

## **Belief or Disbelief? Unraveling the Meaning of the Use of Quranic Verses as Amulets in Indonesian Muslim Society**

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### **Abstract**

*The practice of using Quranic verses as amulets among Indonesian Muslims indicates complex issues related to religious understanding and the concept of monotheism. This study aims to examine this phenomenon and its implications. Using qualitative methods, data were collected through a literature review and field observations, and then analyzed from an Islamic theological perspective, specifically the concept of monotheism and the views of Islamic scholars. The results indicate that this practice persists, influenced by local traditions and mystical beliefs, and fueled by limited understanding. While some view it as a spiritual endeavor, Islamic scholarship warns that believing Quranic verses have independent power can deviate from the creed. The study recommends strengthening the understanding of the creed through more effective Islamic da'wah and education.*

**Keywords:** *Amulets, Islamic Theology, Local Traditions, Muslim Society, Tawhid.*

### **Abstrak**

Praktik penggunaan ayat Al-Quran sebagai jimat di masyarakat Muslim Indonesia mengindikasikan adanya isu kompleks terkait pemahaman keagamaan dan konsep tauhid. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengkaji fenomena tersebut dan implikasinya. Menggunakan metode kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui studi literatur dan observasi lapangan, kemudian dianalisis dari perspektif teologi Islam, khususnya konsep tauhid dan pandangan ulama. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan praktik ini masih berlangsung, dipengaruhi tradisi lokal dan kepercayaan mistis, serta dipicu keterbatasan pemahaman. Sementara sebagian memandangnya sebagai ikhtiar spiritual, kajian keilmuan Islam melihat potensi penyimpangan akidah jika ayat Al-Quran diyakini memiliki kekuatan mandiri. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan penguatan pemahaman akidah dan pemurnian tauhid melalui pengembangan dakwah serta pendidikan keislaman yang lebih efektif sebagai rujukan.

**Kata Kunci:** Jimat, Masyarakat Muslim, Tauhid, Teologi Islam, Tradisi Lokal.

### **A. Introduction**

The Qur'an, as the holy book of Muslims, plays a central role in all aspects of a Muslim's life. It not only serves as a comprehensive guide to life, but also as a source of primary law, moral guidance, and spiritual guidance, guiding individuals from the personal realm to the social order (Al-Qur'an al-Karim). The majesty of the Qur'an as a divine kalam is reflected in its teachings, which include theological, ethical, legal, economic, social, and even cosmological aspects. Its main function is to form character, purify the faith, and direct all

human activities so that they are always within the framework of worship and servitude to Allah SWT. The conception of the Qur'an as *hudā* (guidance), *furqān* (distinction between right and wrong), and *syifā'* (healer) affirms its position as a source of truth and solutions to the problems of human life.

However, in the landscape of religious practice in Indonesia, an interesting and complex phenomenon emerges from society's interaction with these sacred texts. This phenomenon involves using verses from the Qur'an, believed to have magical powers, in the form of amulets or diagrams. This practice, which has been empirically detected to spread across various regions of Indonesia, involves the use of holy verses such as Surat Al-Fatiha, Ayat Kursi, and various other short letters. These texts are no longer treated solely as spiritual readings or sources of law; they are believed to protect from harm, bring blessings, facilitate business (for sellers), and grant certain supernatural powers.

The empirical research conducted provides a concrete picture of this practice. For example, a study in Ponorogo, East Java, shows how the local community integrates verses from the Qur'an into amulets used for self-protection and to support success in business.<sup>1</sup>

A similar phenomenon was also reported in Barus, Central Tapanuli, North Sumatra, where Qur'anic verses function as amulets to maintain individuals' spiritual and psychological safety in their social lives.<sup>2</sup> These studies indicate that people's interactions with the holy text of the Qur'an are highly diverse, extending beyond mere ritual readings or textual understanding. He ventured into the realm of belief in the symbolic and even magical power of these verses to overcome various life problems, as noted by Hakim<sup>3</sup> in his study of the practice of "Living Qur'an".

The phenomenon of using Qur'anic verses as amulets fundamentally raises crucial questions about Muslims' understanding of the function and essence of the Qur'an itself. If the Qur'an serves as a guideline for life that leads to total servitude to Allah SWT, then the practice of using holy verses as a magical medium can have implications for a shift in the focus of belief.

Instead of relying entirely on Allah SWT as the source of all strength and protection, there is a potential shift to the power inherent in the physical media (amulet) that contains the verse. This can blur the line between sincere worship of Allah and practices that resemble

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<sup>1</sup> Mujahidin, A. (2015). The Use of Qur'an Verses as Amulets in the Ponorogo Community. E-Journal Raden Intan.

<sup>2</sup> Widiyanto, S. (2025). The Amulet of the Qur'an in Barus: A Study on Spiritual and Psychological Protection. Unisma Research.

<sup>3</sup> Hakim, Griyarman. (2025). Living Qur'an: A Study of Community Religious Practices in Indonesia. Melati Journal.

superstition or even sharia, which are the greatest sins in Islam. The concept of “Living Qur'an”, which refers to the manifestation of sacred texts in cultural practices and daily life, becomes relevant here.

However, when such manifestations intersect with elements of traditional beliefs and rituals that are not in line with the teachings of pure Islam, it demands a deep and critical academic analysis.<sup>4</sup>

The urgency of this research is underscored by the theological and social implications of this phenomenon. Understanding the extent to which the practice of using Qur'anic verses as amulets reflects the religious construction of society, how it affects religious understanding, and, most importantly, how it relates to the principle of monotheism, the main foundation of the Islamic faith, is necessary.

Existing empirical data show that this practice is not a marginal or marginalized case, but an integral part of the socio-religious reality that lives in the midst of the Indonesian Muslim community. Therefore, a comprehensive, in-depth analysis from an academic perspective is urgently needed to provide clarity and a complete understanding.

This research begins from an awareness of diversity in the religious practices of the Indonesian Muslim community regarding the Qur'an. While most Muslims understand and practice the Qur'an according to its normative guidance, some others adopt different methods, such as using Qur'anic verses as amulets. These differences in how they interact are not only symbolic but also have implications for theological understanding and everyday religious practice.

The Qur'an is the revelation of Allah, revealed to the Prophet Muhammad SAW, as the last and most perfect book in the Islamic tradition. It has a very noble position, serving as a comprehensive guideline for life, the main source of sharia law, and moral guidance that governs all aspects of Muslim life, both in vertical (with Allah SWT) and horizontal (fellow humans and the universe). Its existence is the foundation for building Islamic civilization and shaping the character of pious, noble Muslims. The concept of *tawassul* (seeking mediation) through the verses of the Qur'an, in the form of prayers or readings taught by the Prophet SAW, is indeed justified, but it is fundamentally different from treating the verses of the Qur'an as an object believed to have inherent power.

In Indonesia, the country with the world's largest Muslim majority, the Qur'an has been deeply integrated into various aspects of people's lives. It is read in daily worship

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<sup>4</sup> Nurullah, A., & Handasa, A. (2020). Living Qur'an: The Manifestation of Sacred Texts in the Cultural Practices of Muslim Communities. *Ar-Raniry Journal*.

rituals, studied in formal and informal educational institutions, and serves as a reference in resolving various legal and social problems. However, alongside social and cultural evolution, people's interactions with these sacred texts exhibit complex dynamics and often give rise to unique practices. One of the phenomena that deserves serious attention is the emergence of the practice of using Qur'anic verses as amulets or diagrams.

The use of amulets, or, in Arabic, *tamīmah* (plural: *tama'im*), has been a practice across various cultures throughout history. In the context of Islam, amulets generally refer to objects that are hung or carried by a person with the belief that they can provide certain protection, luck, or strength.

In the historical development of Islamic thought, the permissibility or prohibition of using amulets has been the subject of a long debate among scholars. The majority of scholars, by referring to the shari'i postulates, tend to prohibit or at least dislike the use of amulets, especially if it is accompanied by a belief that can contradict the practice of sharia, namely allying with Allah SWT.

However, in the Indonesian context, the practice of using amulets often undergoes acculturation, incorporating elements of local culture that are firmly rooted. This is clearly seen in the phenomenon of using Qur'anic verses as amulets. Scriptures that should be read to obtain merit, understanding, and divine guidance are instead turned into objects believed to have magical powers. For example, the practice of engraving verses of the Qur'an on paper or cloth, then folding them and making them into pendants, bracelets, or storing them in certain places, such as houses or vehicles.

The beliefs that accompany this practice vary, ranging from salvation from disasters, an antidote to magic, to escape trade, to captivate the hearts of the opposite sex, and even to gain immunity or extraordinary physical strength.

The empirical studies mentioned earlier, such as those conducted by Mujahidin<sup>5</sup> in Ponorogo and Widiyanto<sup>6</sup> in Barus, clearly illustrate the diversity of these practices in various regions. In Ponorogo, the use of Surah Al-Fatiha, Ayat Kursi, and other short letters as part of a protection talisman or business seller shows how these verses have been recontextualized in the community's daily life. Similarly, in Barus, Qur'anic verses are used as amulets to provide spiritual and psychological protection, reflecting people's need for a sense of security and tranquility in facing life's challenges.

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<sup>5</sup> Mujahidin, A. (2015). The Use of Qur'an Verses as Amulets in the Ponorogo Community. E-Journal Raden Intan.

<sup>6</sup> Widiyanto, S. (2025). The Amulet of the Qur'an in Barus: A Study on Spiritual and Psychological Protection. Unisma Research.

This phenomenon is not limited only to the use of Qur'anic verses as physical objects. In some places, there is even the practice of writing holy verses mixed with local mantras or scripts whose meaning is unclear, and then believing them to have special properties. This raises a fundamental question about how society understands the concept of *syifa'* (healing), which actually comes from Allah, not from the media itself. The Qur'an, as the true source of spiritual healing (*syifa'*), is effective when it is read with full confidence and sincerity to Allah, and its teachings are practiced. If Qur'anic verses are used as a magical medium that has intrinsic power, then this has the potential to lead to a shift in religious paradigm.

A study by Hakim<sup>7</sup> on the “Living Qur'an” highlights that sacred texts embedded in cultural practices often reflect a blend of religious teachings and traditional beliefs. In the case of using Qur'anic verses as amulets, this combination is obvious. On the one hand, there are attempts to draw closer to sacred texts, but on the other, elements of pre-Islamic beliefs, including animism and dynamism, still survive and are integrated into religious practice. This is a serious challenge to the purification of the faith, especially regarding the principle of monotheism, the main pillar of Islam.

There is a significant gap between the normative function of the Qur'an as a source of pure spiritual guidance, law, and healing, and its empirical use as a talisman or magical object. The Qur'an is a revelation from Allah that leads people to always depend on and ask Him for help. He taught that all things happen by the will of God, and that true protection and blessing come only from the Almighty Substance. The use of Qur'anic verses as amulets, especially if accompanied by the belief that they have intrinsic or magical powers independent of the will of Allah, can clash with the fundamental principles of monotheism.

The concept of monotheism, which means the oneness of Allah, requires that all forms of worship, supplication, and dependence are only directed to Allah SWT. If a person relies on an amulet containing verses of the Qur'an as if it had power, then he has deviated from the concept of pure monotheism. It can be categorized as a form of *ashghar* (small) or even *akbar* (large) sharia, depending on the level of belief and practice.

Classical scholars such as Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal and Ibn Taymiyah, as well as the fuqaha' of various sects, have discussed at length the prohibition of using amulets, especially those made from objects of unclear origin or believed to possess their own powers. Ibn Taymiyah, in his work *Majmoo' al-Fataawa*, expressly states that hanging a talisman,

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<sup>7</sup> Hakim, Griyarman. (2025). Living Qur'an: A Study of Community Religious Practices in Indonesia. Melati Journal.

even though it contains verses of the Qur'an, is forbidden because it can open the door to shirk (Ibn Taymiyah, *Majmoo' al-Fatawa*<sup>8</sup>).

The phenomenon of using Qur'anic verses as amulets can also be analyzed through the lens of the *syncretism* theory. Syncretism refers to the fusion of two or more different belief systems or religious practices, resulting in a unique new form. In this context, verses of the Qur'an (Islamic elements) are combined with elements of traditional or magical beliefs (local elements) to create a talismanic practice with its own peculiarities. This mixture often arises from people's urgent need to find solutions to life's problems, and they tend to adopt methods they consider effective, even though they may not be entirely consistent with pure religious teachings.

A study by Nurullah and Handasa<sup>9</sup> on the "Living Qur'an" emphasizes the importance of understanding how sacred texts interact with people's lives. However, the study also calls for caution to ensure that the practice of "Living Qur'an" does not deviate from the faith. The use of Qur'anic verses as amulets is one example of how the "Living Qur'an" can touch the realm of belief beyond the normative boundaries of Islam.

Therefore, this study is designed to examine in depth two crucial aspects: first, the psychological, social, and cultural factors that encourage people to use Qur'anic verses as amulets; and second, a review of Islamic law (*fiqh*) on the practice, focusing on its implications for the principle of monotheism. By understanding these two aspects simultaneously, this research is hoped to make a significant contribution to the understanding of this complex religious phenomenon in Indonesia.

Based on the background and formulation of the above problem, this study has the objectives, namely, *first*, to identify and analyze in depth the driving factors (psychological, social, cultural, and economic) behind the use of Qur'an verses as amulets among the Indonesian Muslim community. *Second*, to examine and evaluate the views of contemporary and classical Islamic law regarding the legality of the use of Qur'anic verses as amulets, and analyze their implications for the purification of the creed and the concept of monotheism. And *Third*, explain and analyze the phenomenon of syncretism in the practice of using Qur'anic verses as amulets, and its impact on people's religious understanding and practices.

This research offers novelty in several aspects. First, although there have been studies on amulets and the "Living Qur'an", this study specifically focuses on the intersection

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<sup>8</sup> Ibn Taymiyah, Taqi al-Din Ahmad. *Majmo' al-Fatawa*. (Classical work, many editions available).

<sup>9</sup> Nurullah, A., & Handasa, A. (2020). Living Qur'an: The Manifestation of Sacred Texts in the Cultural Practices of Muslim Communities. *Ar-Raniry Journal*.

between the use of Qur'anic verses as amulets and aspects of monotheism from the perspective of Islamic law. Existing studies tend to focus on normative legal aspects separately or on phenomenological descriptions alone. This research seeks to integrate the analysis of Islamic law with an in-depth understanding of the socio-cultural factors that drive the practice.

Second, this research not only stops at the normative legal assessment that the practice is prohibited, but also explores the complexity of societal views and their cultural roots. By viewing this practice as a manifestation of syncretism, this research can provide a more holistic understanding of how sacred texts interact with dynamic social and cultural realities.

Third, the findings of this study are expected to make a meaningful contribution to religious and social literature in Indonesia. For academics, this research offers empirical data and critical analysis that can enrich the treasure of studies on Islam in Indonesia. For religious leaders, religious education practitioners, and policymakers, the results of this research can inform efforts to foster the ummah and maintain religious understanding in accordance with the true teachings of Islam, as well as to understand the roots of socio-religious problems in society.

## B. Research Method

This study employs a phenomenological qualitative methodology, with the main objective of exploring and interpreting the lived experiences and deep understandings of using Qur'anic verses as amulets in the religious life of the Indonesian Muslim community. The choice of a qualitative approach, as described by Creswell,<sup>10</sup> is essential in exploring the complexity of meaning, individual perception, and socio-cultural networks that make up the practice, beyond mere surface descriptions.

Data were collected through triangulation, using extensive literature reviews and participatory observations. Literature studies include a comprehensive search of primary and secondary sources, including classical Islamic texts such as tafsir and hadith books, theoretical works on faith and Sufism (e.g., by al-Ghazali or Ibn Taymiyyah), as well as contemporary scholarly literature in reputable journals (such as the *Journal of Islamic Studies* or *Al-Jami'ah*) and academic books that discuss the practice of amulets and their relationship to faith. Participatory observation is conducted through direct involvement in

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<sup>10</sup> Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. SAGE Publications.

the field, observing how verses of the Qur'an are inscribed in physical form (e.g., on paper, cloth, or other objects) and how the community interacts with these objects in daily rituals or crucial moments.

Data analysis was carried out iteratively using thematic methods. The initial findings are classified into substantive categories that emerge from the data and then critically examined through the lens of Islamic theology, particularly regarding monotheism (the oneness of Allah) and its implications for worship and belief. This analysis not only identifies patterns but also explores theological tensions that may arise, as well as compares observed practices with Islamic normative teachings. This systematic process aims to build a rich, structured narrative of the phenomenon under study and to identify broader implications for understanding the beliefs and religious practices of Indonesian Muslim communities, as often discussed in studies of religious anthropology.<sup>11</sup>

## **C. Results and Discussion**

### **Manifestation of the Practice of Using Qur'an Verses as Amulets in Surah Al-Fatiha and Chapter Verses**

Preliminary findings from field observations indicate that the practice of using Qur'anic verses as amulets is not uncommon in the daily lives of some Muslims in Indonesia. This practice, often passed down from generation to generation, reflects people's efforts to seek protection, tranquility, and good fortune through sacred media. The two most prominent examples identified are the use of Surah Al-Fatiha and the Verse of the Chair.

#### **1. Surah Al-Fatiha as a Protective Talisman**

One of the most common practices is writing Surah Al-Fatiha in its entirety on a piece of paper. The paper bearing this holy verse is then wrapped in a white cloth, a color considered sacred and clean in many cultural traditions, thereby reinforcing the object's spiritual aura. These Al-Fatiha amulets are then stored in places such as pockets or wallets, or worn on the body. The main purpose of this practice is to obtain protection from distress, calamity, and any form of evil that may befall it.

The choice of Surah Al-Fatiha as a talisman is not without reason. This surah is known as the "Ummul Kitab" (the Mother of the Qur'an) and "Ash-Syifa" (Medicine). Its profound meaning, which includes praise to God, acknowledgment of His power, and pleas

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<sup>11</sup> Geertz, C. (1973). *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. Basic Books.

for guidance to the right path, makes it a highly respected verse. However, in the context of amulets, the understanding of the spiritual meaning and purpose of the worship of Surah Al-Fatiha seems to have shifted. He is more often seen as a magical entity with the inherent power to ward off evil, despite a deep understanding of the content of his verses.

Illustrations of this practice can be found in various walks of life, especially in rural areas or among professionals who are vulnerable to risks, such as itinerant traders or those working in the security field. The belief that the written Al-Fatiha can serve as a spiritual shield is the foundation of this practice. As noted in the original text, “We can find this kind of belief among some Indonesians, the amulet wearers are mostly shamans and elderly people in the countryside who still use amulets.” This statement underscores that this practice is not limited to the general public but also extends to those traditionally associated with spiritual or mystical matters.

## **2. Verse of the Chair as a Versatile Protective Amulet and Religious Symbol**

A similar practice is also found in the use of the Verse of the Chair (QS. Al-Baqarah: 255) as a talisman. This verse, which contains an explanation of the majesty of Allah, His power over the entire universe, and His omniscience, does indeed have a very high position in Islam. Its majesty and power are often believed to provide great protection.

In practice, the Verse of the Chair is written on paper and then placed in a black cloth. This choice of black may have its own symbolic meaning, such as covering or enveloping, but it can also be part of a cultural tradition that associates dark colors with magical powers or protection. This Chair Verse Talisman is then worn as a necklace, making it an attribute worn directly on the body.

Another interesting phenomenon is the existence of the Ayat Kursi amulet, which is widely found in mobile drug sellers who use Islamic religious attributes. These sellers often integrate a specific spell reading in each of their gigs or sales activities. These mantras are believed to attract potential buyers' attention, protect them, or reinforce suggestions to the public about the efficacy of the drugs they offer. In this context, the Verse of the Chair not only serves as a personal amulet but also as a tool for professional activities rooted in religious elements. This shows how scripture can be integrated into various aspects of life, even commercial ones, albeit sometimes with an understanding that is far from the essence of religious teachings.

Empirical data show that the use of the Verse of the Chair amulet is not limited to a specific age group or social status. It is used by various age groups, including babies worn

by their parents for protection, children, teenagers, and adults. This practice is generally understood by its users as a form of spiritual protection. Its hereditary nature makes it a part of local traditions that are difficult to eliminate. However, the main concern is that, in its implementation, the verses of the Qur'an are treated more as symbolic and magical objects whose power is considered inherent in their physical form, rather than as worshipful readings whose meaning is understood and contemplated in accordance with normative Islamic teachings.

### 3. Transformation of the Function and Meaning of the Concept of “Efficacy” of Qur'an Verses as a Mantra Between Fragmentation and Pragmatism

Beyond being worn or kept as amulets, Qur'anic verses are also believed to have specific powers when recited in certain situations, functioning like mantras. This functional transformation indicates a shift in understanding from the Qur'an as a source of divine guidance and revelation to a magical means capable of directly affecting reality.

Some of the “properties” of certain verses in the Qur'an are treated as mantras. An example is as follows.

Table 1. Examples of Quranic Verses that are used as “Efficacy”

| No. | Letters/Verses  | Description   | Analysis  |
|-----|---|---|---|
| 1   | Surah Al-Baqarah: 255<br>(وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ)           | Read 7 times when facing wild animals, or angry people, in order to survive their threats.          | The choice of the phrase “Wa iyyaka nasta'in” (Only to You do we ask for help) from Surah Al-Fatihah as a mantra of protection from physical threats or anger indicates the fragmentation of the verse. Users focus only on one part of the verse that is considered to have specific power, without considering the overall context of the prayer in Al-Fatihah. The pragmatism in this use is obvious, where the main focus is on the desired outcome (salvation) rather than a deep understanding of the essence of asking God for help. |
| 2   | Surah Al-Fatihah: 6<br>(اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ) | It is read while closing your eyes when confused or lost in the middle of the road, so that you can | The phrase “Ihdina as-shirath al-mustaqim” (Show us the straight path) from Surah Al-Fatihah is used as a prayer to get guidance when you get lost. This shows a slight shift towards the original meaning  |

| No. | Letters/Verses   | Description  | Analysis   |
|-----|--|--|--|
|     |  | immediately get guidance or help.  | of the verse, but it remains within a pragmatic framework. Users expect physical clues or solutions to their confusion, not simply asking for spiritual guidance to the path of true truth.  |
| 3   | Surah Al-Fatihah: 7<br>(صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ) | It is read sincerely when people hate or threaten opponents/enemies, so that their hatred disappears and they are no longer hostile. | The part of the verse Al-Fatihah that explains the way of those who are favored by Allah is used to defuse enmity. This indicates a belief that the scriptures can influence the hearts and minds of others. However, again, this approach is pragmatic, focusing on the end result (the enemy becomes non-hostile) rather than on the process of internalizing Islamic values that teach patience, forgiveness, and praying for protection from evil. |
| 4   | Surah Al-Fatihah: 7<br>(أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ)                   | It is read while grasping dust/sand, then sprinkled on the thief/enemy, so that they see the sea of fire and cannot see the person.  | The use of this verse with the medium of dust/sand is the most extreme example of the transformation of the function of the scripture into a magical spell. This action clearly exceeds the limits of normative understanding of the Qur'an. Its use is not only pragmatic, but also tends to practices that smell of magic or black magic, where the scriptures are used as a tool to create illusions or scare opponents.                            |

The implication of this practice is the reduction of the Qur'an from its status as a divine kalam full of wisdom and guidance, to a collection of texts that have magical power per section. The understanding of these verses is fragmented, losing its meaning coherence and spiritual purpose. The user focuses more on “what the verse can do” than on “what the verse teaches”.

#### 4. Integration of Cultural Factors and Theological Arguments in the Practice of Talisman Verses of the Qur'an

The sustainability of the practice of using Qur'anic verses as amulets in Indonesian Muslim society cannot be separated from the complex interplay between cultural construction and

theological development. This phenomenon reflects the dynamic negotiation between the normative teachings of Islam and the existing socio-cultural reality.

#### **a) Cultural Perspectives in Spiritual Traditions and Sacred Symbols**

Culturally, Indonesian society has a long history of integrating spiritual beliefs and magical practices in daily life. Before Islam came into existence, various traditions of animism, dynamism, and polytheism had shaped society's worldview, in which certain objects were considered to have supernatural powers and to serve as protectors or bringers of good fortune. The presence of Islam does not necessarily erase this mindset, but rather undergoes a process of acculturation and assimilation.

In this context, the verses of the Qur'an, as the most pure and holy text in Islam, were naturally integrated into the existing cultural framework. The community sees these verses as sacred symbols with the potential to confer protective powers, just as in previous traditions. This internalization process leads to the scriptures being understood not only as a text for worship or a source of law, but also as a spiritual medium that can provide physical protection and inner peace.

For example, the use of white cloth to wrap the Al-Fatihah talisman may be linked to the tradition of using white cloth in various rituals and ceremonies intended to cleanse, purify, or invoke protection. Similarly, the use of the Ayat Kursi necklace reflects the tradition of wearing jewelry or objects believed to bring luck or provide protection. In this view, the verses of the Qur'an become a more sacred and effective "material" to fulfill the symbolic and protective functions already present in local culture.

#### **b) Theological Perspectives in Tawheed, Shi'rk, and Scholars' Tolerance**

From the perspective of Islamic theology, the practice of using talismans, including those derived from Qur'anic verses, is seen as a complex and often controversial issue. The main principle that is the theological foundation is monotheism, which is the belief in Allah alone. Absolute spiritual dependence can only be directed to God. When a person relies on material objects, no matter how small, that are believed to have independent powers, it can obscure the principle of monotheism and lead to shirk (allying with Allah).

The hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad SAW expressly prohibit the practice of hanging amulets (tamīmah). This statement shows that, normatively, wearing amulets is forbidden in Islam. The Prophet said,

مَنْ تَعَلَّقَ تَمِيمَةً فَلَا أَتَمَّ اللَّهُ لَهُ وَمَنْ تَعَلَّقَ وَدَعَةً فَلَا وَدَعَ اللَّهُ لَهُ

*“Whoever hangs tamīmah, then Allah will not complete his affairs. And whoever hangs wada'ah (a mussel) as an antidote to 'ain, Allah will not give him peace” (HR. Ahmad). In another narration that is more emphatic, it is stated, “Whoever hangs tamīmah, he has indeed committed shirk” (HR. Ahmad).*

However, in practice, especially when the amulet comes from verses of the Qur'an or prayers acknowledged as true, scholars disagree on the law.

- **Permissible Opinion (with Conditions):** Some scholars are of the opinion that the use of Qur'anic verses or sahih prayers as amulets (tamīmah) is permissible, as long as it does not obscure the principle of monotheism and does not make the object the main source of strength, but as a means of effort accompanied by the belief that the real power still comes from Allah. This opinion often refers to the verse of the Qur'an,

وَنُنَزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

*“And We have sent down from the Qur'an something that is an antidote and a mercy for the believers” (QS. Al-Isro': 82).*

This verse is interpreted to mean that the Qur'an has the potential to be a healer (syifa') and mercy, so using it in the form of writing for protection can be considered a justified endeavor. This practice is likened to ruqyah, which is the recitation of prayers or holy verses for healing or protection. Scholars such as Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, in Fath al-Bari, provide explanations that lead to the tolerance of tamīmah derived from the Qur'an or dhikr.

- **The Prohibitive Opinion (Closing the Path of Shirk):** A stronger and more cautious opinion, held by the majority of contemporary scholars and some of the Prophet's companions such as Ibn Mas'ud and Hudzaifah, is that the practice of hanging amulets from Qur'anic verses remains forbidden. The main reason for this prohibition is to close the way so that it does not fall into more severe sharia.

- **Generalization of Evidence:** The hadiths that prohibit tamīmah are general and do not provide exceptions. Practicing the generality of this postulate means forbidding all forms of tamīmah, without exception.
- **Potential Abuse:** Using Qur'anic verses as talismans can lead to harassment of its sanctity. The amulet can be taken to unsuitable places, such as bathrooms, or exposed to uncleanness, which is an insult to the kalamullah.
- **Overlap with Shamanic Practices:** This practice can be used by shamans or psychics to justify their work. They could have written verses of the Qur'an under their shirk mantras, thereby creating confusion and making it difficult for the common people to distinguish right from wrong.
- **Reducing Attention to the Qur'an:** Dependence on Qur'anic verse talismans can make a person lazy to learn the meaning of the Qur'an, memorize it, or practice its contents in daily life. The main focus is on the physical objects it wears rather than on the moral and spiritual messages it conveys.
- **Identity Confusion Concerns:** When amulets based on Qur'anic verses are permitted, it can be difficult to distinguish between those that are indeed derived from holy verses and those that contain other obscure writings. This can expand the practice of amulets in general and make the boundaries between what is halal and haram blurred.

Fatwas from prominent scholars such as Shaykh 'Abdul 'Aziz bin 'Abdullah bin Baaz affirm this view of prohibition. He emphasized that relying on tamīmah, even when it is derived from the Qur'an or from good prayers, is unjust and can lead to shirk. This approach prioritizes prevention (*sad al-dzari'ah*) to maintain the purity of the Muslim faith.

### **c) The Distance Between Norms and Practices: Cultural-Theological Negotiations**

Emerging theological debates highlight the gulf between ideal religious norms and actual religious practices in society. Most people who use Qur'anic verses as amulets are unaware of, or uninterested in, the theological debate. For them, this practice is part of a tradition that provides a sense of security and tranquility. Their understanding is more symbolic and pragmatic, where they believe that the use of divine kalam, in any form, is a good endeavor and will not bring *mudharat*.

This phenomenon confirms that the sustainability of the practice of talisman verses of the Qur'an is not solely due to resistance to stricter religious teachings, but rather to a continuous negotiation process between the normative teachings of Islam and the reality of local culture. The present teachings of Islam interact with established belief systems and values, resulting in forms of religious practice that are unique and sometimes deviate from their original source.

Therefore, the analysis of Islamic law on this practice needs to be complemented by a socio-theological approach. This approach allows us to understand the root of the problem more comprehensively and contextually, taking into account the cultural, psychological, and social factors behind the practice, while still referring to the theological principles that underlie Islamic teachings.

## 5. Getting to Know the Concept of Amulet in Indonesian Culture and Its Relevance to the Qur'anic Verses

To understand the phenomenon of using Qur'anic verses as amulets, it is important to first understand the concept of amulets itself in the context of Indonesian culture. Amulets, amulets, or *tamīmah* generally refer to objects or writings that are believed to have supernatural powers to provide protection, ward off disease, or bring good luck.

Based on *the Qur'an book Inspiration for Literacy: The 2nd Series of Thematic Tafsir Stories* by Saiful Islam,<sup>12</sup> amulets are defined as “a type of item or writing that is hung on a body, vehicle, or building and is considered to have the power to protect its owner, ward off diseases, and repel reinforcements.” This definition encompasses a wide range of forms and functions that are highly relevant to the observed practices.

In Indonesia, amulets are not a strange phenomenon. It has taken deep root across society, from the lower middle class to the upper class. The source of amulets is usually people believed to have profound spiritual knowledge or magic, such as shamans, elder kyais, or other spiritual figures.

### a) Various Forms of Amulets Popular in Indonesia

In addition to Qur'anic verses, various other types of amulets are popular in Indonesia, reflecting the diversity of magical beliefs and practices in the community. Some of them are:

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<sup>12</sup> Saiful Islam. (2021). *Qur'an Inspiration for Literacy: The 2nd Series of Thematic Tafsir Stories* (p. 156).

1. *Ropes Pocong*. This amulet is very popular and is often associated with extreme magical powers. It is usually kept by criminals in wallets or pants pockets. The inherent belief is that pocong ropes can provide immunity from sharp weapon slashes and the ability to hypnotize victims. This reflects the view that objects derived from the ritual of death can have extraordinary powers, both for good and for evil.
2. *Landoh Buffalo Skin*. This amulet is associated with good luck in business. Entrepreneurs are believed to be able to make great profits by storing this type of buffalo skin. It is said that this amulet is difficult to obtain and comes from a magical buffalo in Landoh Village. This indicates a belief in a supernatural entity that can provide material blessings.
3. *The fangs of the wild boar king*. This amulet is believed to provide immunity from firearms. However, its use is often accompanied by taboos, such as the prohibition of marital relations with a partner. It is feared that this violation of taboos will bring disaster. This shows the existence of the concept of balance and consequences in magical practice.

The existence of these different types of amulets strengthens the argument that Indonesian people have a strong tendency to seek protection and good luck through objects believed to have supernatural powers. When Islam came along, the verses of the Qur'an that conveyed purity and majesty became a material to be adapted for this talismanic practice.

#### **b) The Relevance of Qur'anic Verses with the Concept of Traditional Talisman**

The practice of using Qur'anic verses as amulets can be seen as an adaptation or *re-signification* of the function of traditional amulets within Islam. Instead of using natural objects or supernatural beings, people turned to sacred scriptures. However, the essence of the practice—which is to seek protection, strength, or luck from an object—remains the same.

The difference lies in the perceived source of sacredness. If a traditional amulet derives its sacredness from an occult or ritual element, the Qur'anic verse amulet derives it from the Qur'an's status as kalamullah. However, as discussed earlier, the shift in focus from the meaning and purpose of worship to the magical power inherent in the text itself is at the root of its theological problems.

## 6. Analysis of Islamic Law on the Practice of Displaying and Wearing Talisman of Qur'an Verses

The debate over Islamic law regarding the practice of amulets based on Qur'anic verses continues to evolve and holds various points of view among scholars. The fundamental question is whether displaying or wearing amulets derived from Qur'anic verses, such as the Verse of the Chair displayed on the wall or worn on the neck, is permissible in the sharia.

The scholars are divided into two main views on this issue, both permissible and prohibited.

### a) Enabling View (with Conditions)

The word of Allah Ta'ala in QS. Al-Isro': 82, "And We have sent down from the Qur'an an antidote and mercy for the believers." Proponents of this view interpret that verses of the Qur'an can function as *syifa'* (antidote or medicine). Therefore, hanging or wearing the scriptures is considered a form of effort to obtain healing or protection, similar to ruqyah.

Hanging the Qur'an mushaf at home to protect against the interference of evil creatures, hanging Surat Al-Ikhlās on the chest, or displaying the Verse of the Chair or Surat Yasin on the wall of the house to avoid the devil. It also includes writings such as "a'udzu bi kalimaatillahit taammati min syarri maa kholaq" or "masya Allah wa tabarokallah" at the place of business. Some salaf and khalaf scholars, including those mentioned in several books of jurisprudence, are of the same opinion.

### b) A Forbidden View (Closing the Path of Shirk)

Closing the path of Shirk (Sad al-Dzari'ah) is the strongest argument for the view of prohibition. Allowing amulets from the Qur'an will open wide doors for amulet practice in general. People may claim that their amulets come from the Qur'an, when in fact they contain shirk mantras written by shamans. This will cause confusion and make it easier for people to fall into Sharia.

The hadiths of the Prophet SAW about the prohibition of tamīmah are general and have no exceptions. As the hadith from 'Uqbah bin 'Amir says: "*Whoever trusts (the heart) on tamīmah (amulet), then Allah will not complete his affairs...*" (HR. Ahmad). And a more emphatic narration:

مَنْ عَلَّقَ تَمِيمَةً فَقَدْ أَشْرَكَ

“Whoever hangs Tamīmah, he has committed shirk” (HR. Ahmad).

Amulets worn or displayed may be taken to unholy places, such as bathrooms. This encourages potential conflict and is a form of harassment of the sanctity of the Qur'an, which is not appropriate for the kalamullah. In addition, dependence on amulets can make a person negligent in reading, understanding, and practicing the Qur'an directly. They rely only on physical objects, not on the teachings they contain, thereby reducing attention to the Qur'an.

Despite the differences of opinion, the view that prohibits the practice of amulets from the verses of the Qur'an, on the grounds of closing the path of shirk, is often considered to be a more conservative opinion, Wathiq (strong), and be more careful in maintaining the purity of the faith of Muslims. The logic behind this approach is that maintaining the foundation of monotheism is a top priority in Islam. If a practice could violate monotheism, even if it is originally intended to be good, it should be avoided.

Other considerations that strengthen the view of prohibition yaitu, *First*, the worry of being abused by Magic Practitioners. As mentioned, shamans and psychics can easily claim that their amulets are derived from the Qur'an, thus masking their actual magic practices. This will damage the image of Islam and mislead the public.

*Second*, emphasizes the Boundary Between Ruqyah and Amulet: Ruqyah syar'iyah is the recitation of prayers and holy verses performed by a perukyah or recited by the sufferer himself, with full confidence in Allah, without relying on physical objects. Allowing amulets from the Qur'an can blur the difference between a valid ruqyah and a prohibited practice of amulets. Therefore, contemporary fatwas often lead to the prohibition of all forms of tamīmah, including those derived from the Qur'an, to maintain the integrity of the faith and prevent the ummah from falling into the abyss of sharia.

The practice of using Qur'anic verses as amulets among Indonesian Muslims is a complex socio-theological phenomenon. Field observations show that Surah Al-Fatiha and the Verse of the Chair are the two verses that are most often used as amulets, both in the form of written or kept writing, and in the form of mantras recited in certain situations. This practice is passed down from generation to generation, driven by people's desire to seek spiritual protection and inner peace.

A critical analysis of this phenomenon reveals a shift in the meaning of the holy text. From the source of divine guidance and profound worship readings, the verses are reduced to symbolic and magical objects that have inherent protective powers. This transformation of function is increasingly visible in the practice of using verses as mantras, where the fragmentation of verses and pragmatism in their use obscure the essence of their spiritual meaning and purpose.

From a theological perspective, this practice has caused fierce debate among scholars. While some allow with certain conditions, referring to the potential of the Qur'an as a *syifa'*, the majority of scholars, with arguments *sad al-dzari'ah* (closing the path of shirk) and the general postulates of the prohibition of amulets, argue that this practice remains forbidden. This forbidding approach emphasizes more on preventing the ummah from falling into shirk, maintaining the sanctity of the Qur'an, and avoiding the potential for disguised witchcraft practices.

The integration of cultural factors, including a strong spiritual tradition and the use of sacred symbols, with the theological understanding of Islam is key to understanding the practice's sustainability. Indonesian society tends to adapt Islamic teachings into existing cultural frameworks, creating unique forms of religious practice. This suggests a dynamic negotiation between Islamic norms and local cultural realities, which often creates a gap between normative ideals and actual practices.

Getting to know the concept of amulets in general in Indonesian culture, which includes various forms such as pocong rope, buffalo skin, and wild boar fangs, makes it clear that the practice of using Qur'anic verses as amulets is an adaptation of the traditional amulet function into the realm of Islam. Although the source of the sacredness and the talisman's materials are different, the essence of seeking protection and power from physical objects remains the same

Therefore, the analysis of Islamic law on the practice of displaying and wearing amulets from Qur'anic verses emphasizes the importance of a cautious approach based on the principle of closing the path to shirk. Given the potential for abuse and confusion, as well as general prohibitions on amulets, the view that prohibits this practice is considered more appropriate for maintaining the purity of the faith and the integrity of Islamic teachings.

The study concludes that although the intention behind using Qur'anic verses as amulets may be good, namely seeking protection and tranquility, this practice can deviate from normative Islamic teachings. Continuous educational efforts are needed to increase public understanding of the Qur'an's true function as a source of guidance, not as a magical

object. A comprehensive socio-theological approach is essential to continue studying this phenomenon and to find solutions that bridge the gap between cultural traditions and pure religious teachings.

#### D. Conclusion

This study confirms that the practice of using Qur'anic verses as amulets in Indonesian Muslim society, when accompanied by a belief in an independent intrinsic force beyond the will of Allah SWT, is clearly contrary to the fundamental principles of Islamic monotheism. This principle emphasizes that only Allah SWT is the source of all protection and strength, as confirmed in QS. Al-Fatihah: 5.

An in-depth analysis shows that although some scholars allow the use of Qur'anic verses in the context of ruqyah (healing by prayer) on the main condition that there is no element of shirk and adherence to the guidance of the Shari'ah, the practice of amulets that are independent of a correct spiritual understanding is at high risk of leading to deviations from the faith. This phenomenon can be seen as a form of resemblance between divine power and material objects, a fallacy that theologians such as Al-Ghazali critically examined in his work on the dangers of heresy and superstition.<sup>13</sup>

Therefore, the strongest legal conclusion from this study is that the practice is not in harmony with Maqasid al-Shari'ah (the purposes of Islamic sharia) because it has the potential to obscure the essence of worship, which should be aimed purely at Allah, and to weaken the purity of monotheism. The further implications of these findings call for a more massive educational effort to understand the Qur'an as a guide to life and a spiritual source, rather than as a magical object with autonomous power.

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