

## ***Al-Futūr al-Rūhī* in the Qur'ān: A Semantic-Field Model of Spiritual Weakening**

*Al-Futūr al-Rūhī dalam Al-Qur'ān: Model Medan Semantik tentang Pelemahan Spiritual*

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### **Abstract**

Contemporary Muslim discussions often describe spiritual exhaustion (*al-futūr al-rūhī*) alongside modern “burnout,” yet Qur'anic studies rarely examine how the Qur'an itself differentiates movements of spiritual weakening through its moral-psychological vocabulary. This article investigates how Qur'anic semantics articulate *al-futūr al-rūhī* as a structured process rather than a loose set of moral descriptors. Using an integrated thematic approach combining semantic-field mapping with thematic exegesis, the study traces five interrelated roots—*ghaflah* (heedlessness), *i' rād* (turning away), *nufūr* (aversion), *futūr* (slackening), and *kasl* (ritual apathy)—and tests their relations through corpus retrieval, contextual disambiguation, and close reading of anchor loci across Makkān–Madinan contexts. Readings are constrained through classical tafsīr triangulation (al-Rāzī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Ālūsī, and Ibn 'Āshūr) to avoid collapsing believer fluctuation into condemnatory categories directed at entrenched rejection or hypocrisy. The findings show a recurrent semantic progression from attentional dulling to volitional withdrawal, affective recoil, and outward slackening, with *kasl* functioning as an exegetically restricted boundary-marker rather than a default label for fatigue. The article further identifies Qur'anic counter-orientations within the same discourse (dhikr/tadabbur, tawbah, sujūd/khushū', istiḳāmah/ikhhlāṣ, and shukr) that frame recovery as a cyclical reorientation. Overall, the study offers a text-grounded model that clarifies degrees and limits of *al-futūr al-rūhī* in the Qur'an and provides a disciplined vocabulary for discussing spiritual fatigue without semantic overreach.

**Keywords:** *al-futūr al-rūhī*; spiritual burnout; thematic exegesis; spiritual well-being; Qur'ān

### **Abstrak:**

Wacana Muslim kontemporer kerap menyandingkan kelelahan spiritual (*al-futūr al-rūhī*) dengan “burnout,” tetapi studi Al-Qur'an jarang menelaah bagaimana Al-Qur'an sendiri membedakan gerak pelemahan spiritual melalui kosakata moral-psikologisnya. Artikel ini mengkaji bagaimana semantik Al-Qur'an merumuskan *al-futūr al-rūhī* sebagai proses terstruktur, bukan sekadar daftar istilah moral. Dengan pendekatan tematik-terpadu yang menggabungkan pemetaan medan semantik dan tafsir tematik, studi ini menelusuri lima akar yang saling terkait—*ghaflah* (kelengahan), *i' rād* (berpaling), *nufūr* (keengganan), *futūr* (kendur), dan *kasl* (malas ritual)—melalui penelusuran korpus, disambiguasi konteks, serta pembacaan dekat ayat jangkar lintas konteks Makki–Madani. Pembacaan dikendalikan oleh triangulasi tafsir klasik (al-Rāzī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Ālūsī, dan Ibn 'Āshūr) agar tidak menyamakan fluktuasi iman orang beriman dengan kategori kecaman yang ditujukan pada penolakan menetap atau kemunafikan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan progresi semantik yang berulang dari tumpuhnya



perhatian menuju berpaling secara volisional, mengeras menjadi reaksi afektif, lalu termanifestasi sebagai kendur praktik; sementara *kasl* berfungsi sebagai penanda batas yang dibatasi secara eksegetik, bukan label default bagi kelelahan. Artikel ini juga mengidentifikasi orientasi tandingan dalam wacana Al-Qur'an (dhikr/tadabbur, tawbah, sujud/khusyuk, istiqamah/ikhlas, dan syukur) yang membingkai pemulihan sebagai reorientasi siklik. Secara umum, studi ini menawarkan model berbasis teks untuk menjelaskan derajat dan batas *al-futūr al-rūḥī* dalam Al-Qur'an serta menyediakan kosa kata yang lebih disiplin untuk membahas kelelahan spiritual tanpa *semantic overreach*.

**Kata kunci:** al-futūr al-rūḥī; kelelahan spiritual; tafsir tematik; kesejahteraan spiritual; al-Qur'an

## Introduction

A sense of depletion affecting the body, mind, and inner life has become widespread in the twenty-first century. Nevertheless, despite the growing interest in mental health, wellness culture, and stress-management practices, a significant portion of people report the occurrence of emotional fatigue, existential disorientation, and a lack of inner vitality.<sup>1</sup> In the Muslim context, similar experiences are referred to as *al-futūr al-rūḥī*, which translates as a decline in spiritual determination and alertness, and affects the consistency of devotional practice and moral orientation.<sup>2</sup> Empirical research indicates that these conditions are not confined to the occupational setting. It also appears among religious leaders, teachers, caregivers, and students, often with anxiety, withdrawal, impaired memory, and, in some cases, a crisis of faith.<sup>3</sup>

- 1 Arndt Büssing et al., "Perceptions of Spiritual Dryness in Iran during the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Journal of Religion and Health* 60, no. 5 (July 2021): 3347–71, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-021-01360-0>; Leslie W. Oglesby et al., "The Relationship between Spiritual Well-Being and Burnout in Collegiate Athletic Trainers," *Journal of Athletic Training* 56, no. 5 (May 2021): 518–28, <https://doi.org/10.4085/1062-6050-0105-20>; M. S. Mansyur, K. Kerwanto, and M. A. Nawawi, "Kebahagiaan Spiritual bagi Nestapa Manusia Modern (Studi Pemikiran M. Quraish Shihab dalam Tafsir al-Mishbāh)," *Ihsanika: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 3, no. 2 (2023): 122–34; Arndt Büssing et al., "Perceptions of Spiritual Dryness in Iran during the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Journal of Religion and Health* 60, no. 5 (July 2021): 3347–71, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-021-01360-0>
- 2 Malik Muhammad Sohail, Urooj Arshad, and Arndt Büssing, "Triggers of Spiritual Dryness: Insights from Imams in a Muslim Majority Society," *Pastoral Psychology* (September 2025), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11089-025-01253-z>; A. R. Munawar, A. S. Cendana, and N. T. Taudiyah, "Jurisprudential and Psychological Approach to Dar al-Ifta's Fatwa on Overcoming Worship Laziness within the Framework of Modern Behavioral Challenges," *Parewa Saraq: Journal of Islamic Law and Fatwa Review* 2, no. 1 (2024): 15–28; A. Ali @ Mat Zin, "Navigating Sunan Sittah in Exploring the Prophetic Style of Coping with Mental Health Issues: A Case Study on Sadness," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu al-Qur'an dan Hadis* 26, no. 2 (2025): 279–302, <https://doi.org/10.14421/qh.v26i2.5699>; A. IbrahimNur, "Spiritualitas Masyarakat dalam Menghadapi Problematika Zaman," conference paper, 2019,
- 3 Mohammad Mehdi Salaree et al., "Coping Strategies Used by Iranian Nurses to Deal with Burnout: A Qualitative Research," *Global Journal of Health Science* 6, no. 6 (August 2014), <https://doi.org/10.5539/gjhs.v6n6p273>; Nurasikin Mohamad Shariff et al., "Islamic Music Listening, Spiritual Well-Being and Burnout of Employees in Islamic University," *Al-Irsyad Journal of Islamic and Contemporary Issues* 7, no. 2 (December 2022): 915–23, <https://doi.org/10.53840/alirsyad.v7i2.320>; L. Mulyadi et al., "The Role of Stress Management with Dhikr-Based Relaxation Techniques in Reducing Teacher Burnout in the Era of Independent Learning Curriculum,"

Modern psychology typically defines burnout as a syndrome of prolonged stress with such symptoms as exhaustion, depersonalization, and decreased effectiveness. The idea of *futūr* has long been discussed in Islamic spiritual literature as a repetitive moral-spiritual state related to the loss of *dhikr* (remembrance) and *mīzān* (balance) without necessarily implying disbelief or hypocrisy.<sup>4</sup> The conceptual framework is regularly applied in Muslim discourse to profiles of modern social dynamics, such as heightened responsibility, digital distraction, and moral fatigue, though the interpretations are often either descriptive or pastoral.<sup>5</sup>

While these psychological and pastoral framings help characterize the phenomenon, they leave open a more basic question for Qur'ānic studies: how does the Qur'ān itself conceptualize and differentiate movements of spiritual weakening through its moral-psychological vocabulary? Existing discussions often invoke general Qur'ānic themes such as human weakness (e.g., *wa-khuliqa al-insān ḍa'ifan*, Q 4:28), *wasatiyyah* (balance), *tazkiyah* (purification), and *dhikr* (remembrance), but they rarely examine how the Qur'ān internally distinguishes degrees, trajectories, and boundaries of *futūr* at the level of lexical patterning and exegetical context.

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*At-Tadris: Journal of Islamic Education* 3, no. 2 (2024): 42–50, <https://doi.org/10.56672/attadris.v3i2.401>; S. M. H. S. A. Rahman et al., “Developing Islamic Psychospiritual Guidelines for COVID-19 Task Counsellors,” *Afkar: Journal of Aqidah and Islamic Thought* 25, no. 1 (2023): 131–58, <https://doi.org/10.22452/afkar.vol25no1.5>; Rainbow Tin Hung Ho et al., “Underlying Spirituality and Mental Health: The Role of Burnout,” *Journal of Occupational Health* 58, no. 1 (January 2016): 66–71, <https://doi.org/10.1539/joh.15-0142-oa>; Malik Muhammad Sohail, Urooj Arshad, and Arndt Büssing, “Triggers of Spiritual Dryness: Insights from Imams in a Muslim Majority Society,” *Pastoral Psychology* (September 2025), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11089-025-01253-z>

- 4 J. Major et al., “Burnout Phenomenon in the Medical Profession,” *Lege Artis Medicinae* 16, no. 4 (2006): 367–73.; Diane J. Chandler, “Pastoral Burnout and the Impact of Personal Spiritual Renewal, Rest-Taking, and Support System Practices,” *Pastoral Psychology* 58, no. 3 (December 2008): 273–87, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11089-008-0184-4>; Rainbow Tin Hung Ho et al., “Underlying Spirituality and Mental Health: The Role of Burnout,” *Journal of Occupational Health* 58, no. 1 (January 2016): 66–71, <https://doi.org/10.1539/joh.15-0142-oa>; A. H. Usman, Z. Stapa, and M. F. R. Abdullah, “How to Deal with Workplace Stress: A Sufist Psychotherapy Approach,” *Mental Health, Religion & Culture* 23, no. 7 (2020): 625–38, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2020.1829755>; Khatijah Othman et al., “The Needs for Psycho-Spiritual Competencies for Disaster Workers in Malaysia,” *Abqari Journal* 22, no. 2 (July 2020): 21–33, <https://doi.org/10.33102/abqari.vol22no2.320>
- 5 A. Y. F. Nawafi, “Islamic Spirituality: Reflections on Contemporary Da’wah Issues,” *Tasamuh: Jurnal Komunikasi dan Pengembangan Masyarakat Islam* 22, no. 1 (2024): 89–104, <https://doi.org/10.20414/tasamuh.v22i1.9191>; D. de Segovia Vicente et al., “Does Mindless Scrolling Hamper Well-Being? Combining ESM and Log-Data to Examine the Link between Mindless Scrolling, Goal Conflict, Guilt, and Daily Well-Being,” *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 29, no. 2 (2024): zmad056, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcmc/zmad056>; L. Mulyadi et al., “The Role of Stress Management with Dhikr-Based Relaxation Techniques in Reducing Teacher Burnout in the Era of Independent Learning Curriculum,” *At-Tadris: Journal of Islamic Education* 3, no. 2 (2024): 42–50, <https://doi.org/10.56672/attadris.v3i2.401>

To address this gap, this study proposes a Qur'ān-based, textually grounded process model of *al-futūr al-rūḥī*, developed through an analysis of five interrelated roots: *ghaflah* (heedlessness), *i' rād* (turning away), *nufūr* (aversion), *futūr* (slackening), and *kasl* (ritual apathy). Rather than functioning as independent moral labels, these terms are shown to operate as patterned, contextually restricted components of a semantic field. Accordingly, usage is shaped by the audience, the discourse setting, and the interpretive limits articulated in classical exegesis.

Accordingly, this article asks: (1) how do Qur'ānic semantic fields associated with *al-futūr al-rūḥī* function collectively to describe movements of spiritual weakening within the text; and (2) how does the Qur'ān articulate internal orientations of correction and stabilization within the same semantic field, as constrained by exegetical tradition? By foregrounding Qur'ānic semantics and interpretive boundaries, the study situates contemporary burnout discourse as a secondary dialogical frame, without reducing theological categories to psychological diagnosis.

To situate these questions, it is useful to map how contemporary scholarship frames *al-futūr al-rūḥī* in relation to burnout. Current discussions often draw on the broader psychological concept of burnout while also treating *futūr* as a distinctive moral-spiritual condition in Islamic tradition. Burnout is widely described as a chronic stress syndrome manifested in emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal efficacy, and the framework has been applied extensively in occupational settings such as education, healthcare, and caregiving, where long-term emotional labor can produce sustained exhaustion.<sup>6</sup>

In Islamic scholarship, *futūr*, however, is not only an inward state of mind; rather, it is a moral-spiritual condition that occurs when the heart is no longer connected to divine remembrance and balance. Researchers refer to it as a loss of determination expressed through a lack of energy for worship, a loss of focus on responsibilities, and a loss of spiritual motivation. Empirical research also indicates that *al-futūr al-rūḥī* is emotionally exhausting, a sense of distance from God, and a

6 J. Major et al., "Burnout Phenomenon in the Medical Profession," *Lege Artis Medicinae* 16, no. 4 (2006): 367–73; Diane J. Chandler, "Pastoral Burnout and the Impact of Personal Spiritual Renewal, Rest-Taking, and Support System Practices," *Pastoral Psychology* 58, no. 3 (December 2008): 273–87, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11089-008-0184-4>; Rainbow Tin Hung Ho et al., "Underlying Spirituality and Mental Health: The Role of Burnout," *Journal of Occupational Health* 58, no. 1 (January 2016): 66–71, <https://doi.org/10.1539/joh.15-0142-0a>; L. Mulyadi et al., "The Role of Stress Management with Dhikr-Based Relaxation Techniques in Reducing Teacher Burnout in the Era of Independent Learning Curriculum," *At-Tadris: Journal of Islamic Education* 3, no. 2 (2024): 42–50, <https://doi.org/10.56672/attadris.v3i2.401>; Mohammad Mehdi Salaree et al., "Coping Strategies Used by Iranian Nurses to Deal with Burnout: A Qualitative Research," *Global Journal of Health Science* 6, no. 6 (August 2014), <https://doi.org/10.5539/gjhs.v6n6p273>; S. M. H. S. A. Rahman et al., "Developing Islamic Psychospiritual Guidelines for COVID-19 Task Counsellors," *Afkar: Journal of Aqidah and Islamic Thought* 25, no. 1 (2023): 131–58, <https://doi.org/10.22452/afkar.vol25no1.5>



loss of spiritual life, making it multidimensional.<sup>7</sup>

The literature lists several contexts in which *al-futūr al-rūḥī* is forced. One of the most evident categories is professional burnout among religious leaders, counselors, educators, and healthcare workers, as moral responsibility and long-term emotional demands can become exhausting and lead to withdrawal.<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, the second category is the pressure from family and society, such as rising divorce rates, abandonment of responsibility, and leadership fatigue, which weaken *amānah* (divine trust) and lead to a loss of direction among communities. Moreover, the third type draws attention to contemporary distracters, especially the over-influence of digital distractions and meaningless consumption.<sup>9</sup> It serves as a modern form of

- 7 A. H. Usman, Z. Stapa, and M. F. R. Abdullah, "How to Deal with Workplace Stress: A Sufist Psychotherapy Approach," *Mental Health, Religion & Culture* 23, no. 7 (2020): 625–38, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2020.1829755>; Khatijah Othman et al., "The Needs for Psycho-Spiritual Competencies for Disaster Workers in Malaysia," *Abqari Journal* 22, no. 2 (July 2020): 21–33, <https://doi.org/10.33102/abqari.vol22no2.320>; A. Y. F. Nawafi, "Islamic Spirituality: Reflections on Contemporary Da'wah Issues," *Tasamuh: Jurnal Komunikasi dan Pengembangan Masyarakat Islam* 22, no. 1 (2024): 89–104, <https://doi.org/10.20414/tasamuh.v22i1.9191>; Arndt Büssing et al., "Perceptions of Spiritual Dryness in Iran during the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Journal of Religion and Health* 60, no. 5 (July 2021): 3347–71, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-021-01360-0>; Malik Muhammad Sohail, Urooj Arshad, and Arndt Büssing, "Triggers of Spiritual Dryness: Insights from Imams in a Muslim Majority Society," *Pastoral Psychology* (September 2025), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11089-025-01253-z>; A. Ikrou et al., "Structural Equation Model for Nursing's Spiritual Commitment, Religious Adaptation, and Their Relationship to Quality of Life and Burnout," *Middle East Journal of Rehabilitation and Health Studies* 11, no. 3 (2024): e139573, <https://doi.org/10.5812/mejrh-139573>
- 8 S. M. H. S. A. Rahman et al., "Developing Islamic Psychospiritual Guidelines for COVID-19 Task Counsellors," *Afkar: Journal of Aqidah and Islamic Thought* 25, no. 1 (2023): 131–58, <https://doi.org/10.22452/afkar.vol25no1.5>; L. Mulyadi et al., "The Role of Stress Management with Dhikr-Based Relaxation Techniques in Reducing Teacher Burnout in the Era of Independent Learning Curriculum," *At-Tadris: Journal of Islamic Education* 3, no. 2 (2024): 42–50, <https://doi.org/10.56672/attadris.v3i2.401>; Mohammad Mehdi Salaree et al., "Coping Strategies Used by Iranian Nurses to Deal with Burnout: A Qualitative Research," *Global Journal of Health Science* 6, no. 6 (August 2014), <https://doi.org/10.5539/gjhs.v6n6p273>
- 9 Daisy Jehaan Corpin Orcullo and Nik Ahmad Hisham Ismail, "The Effect of Parental Divorce on the Psychological Wellbeing of Muslim Youth: Implications for Counseling and Psychotherapy," *International Journal of Embedded Systems* (2013), <https://doi.org/10.31436/IJES.V11I1-2.16>; Asrorun Niam Sholeh, Nopriadi Saputra, and Adler Haymans Manurung, "The Awareness of Islamic Law as a Spiritual Factor in Family Resilience and Parenting Quality During the Covid-19 Era," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 15, no. 2 (2021): 329–58, <https://doi.org/10.15642/jiis.2021.15.2.329-358>; Rifa Syahidah, Anggun Pratiwi, and Lutfiah Anisa Sholaihah, "Fenomena Kepemimpinan yang Lebih Mengutamakan Popularitas Dibandingkan Kualitas dalam Perspektif Islam," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu Keagamaan Islam* 4, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.58401/salimiya.v4i1.763>; Zainab Amin, "Religious Coping and Moral Injury among Muslim Clinicians: A Mixed-Methods Study of Post-Pandemic Burnout in Healthcare Settings," *Journal of Religion and Health* (2025), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-025-02528-8>; N. Sihombing et al., "The Ulul Albab Spiritual Leadership Construct and Its Impact on Psychological Well-Being: A CFA Examination among Campus Da'wah Activists," *OBAT: Jurnal Riset Ilmu Farmasi dan Kesehatan* 3, no. 1 (2025): 15–27, <https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:280326910>; D. de Segovia Vicente et al., "Does Mindless Scrolling Hamper Well-Being? Combining ESM and Log-Data to Examine the Link between Mindless Scrolling, Goal Conflict, Guilt, and Daily Well-Being," *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 29, no. 2

*lahw*, manifesting as *ghaflah* (heedlessness) and spiritual weariness.

In all these settings, signs of *al-futūr al-rūḥī* are consistently recorded: anxiety, emotional exhaustion, social withdrawal, loss of prayer and remembrance, and, in certain situations, a crisis of faith. To counter this, researchers have suggested Islamic interventions together with psychological interventions. The *dhikr*-related relaxation methods have also been demonstrated to reduce burnout symptoms among teachers, whereas psychospiritual counseling models specific to Muslim practitioners integrate the meaning of religiosity with therapeutic practice. In line with this, leadership models grounded in Qur'ānic spirituality have been associated with greater resilience and societal health at the community level.<sup>10</sup> Though such contributions have been made, most interventions have been localized and descriptive; questions of conceptual coherence and long-term applicability have not been sufficiently addressed.

In addition to modern studies, classical Islamic scholarship offers sustained contemplation of *futūr* as a recurrent state of religious life, rather than a sudden moral decline. Al-Ghazālī defines *futūr* as the progressive undermining of resolve that usually succeeds in the wake of fervor, with the forewarning that, otherwise, it undermines devotional practice without necessarily causing disbelief (*Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*).<sup>11</sup> Conversely, Ibn al-Qayyim considers *al-futūr al-rūḥī* to be a cyclical break rather than a fatal one, observing that the changing intensity of spiritual energy is unavoidable if duties are observed (*Madarij al-Sālikīn*). He also attributes the long-term complacency to the loss of moral sense, in which, over time, inattentiveness leads to the eventual loss of the ability to perceive divine signs (*al-Wābil al-Ṣayyib*).<sup>12</sup>

Classical scholars differentiate as well between the *al-futūr al-rūḥī* of the believers, which is temporary, and the *kasl* denounced in the Qur'ān in connection

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(2024): zmad056, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcmc/zmad056>

- 10 A. IbrahimNur, "Spiritualitas Masyarakat dalam Menghadapi Problematika Zaman," conference paper, 2019, <https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:214088842>; L. Mulyadi et al., "The Role of Stress Management with Dhikr-Based Relaxation Techniques in Reducing Teacher Burnout in the Era of Independent Learning Curriculum," *At-Tadris: Journal of Islamic Education* 3, no. 2 (2024): 42–50, <https://doi.org/10.56672/attadris.v3i2.401>; S. M. H. S. A. Rahman et al., "Developing Islamic Psychospiritual Guidelines for COVID-19 Task Counsellors," *Afkar: Journal of Aqidah and Islamic Thought* 25, no. 1 (2023): 131–58, <https://doi.org/10.22452/afkar.vol25no1.5>; N. Sihombing et al., "The Ulul Albab Spiritual Leadership Construct and Its Impact on Psychological Well-Being: A CFA Examination among Campus Da'wah Activists," *OBAT: Jurnal Riset Ilmu Farmasi dan Kesehatan* 3, no. 1 (2025): 15–27, <https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:280326910>
- 11 Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'rifah, n.d.)
- 12 Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *Madarij al-Sālikīn bayna Manāzil Iyyāka Na'budu wa-Iyyāka Nasta'in* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, n.d.); Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *al-Wābil al-Ṣayyib min al-Kalām al-Ṭayyib* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, n.d.)

to hypocrisy. Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī stresses that moderation maintains consistency in worship, but the opposite occurs when people have too much; they end up giving up (*Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wa-l-Ḥikam*)<sup>13</sup>. In this context, Qur'ānic descriptions of laziness in prayer (*Al-Nisā'* 4:142; *Al-Taṭbah* 9:54) are construed not as commonplace weariness but as instances of insincerity. Notably, this difference is fundamental, since it permits *al-futūr al-rūḥī* to be treated as a curable condition, in faith, in the presence of honesty and fundamental commitments.

Despite this large body of literature, a challenge still lies at the level of Qur'ānic analysis. A vast amount of modern literature is dedicated to symptoms, contexts, or interventions, whereas classical discourse provides moral clarity without recreating the Qur'ān's own lexical means for distinguishing between movements of *al-futūr al-rūḥī*. Divisions to remembrance, patience, or balance are commonly called upon but are often carried out in a general way that pays little attention to how these roots operate across various discourse contexts.

In Qur'ānic studies, this issue relates to a well-known methodological dilemma. Root-based studies of semantics are precise but flatten meaning when words are viewed as fixed concepts independent of audience, rhetoric, or context. Thematic exegesis, however, renders the conjunction of scattered passages possible, but also runs the risk of leveling out the inconsistency of tone and of critical impact, particularly in the case of condemnatory speech. Note that these issues are not merely technical. They are especially pronounced in moral-psychological vocabulary, where the same term may serve polemical, pedagogical, or descriptive functions depending on context.

The present study proceeds from this difficulty. Rather than treating *futūr* as a single concept or assembling verses under a broad theme, it reads five related roots (*ghaflah*, *i'rād*, *nufūr*, *futūr*, and *kasl*) as a connected semantic field whose internal relations become visible only when lexical patterning is read alongside exegetical restriction. Accordingly, the article asks how the Qur'ān itself traces movements of *al-futūr al-rūḥī* without collapsing temporary weakness among believers into the evaluative categories reserved for entrenched rejection or hypocrisy.

Methodologically, the study adopts an Integrated Thematic Exegesis (tafsīr mawḍū'ī) that combines al-Farmawī's thematic organization with semantic-field mapping (as developed in modern semantic-field approaches).<sup>14</sup> The Qur'ānic

13 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Aḥmad Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wa-l-Ḥikam* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, n.d.)

14 A. H. Al-Farmawī, *Al-Bidāyah fī al-Tafsīr al-Mawḍū'ī* (Kaherah: Al-Hadhārah al-'Arabīyyah, 1977); S. Abu Bakar and H. Hussin, "Prospek Penyelidikan Tafsir Mawḍū'ī di Malaysia: Prospects for Tafsir Mawḍū'ī Research in Malaysia," *Jurnal Pengajian Islam* 17, no. 2 (2024): 72–86, <https://doi.org/10.53840/jpi>.

thematic field of *al-futūr al-rūḥī* is operationalized through five roots ل-غ-ف (*ghaflah*), ض-ع-ر (*i' rāḍ*), ن-ف-ر (*nufūr*), ف-ت-ر (*futūr*), and ك-س-ل (*kasl*)—tracing a path from inattentiveness to outward disengagement. This semantic-field approach preserves cross-scalar coherence and the processual character of *futūr* that cannot be exhausted by a single verse.

The Qur'ānic text is treated as the primary data source. To ensure lexicosemantic accuracy and comprehensive retrieval, root searches are conducted using concordances, electronic indices, and a morphological corpus, with contextual disambiguation (for example, distinguishing ف-ت-ر “slacken/interval” from ف-ط-ر “split/create”). Each occurrence is recorded with *sūrah*–*āyah* references, morphological form, local context, and salient rhetorical or syntactic features; where relevant, *asbāb al-nuzūl* and intra-Qur'ānic cross-references are noted.

Exegetical triangulation cross-references selected readings with interpretations by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, Ibn Kathīr, Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ālūsī, and Muḥammad al-Ṭāhir ibn 'Āshūr to maintain semantic plausibility and contextual coherence without privileging a single exegetical voice. The study identifies 35 instances of *ghaflah*, 79 of *i' rāḍ* (53 in the relevant sense), 18 of *nufūr* (6 thematically central), three of *futūr*, and two of *kasl*. From this corpus, anchor verses are selected for close reading based on (1) semantic load and clarity, (2) representativeness of attested sub-meanings, and (3) distribution across Makkan and Madinan contexts, while remaining occurrences are retained for saturation checks and limiting cases (tabulated in Appendix A).

Eight anchor verses are selected across the five roots: for *ghaflah*, Q 21:1 and Q 30:7; for *i' rāḍ*, Q 20:124 and Q 18:57; for *nufūr*, Q 17:41 and Q 25:60; and for *futūr* and *kasl*, Q 21:20 and Q 4:142. Occurrences are open-coded into inductive subthemes, and cross-root interconnections are mapped onto a backbone progression from *ghaflah* through *i' rāḍ* and *nufūr* to *futūr* and *kasl*, with an outcomes layer; proposed relations are tested against the broader corpus for internal consistency.

Methodological rigor is maintained through an auditable record of root lists, coding memos, and explicit selection criteria. At the same time, register boundaries are preserved: the Qur'ānic text generates the analytical model, classical exegetes constrain interpretation, and contemporary language enters only at the stage of contextual articulation. Finally, the scope of application is clarified: although *ghaflah*, *i' rāḍ*, and *nufūr* frequently appear in contexts of persistent rejection or hypocrisy, the study does not equate believers' experiences of *al-futūr al-rūḥī* with those evaluative categories. Rather, the roots are examined as semantic resources for describing movements of inattentiveness, withdrawal, aversion, and slackening in attenuated



forms, while respecting exegetical restrictions where a usage is limited to disbelievers or hypocrites.

### **Qur'ānic Semantic Field and Process Model of *al-Futūr al-Rūḥī***

Across relevant passages, the Qur'ān presents a recurring pattern that supports the following claim: that *al-futūr al-rūḥī* is articulated through a structured semantic process rather than a loose set of moral descriptors, linking heedlessness, turning away, aversion, and terminal slackening or ritual apathy. Although these terms frequently appear in contexts of persistent rejection or hypocrisy, the present analysis approaches them at the level of Qur'ānic semantic patterning. That is, they are examined within the interpretive limits set by classical exegetes and without equating temporary *al-futūr al-rūḥī* among believers with fixed categories of disbelief. For instance, heedlessness is paired with withdrawal, *وَهُمْ فِي غَفْلَةٍ مُّعْرِضُونَ* (*al-Anbiyā'* 21:1), and contrasted with worldly proficiency alongside neglect of the Hereafter, *وَهُمْ عَنِ الْآخِرَةِ هُمْ غَافِلُونَ* (*al-Rūm* 30:7). Meanwhile, turning away is marked by constricted life, *وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَنْ ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا* (*Ṭā-Hā* 20:124). These focal loci are consistent with discussions in al-Rāzī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Ālūsī, and Ibn 'Āshūr.

Subsequently, occurrences are grouped into four analytical stages: *ghaflah* (heedlessness), *i'rād* (turning away after reminder), *nufūr* (emotional recoil), and *futūr/kasl* (slackening/ritual apathy). These stages are related rather than isolated. For example, repeated clarification can intensify aversion, *وَمَا يَزِيدُهُمْ إِلَّا نُفُورًا* (*al-Isrā'* 17:41), and even the call to prostrate may provoke recoil, *وَرَادَّهُمْ نُفُورًا* (*al-Furqān* 25:60). In addition, the outward face of disengagement may appear as lazy performance, *قَامُوا كُسَالَى* (*al-Nisā'* 4:142), set against an ideal horizon of unflagging praise, *لَا يَفْنَوْنَ* (*al-Anbiyā'* 21:20). Outcomes are also stated explicitly, including constriction in life (*Ṭā-Hā* 20:124) and the later unveiling of what was neglected (*Qāf* 50:22).

Classical exegetes consistently distinguish between Qur'ānic usages of *ghaflah*, *i'rād*, and *nufūr* that denote entrenched disbelief or hypocrisy and usages that describe processes of moral dulling, interruption, or withdrawal without ontological rejection. Al-Rāzī, for example, reads the pairing of *ghaflah* and *i'rād* in *al-Anbiyā'* 21:1 as a sequential movement from inattentiveness to avoidance, while still grounding culpability in reflective capacity rather than mere ignorance. In comparison, Ibn 'Āshūr further restricts certain forms of Qur'ānic address, such as *Qāf* 50:22, to the disbelieving soul, explicitly noting that the believer is not described as heedless of resurrection in this absolute sense. At the same time, exegetes treat terms such as *futūr* and *kasl* as indicating interruption, slackening, or depletion of resolve rather than total abandonment of faith. This is especially evident when they appear in

contrastive or pedagogical contexts. In essence, these exegetical boundaries enable the Qur'ānic lexicon to distinguish between progressive and regressive orientations without reducing interim fatigue among believers to fixed types of rejection.

Two contrasts further clarify the field. First, frequency vs. function: the roots with higher frequency (notably *ghaflah* and *i' rād*) bear much of the discursive burden of causal orientation. Conversely, lower-frequency roots (notably *futūr* and *kasl*) function as sharper indicators of outward manifestation. Second, pedagogy through contrast: the negation of slackening in *al-Anbiyā'* 21:20 establishes a horizon of constancy that places human vulnerability to fatigue into relief. The discussion that follows draws on these findings and presents a Qur'ānic model in descriptive semantic terms, while placing any contemporary application in a secondary dialogical frame.

Classical exegetical discussion thus reveals an internal tension. While these terms frequently function in Qur'ānic discourse as condemnations of entrenched rejection, the same lexical fields are also used pedagogically to describe gradations of *al-futūr al-rūḥī* without ontological disbelief. Correspondingly, the present study situates itself within this tension, reading these terms descriptively rather than accusatorily.

### Semantic Basis of the Qur'ānic Progression Model

Accordingly, the proposed model should not be read as a thematic list of moral terms; instead, it serves as a process inferred from recurring reminder–response structures, semantic intensification, and patterned outcomes within Qur'ānic discourse.

In presenting *ghaflah*, *i' rād*, *nufūr*, *futūr*, and *kasl* as a process model, this study does not assume a strict linear development in every case. Rather, progression is used in a restricted sense: a sequence of textually co-occurring and conceptually intensifying orientations that recur across Qur'ānic discourse, while remaining bounded by context and audience. A stage in this model is identified by three criteria: (i) a dominant semantic function (attentional dulling, volitional withdrawal, affective recoil, or terminal slackening), (ii) a characteristic discursive environment (reminder–response structures, condemnation contrasts, or pedagogical horizons), and (iii) a typical outward correlate (such as constriction, recoil, or slackened performance), as indicated by Qur'ānic co-text.

The proposed ordering is supported by the internal relations among the anchor loci: *ghaflah* commonly provides the cognitive-attentional background from which *i' rād* emerges as an articulated act of turning away after reminder; sustained withdrawal is associated with affective hardening expressed as *nufūr*; and terminal

manifestations appear as *futūr* (slackening/interval); and, in condemnatory contexts, *kasl* (ritual apathy linked to insincerity). This sequencing, therefore, does not claim that every individual necessarily passes through each stage; rather, Qur'ānic discourse recurrently links these orientations in an intensifying pattern of disengagement. Alternative orderings and apparent reversals are addressed in the root-specific analyses below, where contextual and exegetical constraints determine whether affective, volitional, or behavioral orientations can precede one another.

At the same time, the model recognizes limiting cases and exegetical restrictions. Certain occurrences of *ghaflah*, *i'ṣād*, and *nufūr* are primarily directed at entrenched rejection, while believers may experience attenuated forms without entering condemnatory categories. Likewise, *futūr* can denote interruption without moral blame, whereas *kasl* in *al-Nisā'* 4:142 is exegetically restricted to hypocrisy and thus functions here as a boundary-marker rather than a default description of believer fatigue. At the same time, these constraints preserve the model's interpretive limits and prevent it from being read as a universal psychological sequence. In this sense, the model is sequential in semantic intensification while allowing cyclical recurrence in lived experience. In other words, occurrences that do not support this progression, such as retrospective eschatological *ghaflah* or purely polemical uses of *i'ṣād*, are treated as limiting cases and discussed in the relevant subsections.

Although five roots are analyzed, the discussion below presents four analytical stages, treating *futūr* and *kasl* as a paired terminal manifestation of slackened devotion (one broader and pedagogical, one more condemnatory and exegetically restricted).

The conceptualization of the analytical model derived from these readings is presented below. The model links each degenerative orientation with a Qur'ānic counter-orientation within the same discourse, while maintaining exegetical boundaries and audience restrictions.

The scheme (see Appendix A, Table A7) correlates the analyzed roots with their Qur'ānic counter-orientations, alongside anchor loci that exemplify each stage. It also illustrates the internal relation between each state and its corresponding orientation of correction in a cyclical movement. The series of analytical tables (Steps 1-7), together with the synthesized thematic exegesis summary, is provided in Appendix A to maintain transparency between the textual stages and the overall synthesis. Table 1 summarizes the integrated model.

**Table 1. Qur'ānic Process Model of *al-Futūr al-Rūḥī* and Recovery (Derived from Thematic Exegesis of Key Roots)**

Stage	Qur'ānic Root	Core Description	Primary Qur'ānic Counter-Practice
1	<i>Ghaflah</i>	Heedlessness; dulled awareness of <i>āyāt</i>	Remembrance with reflection ( <i>dhikr/tadabbur</i> )
2	<i>I'rād</i>	Turning away after a reminder; withdrawal	Return and renewed receptivity ( <i>tawbah</i> )
3	<i>Nufūr</i>	Emotional recoil and aversion	Embodied humility ( <i>sujūd/khushū'</i> )
4	<i>Futūr/Kasl</i>	Slackening and ritual apathy	Steadfast continuity and sincerity ( <i>istiqāmah/ikhlās</i> )
—	Cross-cutting supports	Sustaining dispositions across all stages	Gratitude and steadfastness ( <i>Shukr/istiqāmah</i> )

### ***Ghaflah* (heedlessness)**

Two closely related orientations, *ghaflah* (heedlessness) and *i'rād* (turning away), are juxtaposed in the verse:

وَهُمْ فِي غَفْلَةٍ مُّعْرِضُونَ

“while they remain in heedlessness, turning away” (*al-Anbiyā'* 21:1).

This pairing is not incidental. *Ghaflah* here does not denote ignorance or an inability to know; instead, it represents a dulled attentiveness to moral responsibility despite proximity to reminder. The following term, مُّعْرِضُونَ (“those who turn away”), is a shift of inward lack of attention to outward evasion, which means a change of direction but not repetition of meaning.

Classical exegetes have always understood this juxtaposition to be sequential but not redundant. Al-Rāzī determines the verse as a movement in which neglect of reflection slowly becomes entrenched in avoidance, whereas Ibn Kathīr points out that the closeness of reckoning only increases responsibility and does not reduce it. Ibn 'Āshūr, however, focuses the main targets of the verse thoughtfully on those who constantly oppose revelation, making it clear that it does not include believers who are only distracted and faltering at some point. This limitation is also methodologically important because it prevents the verse from functioning as a blanket moral judgment, yet it makes it diagnostic of a patterned orientation in the Qur'ānic discourse.

Another similar semantic opposition appears in *al-Rūm* 30:7, where care for worldly things is contrasted with carelessness about the Hereafter. The discussions



of the exegesis often observe that the verse is not about intellectual inadequacy or incompetence, but rather an inappropriate focus. Ibn 'Āshūr identifies this type of *ghaflah* with contentment in the present life, and explains that it is not knowledge, but what one chooses to devote attention to. Reading the two, *al-Anbiyā'* 21:1 and *al-Rūm* 30:7, *ghaflah* is a long-term state of carelessness that, without redress, can lead to the deliberate disengagement.

In the current model, *ghaflah* can be described as a preliminary phase of *al-futūr al-rūḥī*, characterized by decreased responsiveness to the *āyāt* (reminders), rather than a lack of information. Qur'ānic discourse repeatedly contrasts such heedlessness with remembrance and gratitude, as in “Remember Me; I will remember you” (*al-Baqarah* 2:152) and “If you are grateful, I will surely increase you” (*Ibrāhīm* 14:7). In semantic terms, *dhikr* accompanied by *shukr* operates as a counter-orientation to *ghaflah*, re-establishing attentiveness by re-situating perceived blessings within their referential horizon. Gratitude thus appears not merely as an affective response; it functions as a Qur'ānic orientation that resists the drift from inattentiveness toward withdrawal.

### *I'rāḍ (turning away after reminder)*

The Qur'ānic orientation of *i'rāḍ* is introduced most clearly in the verse:

وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَنْ ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا

“Whoever turns away from My remembrance—indeed, for him is a constricted life” (*Ṭā-Hā* 20:124).

The expression *أَعْرَضَ عَنْ ذِكْرِي* (“turns away out of My remembrance”) already assumes exposure to a reminder and, therefore, signifies active response as opposed to passive ignorance. In this regard, *i'rāḍ* is a continuation of inattentiveness to conscious avoidance. The result stated, - *مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا* (“a constricted mode of living”), is not material, but as an existential constriction that goes with the continual withdrawal of remembrance.

This is a volitional aspect that classical exegetes always stress. Ibn Kathīr notes that the narrowing in the verse cannot be reduced to poverty; rather, it refers to an internal condition of anxiousness and unease. A similar definition of the verse is given by Al-Ālūsī and Ibn 'Āshūr, who characterize it as having a moral regularity: forgetting leads to an interior constriction that redefines perception, motivation, and orientation. According to this reading, *i'rāḍ* is not episodic but cumulative, in which repeated instances of avoidance occur, rather than through momentary mood fluctuations.

Similar articulation is seen in *al-Kahf* 18:57, which concerns those who are reminded of the signs of their Lord, are turned away, and have forgotten what their hands have given forth. Once more, exegetes emphasize that the injustice outlined is not an injustice of ignorance, but an injustice of rejection that followed clarification. Ibn ‘Āshūr specifically limits this kind of *i‘rāḍ* to the long-term resistance, and this is what is different between long-term resistance and short-term distraction or weakness among a believer. Combined, the verses introduce *i‘rāḍ* as a step in which the initial negligence turns into avoidance, thereby constricting the lived experience and fostering further disengagement.

In the current model, *i‘rāḍ* is the second stage of *al-futūr al-rūḥī*, characterized by active withdrawal following a reminder. Qur’ānic discourse opposes such an orientation, with *tawbah* (return) being construed as a receptive renewal of remembrance rather than an act of reversal. Simultaneously, exegetes observe that such receptiveness is not very strong unless it is perpetuated through continuous orientation (*istiqāmah*). On the semantic level, steadfastness is a stabilizing counter-orientation that keeps renewed attentiveness in place and avoids the receptivity from falling back into avoidance.

### ***Nufūr (emotional recoil)***

The Qur’ānic orientation of *nufūr* is most evident in the answer to the call to prostrate:

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ اسْجُدُوا لِلرَّحْمَنِ قَالُوا وَمَا الرَّحْمَنُ أَنَسْجُدُ لِمَا تَأْمُرُنَا وَزَادَهُمْ نُفُورًا

“When it is said to them, ‘Prostrate to the Most Merciful,’ they say, ‘And what is the Most Merciful? Shall we prostrate to what you command us?’—and it only increases them in aversion” (*al-Furqān* 25:60).

The verse represents a response that cannot be minimized to an inability to understand. Instead, the command itself becomes a source of irritation; it generates resistance to the very act meant to restore orientation. In this regard, *nufūr* is not a result of ignorance, but of the affective opposition whereby direction is perceived as intrusive but not welcoming.

The emotional coloring of this reaction is the characteristic of classical exegetes. Comparing *nufūr* to an instinctive recoil or flight, Al-Rāzī defines *nufūr* as an affective and not a deliberative reaction. Ibn Kathīr also adds that the command is categorical and unambiguous, but pride and internal resistance are in the way of receptivity. Ibn ‘Āshūr also characterizes the responses of this kind as the sign of a

hardened disposition when the counsel is not viewed as something merciful but as something provoking. These interpretations, when read collectively, put *nufūr* in a phase of emotional resistance that overcomes attentiveness and conscious avoidance.

The same trend is paralleled in *al-Isrā’* 17:41, where multiple clarification is reported as “increasing them only in aversion.” Exegetes reiterate that the issue is not a lack of clarity but, rather, affective sealing, which makes reminders a liability. Putting the two passages side by side, it becomes apparent that *nufūr* is the emotional response to long-term withdrawal: as one continues to avoid, the heart turns off that which previously presented an orientation.

In the current model, *nufūr* serves as the third phase of *al-futūr al-rūḥī*, characterized by a transition from volitional avoidance to affective resistance. This state is not defeated by the Qur’ānic discourse in the face of discursive argumentation, but embodied humility. The direct opposite of recoil is acted in *sujūd* (prostration) before *khushū’* (reverent attentiveness), whereby resistance is not softened by persuasion, but rather by submissions. As it is combined with *shukr* (gratitude), prostration helps reorganize perception and re-establish the ability to accept guidance as a gift rather than an intrusion. In this respect, the corrective to *nufūr* is more initiatory than expressive; it deals with affective perversion before cognition sets in, and it defends irritation before it solidifies into aggression.

### ***Futūr/kasl (slack/ritual apathy)***

The last stage of the Qur’ānic series of *al-futūr al-rūḥī* is defined by the two terms, *futūr* (slackening) and *kasl* (ritual apathy), in which the previous cognitive, volitional, and affective instabilities find expression in a less vigorous practice. The Qur’ān introduces this step by making a purposeful comparison between two types of perseverance:

قَامُوا كُسَالَى

“they stand for prayer lazily” (*al-Nisā’* 4:142),

and

لَا يَفْنَوْنَ

“they glorify Him night and day and do not slacken” (*al-Anbiyā’* 21:20).

The contrast does not contradict the human weakness against the angelic ability. Instead, it defines a horizon of constancy in opposition to which deviation of mankind in long-standing orientation is manifested. In this regard, slackening is not posed as an element of weariness, but a variation of persistence when earlier phases of withdrawal have already been established.

Classical exegetes always restrict the evaluative power of *kasl* to the situation of hypocrisy and insincerity. According to Ibn Kathīr, the laziness in *al-Nisā* 4:142 cannot be done without *riyā*, as the worship is carried out as a show and not as an orientation to God. Ibn ʿĀshūr further adds to this restriction and sees such indifference as a manifestation of a lack of belief in responsibility, rather than temporary exhaustion. This limitation is also methodologically definitive, because it does not allow the verse to be interpreted as a verdict against believers who grow weary, but rather places *kasl* at the end of a process whereby sincerity has already been displaced.

In comparison, *futūr* has a broader range of meanings, as it implies the violation or exhaustion of a decision without necessarily implying moral insincerity. *Futūr* is also not ascribed in *al-Anbiyā* 21:20, and negated when speaking of the angels, thus highlighting human weakness to fatigue without rendering it blameworthy. In combination, *futūr* and *kasl* can differentiate between the weakened power and sunken practice: exhaustion can break devotion, but apathy can drain it of significance.

In the given model, the fourth and last level of *al-futūr al-rūḥī* is *futūr* and *kasl*, in which disorientation within is externally manifested. The outer evaluative limit of the process is marked by *kasl* and is not a normative phase in the believer's experience. This step is challenged by Qur'ānic discourse, which maintains disciplined regularity grounded in *ikhhlāṣ* (sincerity) and is supported by *istiqāmah* (steadfast orientation). Steadfastness maintains continuity amid fluctuating energy, so that temporary fatigue does not harden into despondency. *Shukr* (thankfulness), in turn, does not change the obligation but alters the perception thereof, allowing devotional practice to be experienced as a gift rather than a burden. This means that, despite a lack of strength, in times of weakness or strength, normal acts of worship have a purpose. *Istiqāmah*, in semantic terms, safeguards rhythm, and *shukr* safeguards the intention. This combination revitalizes humanity without violating the laws of human nature.

This step, according to the Qur'ān, lies on a wider horizon of consequence and recompense. The narrowing down of life in *Ṭā-Hā* 20:124, the revelation of forgotten truths in *Qāf* 50:22, and the lack of relief amid prolonged rejection in *al-Zukhruf* 43:75 all serve to highlight the dangers of uncontrolled slackening. Meanwhile, these passages confirm that the boundedness of the model renewal is



always possible, provided that fatigue is not confused with rejection. Although the classical exegesis explains the scope and limits of evaluation, the model of normativity remains grounded in the Qur'ānic discourse itself.

### **Qur'ānic Moral-Psychological Vocabulary and the Dynamics of *al-Futūr al-Rūhī***

Contemporary burnout research typically frames depletion as a stress-related syndrome marked by exhaustion, depersonalisation/cynicism, and reduced efficacy, and it increasingly recognises that meaning-systems (including religion) can function as both protective resources and stress-amplifiers.<sup>15</sup> Against that backdrop, *al-futūr al-rūhī* is often discussed in Muslim settings as “spiritual fatigue,” yet the scholarly need in Qur'ānic studies is not primarily therapeutic prescription, but conceptual accountability: what lexical resources does the Qur'ān itself use to describe weakening spiritual orientations, and how are those meanings bounded by audience and discourse context? This matters because recent empirical work among Muslim professionals indicates that patterns of religious coping can correlate with burnout-related distress and moral injury, underscoring how “spiritual language” can be diagnostically potent but also ethically risky if used without textual and interpretive discipline.<sup>16</sup>

Methodologically, the article's main value lies in moving beyond (a) root-studies that can flatten meaning by treating lexemes as fixed “concepts,” and (b) thematic compilation that can dilute tone, audience, and rhetorical force. Your contribution is to treat *ghaflah*–*i' rāḍ*–*nufūr*–*futūr*/*kasl* as an internally related semantic field, and to infer a restricted “process” from recurring reminder–response patterns and outcomes, while keeping classical exegetical restrictions as guardrails. This aligns with—and extends—semantic-field approaches in Qur'ānic studies associated with Izutsu's legacy, especially as later scholarship has stressed that semantic analysis must remain textually accountable and historically cautious rather than merely impressionistic.<sup>17</sup> In other words, the novelty is not “introducing” semantic analysis, but operationalising it as a multi-root, context-bounded mapping that yields a disciplined descriptive

15 Christina Maslach and Michael P Leiter, “Understanding the Burnout Experience: Recent Research and Its Implications for Psychiatry,” *World Psychiatry* 15, no. 2 (June 2016): 103–11, <https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.20311>.

16 Zainab Amin, “Religious Coping and Moral Injury among Muslim Clinicians: A Mixed-Methods Study of Post-Pandemic Burnout in Healthcare Settings,” *Journal of Religion and Health*, ahead of print, December 26, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-025-02528-8>.

17 Ṣalāḥ Al-Dīn Al-Zarāl, “Applied Semantics and the Qur'ān: Izutsu's Methodology as a Case Study,” *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, ahead of print, April 1, 2012, <https://doi.org/10.3366/jqs.2012.0047>; İsmail Albayrak, “The Reception of Toshihiko Izutsu's Qur'anic Studies in the Muslim World: With Special Reference to Turkish Qur'anic Scholarship,” *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 14, no. 1 (April 2012): 73–106, <https://doi.org/10.3366/jqs.2012.0038>.

model rather than a sermonising taxonomy.

Substantively, the mapped field produces a clear interpretive payoff: it explains *al-futūr al-rūḥī* not as a vague mood but as graded orientations—from attentional dulling (*ghaflah*), to volitional withdrawal after reminder (*i' rād*), to affective recoil (*nufūr*), and finally to outward manifestations of slackening or ritual apathy (*futūr/kasl*). Read this way, Qur'ānic discourse supplies a vocabulary for distinguishing temporary weakening from condemnatory categories (especially where *kasl* is exegetically tied to hypocrisy), which is precisely where many contemporary “burnout-as-spiritual-problem” framings become conceptually sloppy or ethically harmful. The model therefore contributes a text-grounded way to speak about spiritual fatigue without collapsing believers' fluctuation into labels reserved for entrenched rejection, while still preserving the Qur'ān's moral seriousness through outcomes language (e.g., constriction, unveiling, hardening) as contextually delimited.

Finally, this study clarifies what the mapping is—and is not. It is descriptive and text-led, not a clinical diagnostic tool and not a new “Islamic therapy.” Its broader significance is that it supplies an accountable bridge between Qur'ānic moral-psychological language and contemporary discourse, by specifying *how far* Qur'ānic terms can travel into modern application without semantic overreach. As a forward path, the model can be strengthened by (i) expanding the anchor set through corpus-linguistic triangulation, (ii) testing alternative orderings and “limiting cases” more explicitly, and (iii) comparing Qur'ānic patterning with ḥadīth/Sufi pedagogical vocabularies of fluctuation and resolve. On the applied side, the framework can inform spiritually integrated support in a cautious way—especially since systematic reviews suggest Qur'ān-engagement practices (listening/reciting/memorising) may correlate with reduced anxiety/stress in some settings—while also recognising that the evidence base remains uneven and should not be overclaimed.<sup>18</sup>

## Conclusion

### *Summary of Findings*

This paper has studied *al-futūr al-rūḥī* through a semantic-field analysis of the Qur'ān, posing the question of how the Qur'ān conceptualizes the processes of *al-futūr al-rūḥī* and revitalization through its moral-psychological lexis. The analysis of five interconnected roots of the *al-futūr al-rūḥī* in the Quran, *ghaflah*, *i' rād*, *nufūr*, *futūr*, and *kasl*, showed that disengagement is a regular process characterized by attentional dulling, volitional withdrawal, affective recoil, and, in limited circumstances, terminal

18 Wan Nor Atikah Che Wan Mohd Rozali et al., “The Impact of Listening to, Reciting, or Memorizing the Quran on Physical and Mental Health of Muslims: Evidence From Systematic Review,” *International Journal of Public Health* 67 (August 2022): 1604998, <https://doi.org/10.3389/ijph.2022.1604998>.

slackening or ritual apathy.

The results reveal that these orientations are not independent; they are interrelated. All the stages are textually connected through certain reminder-response frameworks and are delimited by interpretative boundaries stated in the classical exegetes. *Ghaflah* refers to misguided attentiveness as opposed to ignorance; *i'raḍ* assumes rejection after reminding; *nufūr* implies affective resistance exaggerated by frequent clarification; and *futūr* and *kasl* make the distinction between interrupting the resolve and condemnatory evaluation on the part of those who reject. These roots collectively constitute a Qur'ānic process model that distinguishes between degrees and movements of *al-futūr al-rūḥī* but does not reduce temporary fatigue in believers to the ranks of established rejection or hypocrisy.

Throughout the model, *shukr* (thankfulness) and *istiqāmah* (sturdy orientation) serve as perpetuating dispositions that recur across various steps of the Qur'ānic semantic field. Instead of functioning as stage-specific responses, they stabilize the discourse's attentiveness and persistence.

Concerning Qur'ānic studies, the study adds semantic and exegetical contextualization, elucidating the scope of how classical exegetes restrict the audience, context, and evaluative force in this lexical field. Instead of introducing foreign diagnostic categories into the text, the model is deeply rooted in the Qur'ānic discourse while addressing the current discourse on burnout only analogically and cautiously.

### ***Scholarly and Non-Clinical Implications***

Despite the exegetical contribution that is the primary purpose of this study, the given semantic patterns can be used to shape contemplative work with Qur'ānic discourse in learning or community-based contexts. The counter-orientations inherent in the same lexical domain, like remembrance coupled with gratitude, renewed receptivity, embodied humility, and constant continuity that are offered here, are not given as prescriptions, but are given as descriptive characteristics of Qur'ānic moral discourse that stabilize the orientation without denouncing the human limitation.

Future research is also aided by the framework. Substantiated by both empirical and qualitative research, one can investigate how these Qur'ānic semantic differences would be informative of the lived experiences of *al-futūr al-rūḥī*, while avoiding straying beyond the interpretive limits set in this paper. Such work can also explore how gratitude, repentance, or humility are orientations of meaning rather than techniques, and how these orientations play off against broader discourse on spiritual well-being.

On a larger scale, the Qur'ānic rhythm expressed in *shukr* and *istiqāmah* can be interpreted as directed toward an epistemic reconfiguration rather than a retreat to increased intensity. The gratitude in this framing modifies perception, putting everyday experience within a horizon of divine signs, and steadfastness stabilizes that perception by continuity. Read in semantic terms, spiritual renewal is thus presented not as episodic fervor; rather, it is the cultivation of sustained *shuhūd* (presence) within ordinary life.

At the same time, it is crucial to maintain a clear clinical boundary. The semantic and moral insights articulated here do not substitute for professional mental health care in situations of severe or chronic distress. Instead, the Qur'ānic framework presented in this study complements, rather than replaces, competent psychological and clinical intervention when such care is necessary.

### Supplementary Materials

Any additional material, such as extra tables and analysis structures that are in the Appendix, can be obtained by the author concerned on reasonable request. This study did not produce any new datasets.

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### Authors' contributions

Ahmad Fakhrurrazi bin Mohammed Zabidi: Conceptualization, supervision, and final review of the manuscript. Nur Huraidah binte Jumat: Literature review, data collection, and draft preparation. Latifah binti Abdul Majid: Editing, proofreading, and reference verification.

### Data availability statement

The author of this study has data that supports the findings of the corresponding author, upon reasonable request. Since this study is qualitative and text-based, no new data were generated and published.



## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest related to the publication of this article.

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