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HEALING GUIDELINES BASED ON THE QUR'AN AND SUNNAH: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR HOLISTIC NURSING PRACTICE

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Abstract

Health and healing occupy a central position in Islamic teachings, where the preservation of human life and well-being is closely associated with the objectives of Islamic law (maqāṣid al-sharīʿah), particularly the protection of life (ḥifẓ al-nafs). This study examines the concepts of health, illness, and healing based on the Qurʾān and the Sunnah and explores their implications for contemporary nursing practice. The study employs a qualitative textual analysis of relevant Qurʾānic verses, prophetic traditions (ḥadīth), and classical Islamic scholarly interpretations related to health, illness, and therapeutic practices. These primary sources are analysed thematically to identify key principles that guide healing from an Islamic perspective. The findings reveal that Islam conceptualizes health as a holistic condition encompassing physical, spiritual, psychological, and social well-being. Illness is viewed not only as a physiological condition but also as a spiritual test and a means of purification that encourages patience, reflection, and reliance upon God. At the same time, the Qurʾān and Sunnah strongly encourage seeking medical treatment, disease prevention, and the integration of physical and spiritual approaches to healing. These principles reflect the maqāṣid al-sharīʿah framework by promoting the preservation of life, dignity, and human well-being. For nursing practice, incorporating Islamic healing principles can enhance holistic patient care by addressing patients' spiritual needs alongside clinical treatment. Such integration supports culturally and spiritually sensitive healthcare delivery, particularly in Muslim healthcare settings, and contributes to the development of ethically grounded and patient-centred nursing practice.

Keywords: Islamic healing; Qur'an and Sunnah; Maqasid al-Shariah; Spiritual care; Nursing practice

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INTRODUCTION

Healing practices have long been a subject of interest among scholars and practitioners in medicine and the health sciences. Historically, scientific approaches to healing have predominantly focused on the physical dimensions of disease, diagnosis, and treatment. Nevertheless, health and illness are experienced not only biologically but also psychologically, socially, culturally, and spiritually. Across different civilisations, religious beliefs and traditional healing practices have therefore continued to influence how individuals understand illness, respond to suffering, and seek treatment. Natural

resources, particularly medicinal plants, have similarly played an important role in therapeutic traditions and reflect humanity's continuing search for remedies to preserve health and alleviate illness (Rates 2001).

Within the Islamic worldview, health is regarded as a valuable blessing bestowed by Allah and as an amanah (trust) that enables human beings to fulfil religious duties, family responsibilities, and societal obligations. The Qur'an and Sunnah provide extensive guidance concerning health, illness, prevention, treatment, spiritual well-being, and responses to suffering. Consequently, Islamic understandings of health extend beyond the absence of disease and encompass physical, spiritual, psychological, and social dimensions of human well-being (Rahman 1987; Al-Bar 2007; Al-Bar & Chamsi-Pasha 2015). This understanding also corresponds with the objectives of Islamic law (maqasid al-shariah), particularly the preservation of life (hifz al-nafs), through which the protection of health and prevention of harm constitute important ethical responsibilities.

Illness is similarly understood through both physical and spiritual dimensions. Islamic teachings recognise suffering as part of the human experience and, in certain circumstances, as a test and means of spiritual purification. Prophetic traditions describe how illness and suffering may expiate sins and encourage sabr (patience), tawakkul (reliance upon Allah), and spiritual reflection (Al-Bukhari 1994; Muslim 2007; Ibn Majah 2007; Al-Tirmidhi 1994). Importantly, however, spiritual acceptance of illness does not imply passivity towards disease. The Sunnah encourages Muslims to seek appropriate treatment and utilise available remedies. Islamic healing therefore involves an interaction between spiritual reliance and human effort rather than positioning religious healing in opposition to medical treatment.

This integrated understanding is increasingly relevant to contemporary healthcare. Muslim patients may interpret illness, treatment, suffering, recovery, and end-of-life experiences through religious and spiritual values. Religious practices and spiritual beliefs can influence coping with illness and interactions with healthcare professionals (Koenig 2012; Peteet 2019). Recent literature also demonstrates that culturally responsive healthcare for Muslim patients requires healthcare professionals to understand religious practices, spiritual needs, modesty, family involvement, dietary considerations, and beliefs surrounding illness and treatment (Attum et al. 2023; Zagloul et al. 2024). Such considerations are particularly relevant to nurses because of their continuous and direct interactions with patients throughout the process of care.

Despite growing recognition of spirituality and culturally responsive care, an important conceptual and practice gap remains. Existing scholarship has extensively discussed Islamic medicine, bioethics, spiritual care, Prophetic medicine, and culturally competent care for Muslim patients (Alrawi & Fetters 2012; Al-Bar & Chamsi-Pasha 2015; Padela & Zaidi 2018; Attum et al. 2023; Zagloul et al. 2024). However, these areas are frequently examined separately, with less attention given to synthesising Qur'anic and Prophetic concepts of health, illness, and healing into a coherent framework relevant to professional nursing care. Such synthesis is important because recognising patients' religious beliefs alone does not necessarily equip nurses to facilitate spiritual practices, understand Prophetic healing preferences, maintain professional boundaries, safeguard patient safety, and integrate spiritual needs alongside evidence-based clinical treatment.

Accordingly, the theoretical contribution of this study lies in synthesising the concepts of health, illness, healing, Prophetic therapeutic practices, and maqasid al-shariah into an integrated Islamic holistic healing framework. Rather than examining these concepts as isolated religious teachings, the framework positions them within an interconnected understanding of human well-being grounded in the Qur'an and Sunnah. Practically, the study seeks to translate these principles into a nursing context by examining how they may inform spiritual assessment, culturally sensitive communication, facilitation of appropriate religious practices, ethical decision-making, and the safe recognition of patients' spiritual and healing preferences alongside evidence-based clinical treatment.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the concepts of health, illness, and healing based on the Qur'an and Sunnah, analyse these principles through the framework of maqasid al-shariah, and examine their relevance to holistic nursing practice. In doing so, the study seeks to bridge Islamic perspectives on healing with contemporary nursing care while maintaining the central principles of patient safety, professional responsibility, cultural sensitivity, and evidence-based practice.

LITERATURE CONTEXT AND RESEARCH GAP

Existing scholarship has established a substantial foundation concerning Islamic perspectives on health, illness, medicine, and healing. Classical and contemporary Islamic medical scholarship conceptualises health as extending beyond physical functioning to include spiritual, moral, psychological, and social dimensions of human well-being (Rahman 1987; Al-Bar 2007; Al-Bar & Chamsi-Pasha 2015). Traditional Arabic and Islamic medicine similarly reflects an integrated understanding of healing in which spiritual practices, natural remedies, preventive measures, and therapeutic interventions may coexist within a broader religious worldview (Alrawi & Fetters 2012). From an Islamic bioethical perspective, these practices are also connected to responsibilities to protect life, prevent harm, and promote human welfare.

A related body of literature has examined spirituality as an important component of contemporary healthcare. Spiritual beliefs may influence patients' understanding of illness, coping responses, treatment decisions, psychological well-being, and experiences of healthcare (Koenig 2012; Peteet 2019). Whole-person care therefore increasingly recognises that patients' spiritual concerns should not necessarily be separated from their physical and psychosocial needs (Puchalski et al. 2014). In Muslim populations specifically, religious beliefs and practices may influence dietary requirements, modesty, prayer, family involvement, perceptions of illness, treatment preferences, and interactions with healthcare professionals (Attum et al. 2023; Zagloul et al. 2024).

Studies of Islamic and Prophetic medicine have additionally examined specific therapeutic practices and natural substances. Honey, for example, occupies an established position within Islamic healing traditions and has also been investigated scientifically for antimicrobial and wound-healing properties (Al-Waili et al. 2011; Tashkandi 2021). Similarly, contemporary research on Nigella sativa has identified pharmacological properties and potential therapeutic applications associated with its bioactive constituents (Alberts et al. 2024). These developments demonstrate continuing scholarly interest in the relationship between traditional Islamic healing practices and contemporary healthcare.

However, three limitations remain apparent within this body of literature. First, Islamic concepts of health, illness, spiritual healing, Prophetic therapeutic practices, and Islamic medical ethics are frequently discussed as separate domains. Although each contributes to understanding Muslim approaches to health, their conceptual relationships are not always synthesised into an integrated framework applicable to contemporary nursing care. Second, literature concerning Muslim patients often focuses on cultural competence and accommodation of religious practices. While these approaches are important, recognising religious preferences does not in itself provide nurses with a conceptual structure for understanding how Islamic beliefs concerning illness and healing influence patients' experiences of care. Third, discussions of Prophetic medicine may emphasise particular remedies or religious practices without sufficiently clarifying how healthcare professionals should engage with such practices while maintaining patient safety, professional boundaries, informed decision-making, and evidence-based treatment.

These limitations are particularly important in nursing. Nurses maintain sustained contact with patients and frequently encounter spiritual concerns during pain, hospitalisation, deterioration, recovery, and end-of-life care. Muslim patients may seek reassurance through du'a, dhikr, Qur'anic recitation, ruqyah, sabr, or tawakkul, and some may also express preferences for remedies associated with Prophetic medicine. Nurses therefore require more than general awareness of Muslim culture. They need sufficient knowledge to recognise such practices, communicate respectfully about them,

assess patients' spiritual needs, facilitate appropriate practices when clinically safe, and identify situations requiring referral to religious or other healthcare professionals.

A further issue concerns the relationship between religious healing and professional clinical care. An Islamic approach to holistic healing should not create a dichotomy between spiritual reliance and biomedical treatment. The preservation of life (hifz al-nafs) within maqasid al-shariah provides an important ethical basis for maintaining this balance. Protection of life requires not only respect for religious values but also prevention of harm, appropriate treatment, and responsible healthcare decision-making (Auda 2008; Al-Bar & Chamsi-Pasha 2015). Thus, integrating Islamic healing principles into nursing should complement rather than replace evidence-based clinical management.

Against this background, the present study addresses the identified gap by synthesising Qur'anic and Prophetic understandings of health, illness, healing, and therapeutic practice with maqasid al-shariah and translating these concepts into a conceptual framework relevant to holistic nursing practice. The intended contribution is therefore not to establish that Islam values health or contains teachings concerning healing, as these principles are already well documented. Rather, the contribution lies in organising these established principles into a coherent conceptual structure and examining how they may inform key areas of nursing knowledge and practice needed for spiritually sensitive, culturally responsive, ethically grounded, and clinically safe nursing care.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study are:

1. To explore Islamic perspectives on health, illness, and healing based on the Qur'an and Sunnah.
2. To analyse the principles of healing within the framework of maqasid al-shariah.
3. To examine how these principles may inform holistic, culturally sensitive, and spiritually responsive nursing practice.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative textual analysis to examine Islamic perspectives on health, illness, and healing derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah and to interpret their relevance to holistic nursing practice. A textual approach was considered appropriate because the study sought to identify, interpret, and synthesise meanings and principles embedded within religious texts and scholarly interpretations rather than measure empirical relationships or experiences. The analysis was subsequently organised thematically to identify recurring concepts and relationships across the selected texts (Braun & Clarke 2006; Creswell & Creswell 2018).

Unit of Analysis

The units of analysis comprised textual passages that addressed the concepts of health, illness, healing, treatment, spiritual responses to illness, and the preservation of human well-being. These included selected Qur'anic verses, relevant Prophetic traditions (hadith), and scholarly interpretations of these texts. Particular attention was given to passages concerning shifa' (healing), illness and suffering, sabr (patience), tawakkul (reliance upon Allah), supplication (du'a), spiritual healing, seeking treatment, and therapeutic practices associated with the Prophetic tradition. The concept of preservation of life (hifz al-nafs) was also examined as an ethical lens within the broader framework of maqasid al-shariah.

Sources and Data Collection

Primary textual sources consisted of selected Qur'anic verses and Prophetic traditions relevant to the study objectives. Recognised hadith collections, including Sahih al-Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, Sunan Ibn Majah, and Jamiʿ al-Tirmidhi, were consulted to identify Prophetic guidance concerning illness, seeking treatment, spiritual coping, and therapeutic practices.

Classical Qur'anic commentary, particularly Tafsir Ibn Kathir and Al-Jamiʿ li Ahkam al-Qur'an by al-Qurtubi, was used to support the interpretation of selected Qur'anic passages. Contemporary scholarly literature on Islamic medicine, Islamic bioethics, spirituality, healthcare, and nursing was also examined to contextualise the primary texts and relate the identified Islamic principles to contemporary healthcare practice (Rahman 1987; Al-Bar 2007; Al-Bar & Chamsi-Pasha 2015; Alrawi & Fetters 2012; Padela & Zaidi 2018).

Texts were selected purposively according to their relevance to the three study objectives: (1) understanding Islamic concepts of health, illness, and healing; (2) examining healing within the framework of maqasid al-shariah; and (3) exploring the relevance of these principles to holistic nursing practice. Contemporary healthcare literature was additionally used to examine how spiritual care, cultural sensitivity, and selected therapeutic practices are discussed within modern healthcare settings.

Data Analysis and Theme Development

The selected texts were analysed thematically through an iterative process of reading, comparison, categorisation, and interpretation. The analysis was informed by the thematic approach described by Braun and Clarke (2006). First, the selected Qur'anic verses, Prophetic traditions, and scholarly interpretations were read repeatedly to familiarise the researchers with their meanings and contexts. Relevant textual segments were then identified and assigned initial conceptual categories based on the meanings conveyed within the texts.

Related categories were subsequently compared and grouped according to conceptual similarity. For example, references to health as a blessing, responsibility, and amanah were grouped around the concept of health in Islam, whereas references to suffering, purification, sabr, and tawakkul were organised around the Islamic understanding of illness. Texts concerning shifa', Qur'anic recitation, spiritual healing, and reliance upon Allah informed the conceptualisation of healing, while references to seeking treatment and specific therapeutic practices were grouped under Prophetic healing practices.

The categories were then reviewed in relation to the study objectives and synthesised into four principal thematic domains: (1) concept of health in Islam, (2) concept of illness in Islam, (3) conceptual framework of healing, and (4) Prophetic healing practices. These domains were subsequently interpreted through maqasid al-shariah, particularly hifz al-nafs, and examined in relation to contemporary holistic nursing practice.

Rather than treating the themes as isolated religious concepts, the final analytical stage examined their conceptual relationships. This synthesis informed the development of the proposed Islamic holistic healing framework, which connects Qur'anic and Prophetic foundations with healing principles, maqasid al-shariah, Prophetic healing practices, and their potential application within culturally and spiritually sensitive nursing care.

Methodological Rigour and Interpretive Validation

Methodological rigour was strengthened through source triangulation and researcher review. Qur'anic passages were interpreted with reference to established classical commentaries, while Prophetic traditions were drawn from recognised hadith collections. Interpretations derived from these primary religious sources were further compared with contemporary scholarship in Islamic medicine, Islamic bioethics, spirituality, and healthcare to ensure that the emerging concepts were supported across relevant bodies of literature.

Theme development was conducted iteratively. Following the initial identification and categorisation of relevant textual material, the emerging themes were repeatedly compared with the source texts and study objectives to assess their conceptual coherence and relevance. The themes and their interpretations were subsequently reviewed by the second researcher, who examined the

appropriateness of the thematic categories, their alignment with the underlying textual evidence, and their relevance to the conceptual focus of the study. Differences in interpretation were discussed between the researchers, and the thematic structure was refined until agreement was reached.

The final thematic domains comprised: (1) concept of health in Islam, (2) concept of illness in Islam, (3) conceptual framework of healing, and (4) Prophetic healing practices. The relationships among these domains and their interpretation through maqasid al-shariah, particularly hifz al-nafs, were also reviewed before development of the proposed Islamic holistic healing framework.

Particular attention was given to distinguishing theological interpretations from contemporary biomedical evidence. Scientific studies concerning therapeutic substances or spiritual practices were used to contextualise their contemporary healthcare relevance rather than as evidence to authenticate Qur'anic verses or Prophetic traditions. This process of source triangulation, iterative thematic review, and researcher validation strengthened the interpretive consistency and credibility of the analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Concept of Health in Islam

In Islamic teachings, health is regarded as one of the greatest blessings bestowed by Allah upon human beings. The Qur'an and the Sunnah emphasise the importance of maintaining physical and spiritual well-being as part of human responsibility in fulfilling religious duties and societal obligations. A healthy body enables individuals to perform acts of worship, maintain productivity, and contribute positively to society. In this sense, health is not merely the absence of illness but a state of balance that encompasses physical, spiritual, psychological, and social well-being (Rahman 1987; Al-Bar 2007). Contemporary scholars also highlight that Islamic perspectives on health emphasise holistic well-being, integrating spiritual values with physical care and ethical medical practice (Al-Bar & Chamsi-Pasha 2015; Padela & Zaidi 2018). The Qur'an highlights the significance of divine guidance in preserving human well-being. Allah states: "And We send down of the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy for the believers" (Qur'an 17:82). This verse indicates that healing in Islam is not limited to physical treatment but also includes spiritual guidance and moral development. Classical Qur'anic commentators explain that the Qur'an serves as a source of spiritual healing by strengthening faith, providing ethical guidance, and offering comfort during times of hardship (Ibn Kathir 2000). Recent studies on religion and health further demonstrate that spiritual beliefs and practices can significantly influence individuals' perceptions of illness and coping mechanisms during health challenges (Koenig 2012).

Islam also emphasises the importance of maintaining good health through preventive measures. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) reminded believers of the value of health and the importance of appreciating it before it is lost. In a well-known hadith narrated by Ibn Abbas, the Prophet said: "There are two blessings which many people lose: health and free time." (Al-Bukhari 1994). This hadith demonstrates that health is considered a precious blessing that should be protected and utilised responsibly. From an Islamic perspective, maintaining health involves adopting healthy lifestyles, seeking medical treatment when necessary, and preserving the body as a trust (amanah) from Allah.

Furthermore, the Islamic understanding of health reflects the broader framework of the objectives of Islamic law (maqasid al-shariah), particularly the preservation of life (hifz al-nafs). The protection of human life and well-being is one of the fundamental goals of Islamic law, which emphasises the importance of safeguarding physical and spiritual health (Al-Bar & Chamsi-Pasha 2015). This holistic understanding provides a valuable foundation for healthcare professionals, especially nurses, who are responsible for promoting patient well-being through compassionate and comprehensive care. Integrating Islamic perspectives on health into nursing practice can therefore support holistic and culturally sensitive healthcare delivery (Padela & Zaidi 2018; Koenig 2012).

Within the proposed framework, this understanding extends the conventional concept of holistic care by positioning spiritual well-being not merely as an additional dimension of health, but as an

integral component of the Muslim patient's understanding of health that may inform nursing assessment and care planning.

Concept of Illness in Islam

In Islamic teachings, illness is not perceived solely as a physical or biological condition but is also understood within a broader spiritual and moral framework. The Qur'an and the Sunnah describe illness as part of the human experience and as a means through which believers may be tested, purified, and spiritually elevated. This perspective reflects the holistic understanding of human life in Islam, where physical health and spiritual well-being are closely interconnected (Rahman 1987; Al-Bar & Chamsi-Pasha 2015). Contemporary scholarship also notes that Islamic views on illness integrate theological, ethical, and medical perspectives, emphasising both spiritual reflection and responsible healthcare practices (Padela & Zaidi 2018; Alrawi and Fetters 2012).

The Qur'an reminds believers that trials and difficulties are part of human life and serve as a means of spiritual growth and moral reflection. Illness may therefore function as a test from Allah that encourages patience (*sabr*), trust in divine wisdom (*tawakkul*), and increased reliance upon God. From this perspective, experiencing illness may strengthen a believer's faith and awareness of human dependence on divine mercy. Studies on religion and health also suggest that spiritual beliefs can influence individuals' coping strategies during illness and contribute to psychological resilience (Koenig 2012).

Prophetic traditions further emphasise the spiritual significance of illness. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) explained that physical suffering experienced by believers can serve as a means of expiation for sins and a source of spiritual reward. In a well-known hadith, the Prophet said: "No fatigue, illness, anxiety, sorrow, harm or distress befalls a Muslim—even the prick of a thorn—except that Allah expiates some of his sins for that." (Al-Bukhari 1994; Muslim 2007). This hadith highlights that illness in Islam is not viewed merely as a negative experience but may also carry spiritual meaning and benefits. Through patience and faith, illness can become an opportunity for moral purification and spiritual development.

At the same time, Islamic teachings strongly encourage believers to seek appropriate medical treatment and not to neglect physical care. The Prophet Muhammad emphasised the importance of seeking remedies for diseases and stated: "Allah has not sent down a disease except that He has also sent down its cure." (Al-Bukhari 1994). This prophetic guidance demonstrates that Islam promotes a balanced understanding of illness that combines spiritual reflection with practical efforts to seek treatment. Illness therefore does not negate human responsibility to pursue medical care and maintain well-being.

From a broader ethical perspective, this understanding aligns with the objectives of Islamic law (*maqasid al-shariah*), particularly the preservation of life (*hifz al-nafs*). Islamic teachings encourage believers to take necessary measures to protect their health while maintaining spiritual resilience during times of illness (Al-Bar & Chamsi-Pasha 2015; Padela & Zaidi 2018).

For healthcare professionals, particularly nurses, recognising the spiritual meaning that patients may associate with illness can help support more compassionate and culturally sensitive care. Research on spiritual care in healthcare indicates that acknowledging patients' religious beliefs may enhance emotional support, improve coping mechanisms, and contribute to more holistic healthcare practices (Koenig 2012; Puchalski et al. 2014). Understanding these perspectives can therefore assist nurses in providing care that addresses both the physical and spiritual dimensions of patient well-being. Importantly, recognising the spiritual meaning of illness does not require nurses to interpret illness theologically on behalf of patients. Rather, nurses should be prepared to identify and support the meanings that patients themselves attach to illness while continuing to provide appropriate evidence-based clinical care.

Conceptual Framework of Healing

Healing in Islamic teachings is understood within a holistic framework that integrates physical, spiritual, and psychological dimensions of human well-being. The Qur'an and the Sunnah present healing not merely as the treatment of disease but as a comprehensive process that restores balance between the body, mind, and soul. This perspective reflects the broader Islamic worldview in which health is closely linked to spiritual awareness, ethical conduct, and reliance upon Allah. Classical and contemporary scholars emphasise that Islamic approaches to health combine both spiritual guidance and practical means of treatment (Rahman 1987; Al-Bar & Chamsi-Pasha 2015).

A central element of this framework is the Qur'anic concept of *shifāʾ* (healing). The Qur'an describes itself as a source of healing and mercy for believers. Allah states: "And We send down of the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy for the believers." (Qur'an 17:82). Classical Qur'anic commentators interpret this verse as referring primarily to spiritual healing. Ibn Kathir explains that the Qur'an heals the spiritual diseases of the heart such as doubt, anxiety, and moral corruption, while guiding believers towards faith and righteousness (Ibn Kathir 2000). Similarly, al-Qurtubi notes that the Qur'an provides spiritual comfort and moral clarity that help individuals cope with suffering and adversity (Al-Qurtubi 2006). Through recitation, reflection, and remembrance of Allah, the Qur'an contributes to inner tranquillity and psychological resilience, which are important elements in the process of healing.

Closely related to this concept is the practice of *ruqyah*, which involves the recitation of specific Qur'anic verses and supplications for protection and healing. Within Islamic tradition, ruqyah is considered a legitimate form of spiritual therapy when it is performed using authentic Qur'anic verses and prophetic supplications. The purpose of ruqyah is to strengthen reliance upon Allah (*tawakkul*), provide emotional comfort, and address spiritual or psychological distress. Such practices highlight the spiritual dimension of healing that complements physical treatment.

Faith and reliance upon Allah also play a crucial role in the Islamic understanding of healing. Believers are encouraged to maintain patience (*sabr*) and trust in divine wisdom while seeking appropriate remedies for their illnesses. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasised that every disease has a cure provided by Allah, encouraging believers to pursue treatment while maintaining spiritual reliance upon God (Al-Bukhari 1994). This balanced approach reflects the Islamic principle that spiritual faith and practical effort should work together in the pursuit of healing.

The concept of healing in Islam also corresponds with the broader framework of the objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*), particularly the preservation of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*). The maqāṣid approach emphasises the protection and promotion of essential human interests, including religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property. Within this framework, safeguarding human health and seeking appropriate treatment are considered important responsibilities in preserving human life and well-being. Kamali (2008) explains that the preservation of life represents one of the primary objectives of Islamic law and serves as a guiding principle for policies and practices that protect human welfare. Similarly, Auda (2008) highlights that the maqāṣid framework offers a holistic and dynamic approach for understanding Islamic legal principles in contemporary contexts, including healthcare and medical ethics. Healing in Islam is therefore understood as a comprehensive effort to maintain balance between the physical, spiritual, and psychological dimensions of human life in accordance with the objectives of Islamic law.

The significance of these principles for the present study lies not in presenting shifa', ruqyah, sabr, or tawakkul as newly identified Islamic concepts, as these are well established within Islamic scholarship. Rather, their contribution lies in synthesising these principles as interconnected dimensions of healing that may shape how Muslim patients understand illness, treatment, recovery, and spiritual coping. Organising these principles within a coherent framework therefore provides a conceptual bridge between established Islamic teachings on healing and their potential application within contemporary holistic healthcare and nursing practice.

In addition to emphasising spiritual healing and reliance upon faith, the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) also highlights the importance of seeking treatment and utilising natural remedies. Several prophetic traditions mention specific therapeutic substances and practices that contribute to human health and well-being. These prophetic healing practices illustrate the integration of spiritual guidance and practical treatment within Islamic tradition and will be discussed in the following section.

Taken together, the Islamic perspectives on health, illness, and healing present a holistic framework that integrates spiritual awareness, moral responsibility, and practical efforts to maintain well-being. Health is regarded as a divine blessing that enables individuals to fulfil their religious and social responsibilities, while illness is understood as part of the human experience that may serve as a test, a means of spiritual purification, or a reminder of human dependence upon Allah. Healing, therefore, encompasses both spiritual and physical dimensions, combining reliance upon Allah with the responsible use of available treatments. This holistic understanding reflects the broader objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*), particularly the preservation of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*) and the promotion of human welfare (Kamali 2008; Auda 2008). Building upon this conceptual framework, the following section discusses specific therapeutic practices derived from the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), which illustrate how Islamic guidance on healing can be applied in practical contexts. The key concepts related to health, illness, and healing derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Islamic Perspectives on Health, Illness, and Healing

Concept	Islamic Perspective	Key Sources	Relevance to Nursing Practice
Health	Health is a divine blessing enabling individuals to fulfil religious and social responsibilities	Qur'an 17:82; Rahman (1987)	Nurses should promote holistic well-being including spiritual care
Illness	Illness may function as a test, purification of sins, and reminder of human dependence on Allah	Al-Bukhari; Muslim	Nurses should recognise patients' spiritual coping mechanisms
Healing	Healing involves both spiritual and physical dimensions including faith, prayer, and treatment	Qur'an; Sunnah; Ibn Kathir	Holistic care integrating spiritual and clinical support
Maqasid	Preservation of life (*hifz al-nafs*) emphasises safeguarding human health	Kamali (2008); Auda (2008)	Ethical framework guiding patient-centred care

As illustrated in Table 1, Islamic teachings emphasise a holistic understanding of health that integrates spiritual, physical, and ethical dimensions. Building upon this conceptual framework, the following section discusses specific prophetic healing practices.

Prophetic Healing Practices

The teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) provide practical therapeutic guidance that complements the spiritual framework of healing described in the Qur'an. These practices, commonly referred to as *al-ṭibb al-nabawī* (Prophetic medicine), represent an integrated model of healthcare that combines spiritual devotion, preventive care, and the use of natural remedies. Within Islamic tradition, Prophetic medicine does not function as a replacement for medical treatment but rather as a complementary approach that promotes holistic well-being and encourages believers to utilise available remedies while maintaining reliance upon Allah. Contemporary scholarship increasingly recognises that Prophetic medical practices reflect a holistic health philosophy that integrates spiritual, psychological, and physiological dimensions of healing (Al-Bar & Chamsi-Pasha

2015; Padela & Zaidi 2018).

One of the most prominent examples of prophetic therapeutic guidance is the use of honey. The Qur'an explicitly highlights the medicinal value of honey in the following verse: "From their bellies comes a drink of varying colours wherein is healing for mankind." (Qur'an 16:69). Classical Islamic scholars interpreted this verse as an indication of the therapeutic benefits of honey in maintaining human health. Historically, honey has been used within Islamic medical traditions to treat digestive disorders, infections, and wounds. Recent biomedical studies continue to support these traditional insights, demonstrating that honey possesses antibacterial, antioxidant, and anti-inflammatory properties that contribute to wound healing and infection control. Contemporary medical research further suggests that honey-based treatments may play a role in modern clinical care, particularly in wound management and antimicrobial therapy (Al-Waili et al. 2011; Tashkandi 2021).

Another widely recognised prophetic remedy is black seed (*Nigella sativa*), which has been recommended in several authentic prophetic traditions. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) stated: "Use the black seed, for it contains healing for every disease except death." (Al-Bukhari 1994; Muslim 2007). This hadith highlights the significance of natural remedies within Islamic therapeutic practices. Modern pharmacological research has identified various bioactive compounds in *Nigella sativa*, including thymoquinone, which demonstrates antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, and immunomodulatory effects. Recent scientific investigations suggest that black seed may have potential therapeutic benefits in managing chronic diseases, metabolic disorders, and immune-related conditions (Yimer et al. 2019; Alberts et al. 2024).

Importantly, the inclusion of these remedies within the Prophetic healing tradition should not be interpreted as a recommendation for nurses to prescribe or administer them independently. Their relevance to nursing lies primarily in recognising patients' use or preferences for such remedies, assessing potential safety considerations, communicating these practices to the healthcare team when clinically relevant, and supporting informed and evidence-based decision-making.

In addition to natural remedies, prophetic guidance also emphasises the importance of spiritual practices such as supplication (*duʿāʾ*), remembrance of Allah (*dhikr*), and reliance upon divine assistance during illness. These spiritual practices play a significant role in supporting psychological resilience and emotional well-being among patients. Contemporary research in the field of religion and health increasingly demonstrates that spiritual coping mechanisms, including prayer and religious reflection, may contribute positively to patients' mental health, stress management, and recovery processes (Koenig 2021; Peteet 2019).

Taken together, prophetic healing practices illustrate the integrative nature of Islamic approaches to healthcare. They reflect a model of healing that combines spiritual support, preventive care, and natural therapeutic interventions while encouraging individuals to seek appropriate medical treatment. For healthcare professionals, understanding these prophetic healing traditions can help facilitate culturally sensitive care for Muslim patients. Such awareness may enhance patient trust, improve communication between healthcare providers and patients, and support holistic healthcare practices that respect patients' spiritual beliefs alongside evidence-based medical treatment.

The concepts of healing discussed in the Qur'an and Sunnah, together with prophetic therapeutic practices, can be synthesised into a holistic framework that integrates spiritual principles, ethical guidance, and practical healthcare approaches, as illustrated in Figure 1.

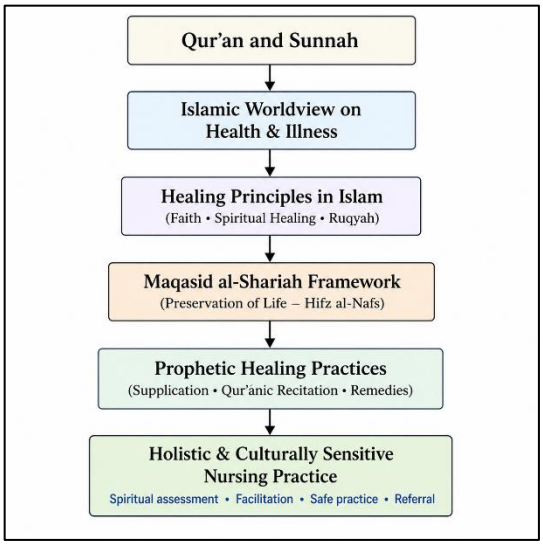


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Islamic Holistic Healing.

This framework illustrates how the Qur'an and Sunnah shape the Islamic understanding of health, illness, and healing. The framework integrates spiritual principles, prophetic healing practices, and the ethical objectives of Islamic law (*maqasid al-shariah*), particularly the preservation of life (*hifz al-nafs*). These elements collectively inform holistic and culturally sensitive nursing practice.

Translation of Islamic Holistic Healing into Nursing Practice

The Islamic perspectives on health, illness, and healing discussed in the previous sections provide important insights for contemporary nursing practice, particularly in multicultural healthcare environments where patients' religious beliefs may significantly influence their perceptions of illness and recovery. Islamic teachings emphasise a holistic understanding of health that integrates physical, spiritual, psychological, and social dimensions of human well-being. For nurses and healthcare professionals, recognising these dimensions can support the delivery of more comprehensive and patient-centred care that respects the values and beliefs of Muslim patients.

One important implication for nursing practice is the integration of spiritual care into clinical settings. Islamic teachings highlight the role of faith, supplication (*duʿāʾ*), remembrance of Allah (*dhikr*), and Qur'anic recitation as sources of emotional comfort and psychological resilience during illness. Recent studies in healthcare research indicate that addressing patients' spiritual needs may contribute to improved coping mechanisms, reduced anxiety, and enhanced overall well-being during illness and hospitalisation (Koenig 2021; Puchalski et al. 2022). Nurses who are aware of the spiritual needs of Muslim patients can therefore facilitate supportive practices such as allowing space for prayer, respecting religious practices, and encouraging spiritual support systems when appropriate.

To translate these principles into clinical practice, nurses should be appropriately equipped with competencies in Islamic spiritual care and Prophetic holistic healing. This preparation may be incorporated into undergraduate nursing education, continuing professional development, and hospital-based training programmes. Training should provide nurses with basic knowledge of Islamic perspectives on health and illness, spiritual practices such as du'a, dhikr, Qur'anic recitation and ruqyah, and commonly recognised Prophetic remedies, while clearly distinguishing spiritual support from clinical treatment. Nurses should also be trained to assess patients' spiritual needs, communicate respectfully about religious healing preferences, facilitate appropriate spiritual practices when requested, and recognise situations requiring referral to qualified religious personnel or other members of the multidisciplinary healthcare team. Importantly, such preparation is not intended to transform nurses into practitioners of Prophetic medicine, but to equip them to recognise and respond safely to

the religious and spiritual dimensions of Muslim patients' healing experiences. This approach allows Prophetic holistic practices to complement, rather than replace, evidence-based medical and nursing care.

In addition, the Islamic concept of healing emphasises the importance of combining spiritual reliance with practical efforts to seek treatment. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) encouraged believers to pursue remedies for illnesses while maintaining trust in Allah. This balanced perspective aligns closely with contemporary models of holistic healthcare that recognise the interaction between biological, psychological, social, and spiritual factors in patient recovery. Recent healthcare research highlights that culturally and spiritually sensitive care can strengthen patient–provider relationships, improve communication, and increase patient satisfaction in clinical settings (Peteet 2019; Zagloul et al. 2024).

The framework of *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* also provides an ethical foundation that can inform nursing practice in Muslim healthcare contexts. The preservation of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*) represents one of the central objectives of Islamic law and emphasises the responsibility to protect human health and well-being. From this perspective, healthcare professionals play an important role in fulfilling this objective through compassionate care, disease prevention, and the promotion of health. Contemporary scholars highlight that the maqāṣid approach offers a valuable framework for addressing ethical challenges in healthcare and guiding patient-centred decision-making within Muslim communities (Auda 2008; Kamali 2008; Bayer and Ellam 2025).

Furthermore, incorporating an understanding of Islamic perspectives on healing may help nurses develop greater cultural competence when caring for Muslim patients. Cultural competence in healthcare involves recognising and respecting patients' cultural and religious values while ensuring that medical care remains evidence-based and ethically sound. Recent nursing research emphasises that culturally sensitive care can improve patient trust, adherence to treatment, and overall healthcare outcomes, particularly in diverse healthcare settings (Zagloul et al. 2024; Attum et al. 2023).

Ultimately, integrating Islamic perspectives on health and healing into nursing practice does not require replacing biomedical approaches but rather complementing them with culturally and spiritually sensitive care. By acknowledging the spiritual beliefs and healing practices valued by Muslim patients, nurses can contribute to more holistic healthcare environments that address both the physical and spiritual dimensions of patient well-being. Such an approach reflects the broader Islamic understanding of health as a balanced state of harmony between the body, mind, and soul.

CONCLUSIONS

This study has explored the concepts of health, illness, and healing from the perspectives of the Qur'an and the Sunnah and examined their relevance to contemporary nursing practice. Islamic teachings present a holistic understanding of health that encompasses physical, spiritual, psychological, and social dimensions of human well-being. Within this framework, health is regarded as a divine blessing that enables individuals to fulfil their responsibilities in life, while illness is understood as part of the human experience that may serve as a test, a means of spiritual purification, and an opportunity for personal reflection and growth.

The Qur'an and the Sunnah provide a comprehensive approach to healing that combines spiritual reliance upon Allah with the responsible use of available remedies. The concept of *shifāʾ* in the Qur'an highlights the role of spiritual healing through faith, remembrance of Allah, and Qur'anic recitation, while prophetic teachings encourage believers to seek treatment and utilise natural remedies as part of maintaining health. This balanced perspective reflects the broader objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*), particularly the preservation of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), which emphasises the protection of human health and well-being.

For contemporary healthcare practice, particularly nursing, these teachings offer valuable insights for developing holistic and culturally sensitive care. Recognising the spiritual beliefs and

healing practices valued by Muslim patients can enhance communication, strengthen trust between patients and healthcare providers, and support more comprehensive approaches to patient care. Integrating spiritual considerations into clinical practice may therefore contribute to improved patient experiences and promote compassionate healthcare environments that address both the physical and spiritual needs of individuals.

In conclusion, the Qur'an and the Sunnah provide a rich ethical and conceptual framework for understanding health and healing that remains relevant in modern healthcare contexts. By incorporating these perspectives into nursing practice, healthcare professionals can contribute to more holistic models of care that respect patients' cultural and spiritual values while maintaining evidence-based medical practice.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

M.F.M.I. (Conceptualisation; Methodology; Formal analysis; Writing–original draft; Writing–review & editing).

S.Z.S. (Conceptualisation; Validation; Supervision; Writing–review & editing).

AVAILABILITY OF DATA AND MATERIALS

The data supporting this study's findings are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

ETHICS STATEMENT

Not applicable.

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