are rooted in a profound theological conviction regarding Allah's absolute control over destiny (*qadar*). Participants consistently expressed that every event occurring in human life unfolds according to divine decree and wisdom. Consequently, success, failure, prosperity, illness, and adversity are interpreted within a framework of submission to Allah's will. This theological orientation significantly influences their emotional responses to life's uncertainties, reducing excessive anxiety concerning future events while encouraging greater acceptance of circumstances beyond human control.⁴² In this respect, *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* functions not only as a declaration of monotheism but also as a cognitive framework through which believers interpret reality itself.

From the perspective of social psychology, these findings demonstrate that the recitation contributes to the formation of religious attitudes through the integration of three interconnected dimensions: cognitive, affective, and behavioral.⁴³ Cognitively, participants develop strong beliefs concerning Allah's sovereignty, mercy, and providence. Affectively, these beliefs generate feelings of tranquility, optimism, gratitude, and spiritual security. Behaviorally, they are manifested through increased commitment to worship, moral discipline, patience, sincerity, and responsible social conduct. These three dimensions reinforce one another continuously, illustrating that religious attitudes emerge through sustained interaction between belief, emotion, and practice rather than through intellectual understanding alone.

An equally important finding concerns the emergence of *tawakkul* as the dominant religious attitude cultivated through continuous *dhikr*. Participants consistently described *tawakkul* not as passive resignation but as active reliance upon Allah following sincere personal effort. They emphasized that remembrance encourages them to perform their responsibilities with diligence while relinquishing excessive attachment to the outcomes of their endeavors. This interpretation corresponds closely with the broader Islamic understanding that trust

42 M Vural and others, 'Holding onto Hope in Times of Crisis: The Mediating Role of Hope in the Link Between Religious Motivation, Pandemic Burnout, and Future Anxiety Among Turkish Older Adults', *Religions*, 16.6 (2025), 1–16.

43 V Saroglou and others, 'Believing, Bonding, Behaving, and Belonging: The Cognitive, Emotional, Moral, and Social Dimensions of Religiousness across Cultures', *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 51 (2020), 551–75.

in Allah must be accompanied by responsible action. Consequently, *dhikr* strengthens psychological resilience because practitioners no longer evaluate success exclusively through material achievement but through faithfulness to divine guidance.

The narratives collected during fieldwork further demonstrate that the cultivation of *tawakkul* significantly contributes to participants' inner peace (*sakīnah*). Numerous informants explained that regular participation in *Ratib al-'Aṭṭās* reduces anxiety, emotional instability, and fear regarding uncertain future events. They repeatedly associated this tranquility with their increasing awareness that Allah remains present in every circumstance. Such experiences illustrate the practical realization of the Qur'anic teaching that "indeed, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest" (Q. 13:28). Rather than functioning merely as a theological proposition, this Qur'anic verse becomes a lived reality continuously experienced through collective remembrance.

The field findings also reveal that spiritual tranquility extends beyond individual psychological well-being to influence social relationships. Participants frequently reported becoming more patient in family interactions, more tolerant of differing opinions, more forgiving toward others, and more willing to assist members of the community. They attributed these behavioral changes to the gradual purification of the heart achieved through sustained remembrance. Thus, the internal transformation produced by *dhikr* generates observable ethical consequences within everyday social life. This finding reinforces the classical Sufi principle that authentic spirituality must ultimately manifest itself through noble character (*akhlāq al-karīmah*).

Another significant observation concerns the reciprocal relationship between collective ritual participation and the maintenance of religious attitudes. The communal recitation of *Ratib al-'Aṭṭās* creates a shared spiritual environment in which participants continuously reinforce one another's faith and commitment. Through regular interaction with fellow practitioners, individuals receive emotional encouragement, moral support, and spiritual motivation that help sustain their devotional discipline. Religious attitudes are therefore not formed exclusively within the private consciousness of individuals but emerge through ongoing participation in a community of shared remembrance.⁴⁴ This finding supports sociological perspectives that emphasize the collective character of religious identity and the role of ritual in reproducing communal values across generations.

From the perspective of Living Qur'an scholarship, these findings illustrate how Qur'anic values become embodied through repeated devotional practice. The teachings concerning *tawḥīd*, *tawakkul*, patience (*ṣabr*), gratitude (*shukr*), and reliance upon Allah are not confined to textual interpretation but become enduring personal dispositions cultivated through ritual performance. The repeated declaration of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* serves as the primary medium through which these Qur'anic values are internalized until they gradually shape perception, emotion,

44 D Hervieu-Lèger, 'The Transmission and Formation of Socioreligious Identities in Modernity', *International Sociology*, 13 (1998), 213–28.

decision-making, and behavior. Consequently, the process of Qur'anic reception extends beyond understanding the text to include the transformation of the believer's entire way of life.

These findings further suggest that the relationship between ritual and attitude should be understood as dynamic rather than linear. It is not simply the repetition of sacred words that produces transformation; rather, transformation emerges through the continuous interaction of ritual discipline, theological understanding, spiritual guidance provided by the *murshid*, personal reflection, and communal participation. The effectiveness of *dhikr* therefore depends upon the integration of multiple dimensions that together facilitate the internalization of Qur'anic teachings. This dynamic process explains why participants consistently describe their spiritual development as gradual, cumulative, and lifelong rather than immediate or instantaneous.

A conceptual synthesis of the findings indicates that the recitation of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* generates a sequential process of religious attitude formation. The process begins with the reception of Qur'anic teachings concerning the oneness and sovereignty of Allah, followed by their repetitive enactment through *Ratib al-'Aṭṭās*. Continuous participation in the ritual then cultivates spiritual awareness, which gradually develops into theological conviction, emotional tranquility, and behavioral commitment. Over time, these interconnected dimensions crystallize into enduring religious attitudes characterized by *tawakkul*, resilience, gratitude, sincerity, and ethical responsibility. This sequence demonstrates that devotional practice functions as a mechanism of value internalization through which scriptural teachings are transformed into lived religious dispositions.

Overall, the findings confirm that the attitudes of the Khalwatiyah Shaykh Yusuf followers toward *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* cannot be adequately explained through doctrinal belief alone. Rather, these attitudes emerge from the sustained interaction between sacred text, ritual performance, spiritual authority, communal participation, and personal religious experience. The participants' conviction that *dhikr* facilitates sustenance, protects against adversity, and nurtures inner peace should therefore be understood as the outcome of a comprehensive process of Qur'anic embodiment in which theological principles are continuously translated into existential realities. This process represents one of the clearest manifestations of the Living Qur'an, demonstrating how the message of the Qur'an transcends textual interpretation to become an enduring source of moral orientation, spiritual resilience, and religious identity within contemporary Muslim society.

Toward a Living Qur'an Model of Spiritual Internalization: A Conceptual Synthesis

The preceding discussions demonstrate that the practice of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* within *Ratib al-'Aṭṭās* cannot be adequately understood through a single analytical perspective. The findings reveal a complex interaction among Qur'anic teachings, ritual performance, spiritual authority, communal participation, and personal religious experience. Rather than functioning independently, these dimensions

continuously reinforce one another, generating a comprehensive process through which the Qur'an becomes embodied within the everyday lives of practitioners. Accordingly, the present study proposes a conceptual synthesis referred to as the Living Qur'an Model of Spiritual Internalization (LQMSI). This model seeks to explain the dynamic mechanism through which Qur'anic values are transformed from revealed texts into enduring religious attitudes and patterns of behavior.

Unlike conventional approaches that primarily examine the relationship between the Qur'an and its textual interpretation (*tafsīr*), the proposed model emphasizes that Qur'anic reception is fundamentally experiential. The process begins with the reception of Qur'anic teachings concerning *tawhīd*, remembrance (*dhikr*), reliance upon Allah (*tawakkul*), patience (*ṣabr*), gratitude (*shukr*), and spiritual purification. These teachings do not remain as abstract theological concepts but are continuously activated through ritual practice. Consequently, the Qur'an functions not merely as an object of interpretation but as a living source of ethical orientation and spiritual formation.

The empirical findings indicate that the first stage of internalization consists of scriptural reception. Within the Khalwatiyah Shaykh Yusuf tradition, the teachings of the Qur'an are introduced through the guidance of the *murshid*, religious instruction, and the liturgical structure of *Ratib al-'Aṭṭās*. Participants initially encounter *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* as the central expression of Islamic monotheism rooted in Qur'anic revelation. At this stage, theological understanding provides the cognitive foundation upon which subsequent spiritual development is constructed. The declaration of *tawhīd* is therefore understood not only as an article of faith but also as the principal framework for interpreting reality.

The second stage involves ritual embodiment. The repeated recitation of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh*, performed consistently within both collective and individual devotional settings, transforms theological knowledge into habitual religious practice. Repetition serves as an educational mechanism rather than mere ritual formalism. Every act of remembrance reinforces participants' awareness of Allah's presence while gradually reducing excessive attachment to worldly concerns. This embodied dimension illustrates one of the defining characteristics of Living Qur'an phenomena: sacred texts are experienced through disciplined bodily practice, vocal articulation, attentive listening, and sustained participation in communal worship.

The third stage consists of spiritual internalization. Continuous participation in the ritual enables Qur'anic values to penetrate beyond intellectual understanding into the affective and existential dimensions of human experience. Participants repeatedly described the emergence of inner tranquility, stronger faith, emotional stability, increased sincerity, and greater awareness of Allah's continuous supervision. These experiences indicate that the repeated performance of *dhikr* gradually reshapes the practitioners' inner consciousness. In this stage, the Qur'an becomes internalized not simply as religious knowledge but as an enduring spiritual orientation influencing perception, motivation, and emotional responses.

The fourth stage concerns religious attitude formation. The findings demonstrate that the internalization of Qur'anic values produces observable transformations within three interconnected domains. Cognitively, practitioners

develop firm convictions concerning Allah's sovereignty over sustenance, destiny, and protection. Affectively, these convictions generate feelings of serenity, hope, gratitude, and spiritual security. Behaviorally, they encourage patience, ethical discipline, perseverance, social responsibility, and consistency in worship. Religious attitudes therefore emerge as the cumulative outcome of repeated interaction between revealed teachings and lived devotional experience rather than from isolated acts of religious instruction.

The final stage involves social manifestation, where internal spiritual transformation becomes visible within everyday social interactions. Participants consistently associated continuous *dhikr* with improved interpersonal relationships, greater honesty in economic activities, increased willingness to help others, stronger family commitment, and heightened awareness of moral responsibility. This finding demonstrates that the process of internalization extends beyond individual spirituality to influence broader patterns of social behavior. In other words, Qur'anic values become socially meaningful because they are translated into concrete ethical actions that shape communal life.

The proposed model therefore suggests that Living Qur'an should be understood as a multidirectional process rather than a linear relationship between scripture and practice. The Qur'an influences ritual practice, ritual practice strengthens spiritual awareness, spiritual awareness shapes religious attitudes, and these attitudes subsequently influence social behavior. Conversely, communal experiences, spiritual guidance, and everyday ethical challenges continuously reshape the manner in which practitioners receive and embody Qur'anic teachings. This reciprocal interaction explains why Living Qur'an remains dynamic across different historical and cultural contexts while preserving its theological foundations.

An important implication of this model is the reconceptualization of *dhikr* itself. The findings indicate that *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* should not be understood merely as repetitive verbal remembrance. Instead, it functions simultaneously as a pedagogical instrument, a psychological regulator, a spiritual discipline, and a mechanism for ethical formation. Through continuous repetition, the declaration gradually integrates cognition, emotion, and behavior into a coherent religious worldview centered upon *tawhīd*. This multidimensional role distinguishes *dhikr* from purely ritualistic practices by demonstrating its transformative capacity in shaping both individual character and collective religious identity.

The model also contributes to the theoretical development of Living Qur'an studies by expanding its analytical scope beyond textual reception. Existing scholarship has generally emphasized Qur'anic recitation, memorization, manuscript traditions, calligraphy, and ritual usage as forms of Qur'anic reception.⁴⁵ While these dimensions remain important, the present findings demonstrate that

45 Václava Tlilí, 'Uṣūl Al-Qirā'āt: A Brief Overview of the Science of Qur'ān Recitations and Its Formation from the Position of Traditional Qirā'āt Literature', *Acta FF*, 2.2 (2021), 16–33; B Gent and Abdullah Muḥammad, 'Memorising and Reciting a Text without Understanding Its Meaning: A Multi-Faceted Consideration of This Practice with Particular Reference to the Qur'an', *Religions*, 10.7 (2019), 1–18.

reception should equally encompass the gradual formation of religious attitudes through sustained devotional engagement. In this sense, the Qur'an becomes "living" not only because it is recited or displayed in religious rituals but because its values are progressively embodied in the beliefs, emotions, decisions, and behaviors of believers.

Furthermore, the proposed model establishes an important dialogue between Living Qur'an studies and social psychology. The findings indicate that religious attitudes are not static cognitive constructs but dynamic products of continuous interaction between scriptural understanding, ritual participation, emotional experience, and communal reinforcement. This perspective enriches existing theories of religious attitude formation by incorporating ritual embodiment and spiritual experience as central explanatory variables. Consequently, the study bridges two academic traditions that have often developed independently: Qur'anic studies and the psychology of religion.

The synthesis also contributes to contemporary discussions concerning Islamic spirituality. In many modern contexts, spirituality is frequently interpreted as an individual and highly subjective experience detached from communal religious traditions.⁴⁶ The Khalwatiyah experience demonstrates an alternative paradigm in which spirituality develops through disciplined participation within a structured religious community under the guidance of recognized spiritual authority. Individual transformation is therefore inseparable from collective ritual, ethical instruction, and inherited spiritual traditions. Such findings reaffirm the importance of communal religious practice in sustaining long-term spiritual development.

Taken together, the Living Qur'an Model of Spiritual Internalization illustrates that the relationship between scripture and society is neither symbolic nor merely performative. Rather, it constitutes a transformative process through which Qur'anic revelation continually shapes the worldview, spirituality, and ethical orientation of believers. The Khalwatiyah Shaykh Yusuf tradition demonstrates that the recitation of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* functions as the central mechanism through which this transformation occurs. Through repetitive remembrance, theological doctrines become lived convictions, ritual performance becomes spiritual education, and individual piety develops into social morality.

Based on these findings, the study proposes the following conceptual sequence as the principal theoretical contribution of the research: Qur'anic Teachings (*Tawhīd*) → Guided Dhikr (*Ratib al-'Aṭṭās*) → Ritual Embodiment → Spiritual Internalization → Religious Attitude Formation → Ethical Behaviour → Living Qur'an

This conceptual framework demonstrates that the Qur'an does not merely function as a sacred text interpreted through scholarly discourse but also operates as a living moral force continuously reproduced through devotional practice. Accordingly, the Living Qur'an should be understood as an ongoing process of internalization in which revelation, ritual, spirituality, and social ethics interact

46 D Villani and others, 'The Role of Spirituality and Religiosity in Subjective Well-Being of Individuals With Different Religious Status', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10 (2019), 1–9.

dynamically to produce enduring religious transformation. The proposed model therefore extends the theoretical boundaries of Living Qur'an scholarship by positioning religious attitude formation as the central mechanism linking Qur'anic revelation with the lived experiences of Muslim communities.

Conceptual Framework: The Living Qur'an Spiritual Internalization Framework (LQSIF)

The synthesis of the empirical findings enables the development of a conceptual framework referred to as the Living Qur'an Spiritual Internalization Framework (LQSIF). This framework illustrates that the embodiment of Qur'anic teachings within the Khalwatiyah Shaykh Yusuf al-Makassari Order does not occur instantaneously but evolves through a sequential and mutually reinforcing process involving scriptural understanding, ritual performance, spiritual guidance, personal experience, and ethical transformation.

The framework begins with Qur'anic Revelation, particularly the Qur'anic teachings concerning *tawhīd*, *dhikr*, *tawakkul*, patience, gratitude, and remembrance of Allah. These revealed principles constitute the normative foundation upon which all subsequent spiritual practices are established. However, revelation alone does not automatically produce religious transformation. Its meanings are mediated through Murshid Guidance, where the *murshid* interprets, transmits, and contextualizes Qur'anic values through *talqīn*, spiritual instruction, and exemplary conduct. The *murshid* therefore functions as an interpretive bridge connecting scriptural authority with lived religious experience.

The second phase consists of Structured Ritual Practice, represented by the regular recitation of *Ratib al-'Aṭṭās*. At this stage, the Qur'anic doctrine of *tawhīd* is repeatedly enacted through the recitation of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* in both collective and individual settings. Repetition transforms abstract theological concepts into embodied devotional habits, enabling participants to experience the Qur'an not only as a text to be understood but also as a reality to be lived.

Continuous engagement with the ritual subsequently produces Spiritual Internalization, characterized by the gradual development of heightened awareness of Allah (*murāqabah*), sincerity (*ikhhlās*), humility (*tawāḍu'*), emotional stability, and purification of the heart. This stage represents the transition from external ritual performance to internal spiritual consciousness, where Qur'anic values become integrated into the practitioners' worldview and self-understanding.

The internalization process then generates Religious Attitude Formation, encompassing three mutually interconnected dimensions. The cognitive dimension consists of firm belief in Allah's sovereignty over sustenance, destiny, and protection. The affective dimension is reflected in feelings of tranquility (*sakīnah*), optimism, gratitude, and reliance upon Allah (*tawakkul*). The behavioral dimension manifests itself through disciplined worship, ethical conduct, perseverance, honesty, patience, compassion, and social responsibility. These dimensions

continuously reinforce one another, producing stable and enduring religious dispositions.

Finally, these attitudes are translated into Ethical and Social Transformation, where personal spirituality becomes visible through everyday moral conduct and communal engagement. Participants' commitment to honesty, mutual assistance, social solidarity, family responsibility, and peaceful coexistence demonstrates that the ultimate objective of *dhikr* extends beyond individual piety toward the realization of Qur'anic ethics within society. In this way, the Living Qur'an becomes observable not only through ritual performance but also through transformed social behavior inspired by sustained spiritual discipline.

Accordingly, the proposed framework conceptualizes the process of Qur'anic embodiment as follows:



The proposed framework extends existing Living Qur'an scholarship by positioning religious attitude formation as the central mediating mechanism through which Qur'anic revelation becomes embodied within the everyday lives of believers. Rather than treating ritual merely as an expression of faith, the framework demonstrates that repetitive devotional practice functions as an educational, psychological, and spiritual process that continuously transforms revealed teachings into ethical behavior and communal religious identity. Consequently, the Living Qur'an should be understood as a dynamic process of spiritual internalization in which revelation, ritual, cognition, emotion, and social ethics interact to produce enduring religious transformation

CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that the recitation of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* within *Ratib al-'Aṭṭās* among the followers of the Khalwatiyah Shaykh Yusuf al-Makassari Order represents far more than a repetitive devotional practice. Rather, it constitutes a dynamic process of Living Qur'an through which Qur'anic teachings

are continuously interpreted, embodied, and internalized in the everyday lives of believers. The findings reveal that the declaration of *tawhīd* functions simultaneously as a theological affirmation, a structured spiritual discipline, and a transformative educational process that shapes religious consciousness, ethical orientation, and communal identity.

The study identified three principal findings. First, *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* is understood by practitioners as the central expression of Islamic monotheism that continuously strengthens faith, purifies the heart, and cultivates awareness of Allah's absolute sovereignty. This understanding extends beyond doctrinal knowledge into an existential experience in which *tawhīd* becomes the primary framework through which practitioners interpret their relationship with God, themselves, and the surrounding world. Second, the recitation of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* within *Ratib al-'Atṭās* is practiced systematically under the spiritual guidance of the *murshid*, both collectively and individually, illustrating that ritual discipline serves as the principal mechanism through which Qur'anic teachings are embodied in daily religious life. Third, continuous participation in the ritual contributes significantly to the formation of religious attitudes characterized by firm belief in Allah's control over sustenance and destiny, confidence in divine protection, *tawakkul*, spiritual tranquility, emotional resilience, and ethical commitment in everyday social interactions.

Beyond these empirical findings, the study contributes theoretically to the development of Living Qur'an scholarship by proposing the Living Qur'an Spiritual Internalization Framework (LQSIF). Unlike previous approaches that primarily emphasize textual reception or ritual performance separately, the proposed framework conceptualizes Qur'anic embodiment as a sequential process linking Qur'anic revelation, spiritual guidance, ritual practice, spiritual internalization, religious attitude formation, and ethical-social transformation. Within this framework, religious attitudes function as the critical mediating mechanism through which Qur'anic teachings are translated into lived religious experience. Consequently, the Living Qur'an is understood not merely as the public presence of the Qur'an within religious rituals but as the continuous internalization of Qur'anic values that transforms cognition, emotion, behavior, and communal life.

The findings also contribute to broader discussions in Islamic spirituality and the psychology of religion by demonstrating that repetitive *dhikr* functions simultaneously as a theological, pedagogical, psychological, and ethical process. The recitation of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* should therefore be understood not as mechanical verbal repetition but as a holistic practice through which believers cultivate self-discipline, emotional stability, resilience, and moral responsibility. This perspective bridges the gap between Qur'anic studies, Sufism, Living Qur'an research, and social psychology by illustrating how scriptural teachings become embodied through sustained ritual participation and communal religious experience.

From a practical perspective, the study suggests that structured *dhikr* traditions such as *Ratib al-'Atṭās* continue to play an important role in strengthening spiritual resilience and ethical awareness within contemporary Muslim societies. Amid increasing social uncertainty, economic pressures, and moral challenges,

collective remembrance provides not only spiritual comfort but also a framework for developing patience, gratitude, honesty, social solidarity, and responsible religious conduct. The findings therefore reaffirm the continuing relevance of Sufi devotional traditions as important resources for nurturing holistic Islamic spirituality in modern contexts.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. The research was conducted within a single Sufi community, focusing specifically on the Khalwatiyah Shaykh Yusuf al-Makassari Order. Consequently, the findings should not be generalized automatically to other *ṭuruq* that may possess different ritual structures, theological emphases, or pedagogical traditions. In addition, the present investigation primarily adopted qualitative methods and therefore emphasized the depth of participants' lived experiences rather than measuring the broader social distribution of religious attitudes across larger populations.

Future research may extend the proposed conceptual framework by undertaking comparative studies involving different Sufi orders, diverse cultural settings, or transnational Muslim communities. Comparative investigations may reveal how various forms of *dhikr* contribute differently to the embodiment of Qur'anic values and the formation of religious attitudes. Furthermore, interdisciplinary research integrating qualitative inquiry with quantitative psychological measurement may provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between ritual participation, spiritual experience, emotional well-being, and ethical behavior. Such studies would further refine the Living Qur'an Spiritual Internalization Framework and expand its applicability across broader contexts of Islamic religious life.

In conclusion, this study affirms that the Living Qur'an should be understood as a dynamic and transformative process through which revelation continually interacts with ritual practice, spiritual authority, personal experience, and social ethics. The experience of the Khalwatiyah Shaykh Yusuf al-Makassari Order demonstrates that the repetitive recitation of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* is capable of transforming Qur'anic teachings into enduring religious attitudes and ethical ways of life. The Living Qur'an therefore exists not only in the interpretation of scripture or the performance of ritual, but most profoundly in the continuous formation of believers whose faith, character, and social conduct embody the moral vision of the Qur'an within everyday reality.

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