

Traditional Medicine Practices Using Arabic Symbols

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Cite this article:

Irawati, R., Arifin, A., Kuswardono, S., Miftahuddin, A., & Siminto, S. (2023). Traditional Medicine Practices Using Arabic Symbols. *Arabiyatuna: Jurnal Bahasa Arab*, 7(2), 655-674. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.29240/jba.v7i2.8490>

Received: 10-09-2023

Revised: 21-10-2023

Accepted: 12-11-2023

Abstract

This research aimed to explore the forms and characteristics of Arabic written symbols used in traditional medicine. Traditional medicine is in demand by the public, because of the perceived high cure rate and the failure of modern treatment that patients have undergone after undergoing medical treatment. Traditional medicine is more convincing than medical treatment. There has not been much research regarding the characteristics and methods of traditional medicine using Arabic symbols/writing. Arabic symbols or writing have been researched more in terms of meaning and ritual. Hence, this research utilized data source triangulation and technical triangulation. This qualitative research adopted a phenomenological approach. The research subjects were traditional medicine practitioners who used Arabic symbols/writing in their treatments and patients who had used traditional medicine. Determining the subjects of this research was carried out using a purposive sampling technique. The research results showed that prayers originating from the Qur'an and *rajah* with Arabic letter symbols were the therapist's mainstay medicine for treating patients. The use of prayers and *rajahs* with Arabic letter symbols varied from one therapist to another. *Rajah* in traditional medicine was used to treat various kinds of patient complaints. The *rajah* writing came from the books of Shams al Ma'arif al Kubra and Al Mujarrabat. *Rajah* came from verses from the Qur'an which were rewritten in

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the book of medicine. Proper interpretation and use of the Qur'an could provide effective improvements to a person's weak mental and psychological condition.

Keywords: Arabic script; traditional medicine; social anthropology; health; *rajab*.

Introduction

Indonesian people make extensive use of ancient scripts and Arabic symbols/writing for various purposes. The cultural heritage of ancient society in the form of written symbols, as well as self-identity and a manifestation of the high intellectuality of society at that time, is called ancient script¹. This ancient script is also found on amulets or *rajab*.

Amulets or *rajab* are also found in various forms, inscribed with Arabic letters, verses from the Quran, as well as special Arabic symbols written in certain media. Arabic writing, including verses from the Qur'an, apart from being related to prayer and worship, is also used for various purposes which are full of the noble values of Islamic teachings. The Qur'an has the characteristics of being selective in using sentence editing, language style, and vocabulary. This uniqueness caused the Arab people, at the beginning of the revelation of the Qur'an, to be stunned when they heard the verses of the Qur'an. They feel that the language of the Qur'an surpasses the popular language style in their daily speech and exceeds the beauty of the poetry style that they have inherited from generation to generation². The Qur'an was revealed in Arabic. Every person who uses his mind is motivated to understand God's messages in the Qur'an. All diction and sentence structures in the Qur'an display uniqueness and beauty. The Arabs themselves also recognized and greatly admired the beauty of the Qur'an. They used the Qur'an as a new Arabic scientific reference in addition to the entrenched oral tradition³.

The Qur'an was understood by Indonesian people because of the arrival of the Arabs. Arabs came to Indonesia around the 12th and 14th centuries AD, introducing Arabic writing to make it easier to read the Qur'an and spread Islam

¹ Nyimas Umi Kalsum, Naffa Rachmadini, and Annabel Teh Gallop, "The Threat of Discontinuity Ancient Scripts in the Islamic-Malay Manuscript," *Arabiyatuna: Jurnal Bahasa Arab* 7, no. 1 (2023): 363–88, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jba.v7i1.7327>.

² Damhuri Dj. Noor, "Gaya Bahasa Al-Iltifat Al-Mu'jami Dalam Al-Qur'an," *Arabiyatuna: Jurnal Bahasa Arab* 4, no. 1 (2020): 131–54, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jba.v4i1.1357>.

³ Himatul Istiqomah, "Analisis Morfologi Doa Dalam Al-Qur'an Surat Al-Baqarah 186," *Arabiyatuna: Jurnal Bahasa Arab* 3, no. 2 (2019): 251–60, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jba.v3i2.970>.

in the archipelago. Arabic writing was then used to write Malay literature and people knew it as Arabic Pegon⁴.

Arabic Pegon is not only limited to Malay or Javanese but is commonly found in other areas. Islamic culture is a marker of the presence of Arabic Pegon in the Indonesian archipelago. Arabic Pegon was used by ancient ulama as an effort to spread Islam⁵. The use of Arabic Pegon in schools and Islamic boarding schools is deeply rooted in the culture of the local community and is still maintained today. Madrasas and Islamic boarding schools are still considered very successful in producing graduates who understand Arabic Pegon⁶. Arabic pegon can also be found in *Rajah* or medical books.

Rajah is considered to have magical powers because it was made by someone who had wisdom. *Rajah* is also used as a medium for traditional medicine, and for various other functions, for example for grooming, *rajah* for love, personal protection, *rajah* for house fences and immunity^{7,8}. Arabic writing and verses from the Al-Quran used in traditional medicine are not foreign to society. Prayers for healing based on the Al-Quran from *kyai* are often requested by people who come for treatment⁹. Traditional medicines in the form of medicinal plant concoctions, dietary practices, mental health practices, spiritual healing and therapy are heavily influenced by Islam. These traditional medicines reflect the timeless interconnection between Islamic medicines, prophetic influences, and traditional medicines that emerged from specific geographic and cultural origins¹⁰.

Traditional medicine is a holistic practice, based on beliefs and experiences from various cultures, whether explainable or not, in the context of

⁴ Eva Dewi et al., "The Contestation of the Malay Arabic and Roman Literature: Shifts in Culture, Literature, and Religion," *Arabiyatuna: Jurnal Bahasa Arab* 7, no. 1 May (2023): 1, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jba.v7i1.5654>.

⁵ Mahmood Kooria, "The Dutch Mogharaer, Arabic Muharrar, and Javanese Law Books: A VOC Experiment with Muslim Law in Java, 1747-1767," *Itinerario* 42, no. 2 (2018): 202–19, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S016511531800030X>.

⁶ Mochamad Chobir Sirad et al., "The Implementation of the Utawi Iki-Iku (Pegon Symbols) Formula Method in Basic Syntax Courses at Islamic Higher Education," *Arabiyatuna: Jurnal Bahasa Arab* 7, no. 1 May (2023): 299–314, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jba.v7i1.6465>.

⁷ Bayu Pamungkas, Muhammad Noupal, and Nur Fitriyana, "Tradisi 'Rajah': Terapi Mistik Dalam Kepercayaan Masyarakat Suku Jawa Di Kabupaten Ogan Komering Ulu Timur," *Jurnal Studi Agama* 6, no. 1 (2022): 12–28.

⁸ Salamiyah and M. Reza Fitriadi, "Rajahan: Sisi Ilmiah Budaya Bahari Dalam Pengobatan Alternatif," *Jurnal Interdisiplin Sosiologi Agama (JINSA)* 2, no. 2 (2022): 70–80.

⁹ Siti Durrotun Nafisah, "Melacak Sumber-Sumber Penggunaan Ayat-Ayat Pengobatan Dalam Kitab Shams Al-Ma'Arif Al-Kubrā," *AL ITQAN: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an* 5, no. 1 (2019): 85–114, <https://doi.org/10.47454/itqan.v5i1.709>.

¹⁰ Sara N. Alrawi and Michael D. Fetters, "Traditional Arabic & Islamic Medicine: A Conceptual Model for Clinicians and Researchers," *Global Journal of Health Science* 4, no. 3 (2012): 164–69, <https://doi.org/10.5539/gjhs.v4n3p164>.

health maintenance, prevention, diagnosis, improvement or treatment of physical and mental illnesses. Traditional healing practices extend beyond the realm of health to broader societal, religious, and cultural levels^{11,12}. Each society develops a system of medicine that has different styles and characteristics. Conditions in Indonesia in general, traditional healers tend to be more spread out in rural areas, and modern healers tend to be found more often in urban areas^{13,14}. Nowadays, the use of traditional medicine is often found because traditional medicine is part of tradition, easy, cheap, and effective. Traditional medicine is also used as a first aid measure when experiencing illness^{15,16}. The treatment most sought after by the public is treatment that has a high cure rate which is proven after the patient undergoes the treatment. Traditional medicine is in demand by the public, because of the perceived high cure rate and the failure of modern treatment that patients have undergone after undergoing medical treatment. This has given rise to new views and a strong belief that traditional medicine is more convincing than medical treatment^{17,18,19}. There has not been much research regarding the characteristics and methods of traditional medicine using Arabic symbols/writing. Arabic symbols or writing have been researched more in terms of meaning and ritual^{20,21,22}. This article discusses the forms of Arabic written symbols which are used as traditional medicine.

¹¹ Sara N. AlRawi et al., "Traditional Arabic & Islamic Medicine: Validation and Empirical Assessment of a Conceptual Model in Qatar," *BMC Complementary and Alternative Medicine* 17, no. 1 (2017): 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12906-017-1639-x>.

¹² Sharmi Sultana Ayshi et al., "Healing with Arabic Scriptures and Symbols : A Less Documented Aspect of Traditional Healing Methods in Bangladesh," *Advances in Natural and Applied Sciences* 9, no. 78 (2015): 1–15.

¹³ Atik Triratnawati, "Pengobatan Tradisional, Upaya Meminimalkan Biaya Kesehatan Masyarakat Desa Di Jawa," *Jurnal Manajemen Pelayanan Kesehatan* 13, no. 02 (2010): 69–73, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.22146/jmpk.v13i02.2598>.

¹⁴ Muhammad Syaiful, Arif Rahman Hakim, and Imamul Hak, "Healing from Healer: Use of Traditional Health Services in the Age of Modern Health," *Diversity: Disease Preventive of Research Integrity* 1, no. 2 (2021): 35–50, <https://doi.org/10.24252/diversity.v1i2.19740>.

¹⁵ Triratnawati, "Pengobatan Tradisional, Upaya Meminimalkan Biaya Kesehatan Masyarakat Desa Di Jawa."

¹⁶ Didik Gunawan Tamtomo, "Gambaran Histopatologi Kulit Pada Pengobatan Tradisional Kerokan," *Cermin Dunia Kedokteran* 35, no. cdk 160 (2008): 1–4.

¹⁷ Pamungkas, Noupal, and Fitriyana, "Tradisi 'Rajah': Terapi Mistik Dalam Kepercayaan Masyarakat Suku Jawa Di Kabupaten Ogan Komering Ulu Timur."

¹⁸ Salamiyah and Fitriadi, "Rajahan: Sisi Ilmiah Budaya Bahari Dalam Pengobatan Alternatif."

¹⁹ Oualid Hechehouche, Mariam Adawiah Dzulkifli, and Intan Aidura Alias, "The Quranic-Based Healing through Sound and Its Psychological Effect," *IJUM Journal of Human Sciences* 2, no. 2 (2020): 75–80.

²⁰ Judika Panggabean and Flansius Tampubolon, "Simbol Pengobatan Tradisional Etnik Batak Toba," *Jurnal Kompetensi* 15, no. 2 (2022): 117–28.

²¹ Dede Hidayatullah, "Mantra Pengobatan Dalam Naskah Banjar," *Naditira Widya* 13, no. 1 (2019): 41, <https://doi.org/10.24832/nw.v13i1.322>.

Previous and current research found related to (a) traditional medicine that uses plant-based medicine, mantras, or other media as an alternative to modern health industry practices²³, (b) healing based on the Al-Quran through sound and the psychological effects it causes^{24,25}, (c) the tradition of *rajab* in Javanese tribal beliefs²⁶, and (d) Al-Quran verses in psychic practice among Javanese society, by *santri* or *kyai*, who have normative arguments and theological legitimacy from the Al-Quran²⁷. Based on previous research, this article makes a different contribution that has not been discussed much before. This research seeks to reveal the form of Arabic symbols/writing that has been used in traditional medicine and has become a therapeutic tool to support patient recovery and can become an integral part of modern medicine. This article contributes to providing a classification of the characteristics of tattoos with Arabic writing that are used in traditional medicine. The theory used is related to the semiotic triangle of Ogden and Richards. In the diagram, the semiotic triangle has a dotted line between the symbol (word) and the reference (object). This shows that symbols and references (objects) do not have an absolute relationship²⁸.

This research is qualitative research using a phenomenological research approach. The phenomenological approach aims to explain phenomena in their purity, seeking to reveal and understand the reality of research based on the perspective of the research subject. The phenomenological approach examines society describing its everyday world, especially how individuals with their consciousness construct meaning from the results of interactions with other

²² Derri Ris Riana, S.S. and Indrawati, "Makna Simbol Tolak Bala Dalam Masyarakat Banjar: Kajian Etnolinguistik," *Kindai Etam: Jurnal Penelitian Arkeologi* 7, no. 2 (2021): 133–46, <https://doi.org/10.24832/ke.v7i2.100>.

²³ Syaiful, Hakim, and Hak, "Healing from Healer: Use of Traditional Health Services in the Age of Modern Health."

²⁴ Hechehouche, Dzulkifli, and Alias, "The Quranic-Based Healing through Sound and Its Psychological Effect."

²⁵ Mine Yilmaz Kocak, Nazlı Nur Göçen, and Bihter Akin, "The Effect of Listening to the Recitation of the Surah Al-Inshirah on Labor Pain, Anxiety and Comfort in Muslim Women: A Randomized Controlled Study," *Journal of Religion and Health* 61, no. 4 (2022): 2945–59, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-021-01356-w>.

²⁶ Pamungkas, Noupal, and Fitriyana, "Tradisi 'Rajah': Terapi Mistik Dalam Kepercayaan Masyarakat Suku Jawa Di Kabupaten Ogan Komering Ulu Timur."

²⁷ Hasyim Muhammad et al., "The Qur'anic Mantras Recited by Shamanic Santri in Java, Indonesia," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 77, no. 4 (2021): 1–9, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v77i4.7059>.

²⁸ Rizka Aprilya et al., "Translation Based on Ogden and Richard's Semantic Triangle Theory: How the Idea Is Connected to Real-World Objects," *JELITA: Journal of English Language Teaching and Literature* 1, no. 1 (2020): 20–26, <https://jurnal.stkipmb.ac.id/index.php/jelita/article/view/37>.

individuals^{29,30}. The research subjects were (1) therapists and traditional medicine practitioners in general, (2) therapists and traditional medicine practitioners who used Arabic symbols or symbols in their treatment, and (3) patients who had used traditional medicine. Determining the research subjects was carried out using a purposive sampling technique, so that the selected research subjects were in accordance with the research focus.

Literature study technique, through searching written documents (either reference books or scientific journals resulting from research) to gather information about Arabic script symbols used in traditional medicine and all their ins and outs. Documentation techniques, through photo and video documentation, aimed to collect information about Arabic written symbols used in traditional medicine. Observation techniques were used by looking directly at traditional medicine that used Arabic symbols. In-depth interview techniques and distribution of questionnaires were carried out with research subjects, with the questions given being the same as the questionnaire. The questionnaire was created using a combination of open and closed question models, for the entire group of research subjects. In this research, we utilized triangulation of data sources and triangulation of methods/techniques. Source triangulation was carried out by cross checking research subject data from groups of therapists and traditional medicine practitioners in general, therapists and traditional medicine practitioners who used Arabic symbols in their treatment, and patients. Method/technique triangulation was carried out by utilizing library study techniques, documentation techniques, observation, distribution of questionnaires, and in-depth interviews to collect research data.

Findings and Discussion

Rajah is Arabic writing containing verses from the Al-Quran, prayer readings, names of Allah, *sholawat* or certain Arabic letters written by a spiritual practitioner to treat physical or psychological illnesses and to provide spiritual protection to the person who wears it. *Rajah* can be written on various media such as paper, cloth, plates, or other solid objects. *Rajah* can also be written on the body of people who have complaints of illness using certain oils such as *za'faran* or *misk*. Even though *rajahs* come from verses from the Al-Quran, hadith, or Arabic books, not everyone can write *rajah* that have medicinal benefits. A spiritual practitioner who writes it must go through various mental

²⁹ Hasbiansyah, "Pendekatan Fenomenologi Pengantar Praktik Penelitian Dalam Ilmu Sosial Dan Komunikasi," *Mediator* 9, no. 1 (2008): 163–80.

³⁰ Suyanto, "Fenomenologi Sebagai Metode Dalam Penelitian Pertunjukan Teater Musikal," *Lakon: Jurnal Pengkajian & Penciptaan Wayang* XVI, no. 1 (2019): 26–32, <https://jurnal.isi-ska.ac.id/index.php/lakon/article/download/3154/2628>.

and spiritual practices such as fasting, reciting several *dhikirs* with certain numbers for a specified time³¹.

Characteristics and media for writing *rajahs*

Therapists use the book *Shams al Ma'arif al Kubra* as the main reference for writing *rajah*. The book was written by Ahmad Ali Al Buni, a scholar from Al Jazair. The book contains a guide to writing *rajah* which comes from verses from the Al-Quran because according to the author and many other scholars, the Al-Quran has the function of healing various diseases and eliminating various disorders. This book is studied in many traditional Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. Most spiritual practitioners who practice *rajah* medicine have studied this book in Islamic boarding schools³². As an amulet, *rajahs* are often written on handkerchiefs, clothes, vests, and belts. Some are also written on weapons such as knives, spears, swords, daggers, bamboo, wooden sticks, or animal bones³³.

Rajah made from animal skin is a *rajah* with Arabic writing, written on goat skin or deer skin. This *rajah* is usually kept in a belt or wallet. This *rajah* is used by people for safety and self-protection when traveling long distances because when traveling, what things will be encountered or experienced, you can never predict that you will experience a certain incident. Through this *rajah*, the owner believes that God will always be and give safety. *Rajah* made from animal skin is also believed to bring good luck³⁴.

³¹ Wildan Taufiq Revky Oktavian Sakti, Dadan Rusmana, "Application of Cultural Semiotic Study With the Content of the Qur'an (Symbolism in Wafaq Loading the Qur'an for Muslim Communities; Structure, Meaning and Ideology)," *Journal of Scientech Research and Development* 5, no. 1 (2023): 371–92, <https://idm.or.id/JSCR/index.php/JSCR/article/view/144/127>.

³² Hilda Nurfuadah, "Living Quran: Resepsi Komunitas Muslim Pada Alquran (Studi Kasus Di Pondok Pesantren at-Tarbiyyatul Wathoniyah Desa Mertapada Kulon, Kec. Astatana Japura, Kab. Cirebon)," *Diya Al-Afkar: Jurnal Studi Al-Quran Dan Al-Hadis* 5, no. 01 (2017): 125, <https://doi.org/10.24235/diyaafkar.v5i01.4337>.

³³ Sri Dewi Priwanti Siregar, Maman Abdurrahman, and Syihabuddin, "Arabic Symbols on Rajah With The Perspective Of Mantiq Science And Al-Azhar Interpretation," *APHORISME Journal of Arabic Language, Literature, and Education* 3, no. 2 (2022): 81–96, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.37680/aphorisme.v3i2.2152>.

³⁴ Pamungkas, Noupal, and Fitriyana, "Tradisi 'Rajah': Terapi Mistik Dalam Kepercayaan Masyarakat Suku Jawa Di Kabupaten Ogan Komering Ulu Timur."



Figure 1. *Rajah* is made from animal skin.

Apart from being pieces of verses from the Al-Quran and the names of Allah, *rajahs* also have various shapes and patterns. A numerical pattern diagram contains a table of Arabic numbers. An alphabetic diagram contains the arrangement of Arabic letters. A pictorial diagram contains images with certain patterns³⁵.

ظ	ث	ج	ف	خ	ش	ظ
ح	ف	خ	ش	ظ	ز	ث
خ	ش	ظ	ز	ث	ج	ف
ظ	ز	ث	ج	ف	خ	ش
ث	ج	ف	خ	ش	ظ	ز
ف	خ	ش	ظ	ز	ث	ج
ش	ظ	ز	ث	ج	ف	خ

Figure 2. Alphabetic diagram

³⁵ Abdussakir, Rosy Aliviana, and Yunita Rohmawati, “Laporan Penelitian Bersama Dosen-Mahasiswa Analisis Matematik Terhadap Azimat Numerik Dan Alfabetik” (Malang, 2011), <http://repository.uin-malang.ac.id/1757/7/1757.pdf>.

Ahmad Ali Al Buni in the book *Shams al Ma'arif al Kubra* provided an explanation of *rajah* with numerical patterns. ظ for ظہیر means the perceptible. ش for شہید means the all-and-ever witnessing, خ for خبیر means the most aware. ف for فرد means the one. ج for جبار means the compeller. ث for ثابت means the solid, ز for زکی means the pure.

While *rajah* with numerical diagram pattern, each number represents a letter which is believed to have magical powers and can be used for various purposes such as protecting from mystical things.

۴۲۴۷	۲۲۴	۳۲۱	۶۰۶۰	۴۴۴	۳۲۲۱	۴۳۱۱
۴۲۴۳	۴۳۴۱	۴۶۱	۴۴۵	۲۳۱۳	۳۰۴۸	۴۲۲۵
۴۲۲۹	۴۲۱۳	۴۲۴۲	۲۴۱	۳۵۶	۲۳۴۲	۶۶۳
۴۲۱۴	۴۳۵	۳۳۷	۳۲۴	۲۴۵۹	۲۳۴۰	۴۳۵۱
۲۸۴۳	۴۴۱۸	۴۲۷	۴۴۱	۴۲۵۷	۴۳۱۵	۴۳۱۹
۴۴۳	۵۸۴۳	۴۳۴۲	۴۳۲۹	۴۳۱۶	۲۲۳۲	۴۳۱۸
۴۳۲۰	۳۱۷	۲۳۴۹	۴۲۳	۴۴۲۰	۵۳۵۰	۱۳۴۲

Figure 3. Numerical pattern diagram



Figure 4. Pictorial diagram

This symbol (figure 4) is believed to originate from the Hebrew alphabet used to write the Torah and Bible. This *Rajah* is used to provide protection for assets such as a house, garden, or place where treasure is stored.

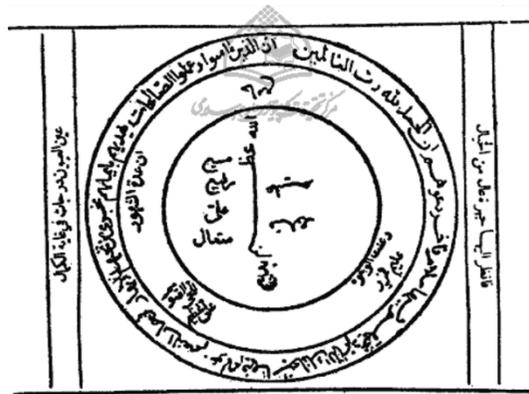


Figure 5. *Rajah* of a verse from the Al-Quran

The *rajah* in figure 5 gives the meaning that surely those who believe and do good, their Lord will guide them 'to Paradise' through their faith, rivers will flow under their feet in the Gardens of Bliss: Yunus verse 9. The verse is written on the *rajah* because it is believed that it can give power, grace, and love from others to whom uses this *rajah*.

In the past and present, if a person is unable to fight emotional, physical, and psychological discomfort in its various aspects (illness, sadness, any kind of difficulty), that person may very well try to eliminate or neutralize the discomfort he feels with plants, words, signs, and objects that are considered to have supernatural powers. The use of amulets and *rajah* by traditional medicine practitioners is very normal and people believe that the efforts made by traditional medicine practitioners can protect them from danger, bring good luck, or ward off evil spirits³⁶.

The use of *rajahs* in traditional medicine

The Andersen and Newman health seeking Behavioral Model includes (1) predisposing factors, namely the patient's socio-cultural conditions which describe their health condition, (2) supporting factors needed to obtain services in the form of facilities or logistics, and (3) factors requiring the use of health services as a direct cause of health care choices and reflects an individual's perceived health status³⁷.

³⁶ Madeleine Johnson and Evariste Fongzossie, "Ethnobotanical Survey of Plants Used as Amulets among the Banen Ethnic Group in Ndiki Sub-Division (Centre Region of Cameroon)," *Acta Universitatis Agriculturae et Silviculturae Mendelianae Brunensis* 68, no. 4 (2021): 741–53, <https://doi.org/10.11118/actaun202068040741>.

³⁷ Gezahegn Tesfaye et al., "Application of the Andersen-Newman Model of Health Care Utilization to Understand Antenatal Care Use in Kersa District, Eastern Ethiopia," *PLoS ONE* 13, no. 12 (2018): 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0208729>.

Religious practices, traditional beliefs and culture used in healing various diseases are still the choice of people in Indonesia. The selection of a patient for health services, in this case a traditional medical therapist, in a medically plural society is a complex process. This depends on various factors, such as the severity of the disease, the patient's perceived risk of the disease, relative proximity to traditional medicine therapists, cost of health services, transportation facilities, gender of the patient, attitude of the patient towards different treatment systems, past experiences of the patient, the patient's perception of the disease, and the belief system regarding the causes of the emergence of a disease³⁸. In Indonesian society, religious figures are considered to have privileges apart from religious knowledge. They are considered to have the ability to treat illnesses, both medical and non-medical, with prayers or certain methods. The suggestions of people who seek treatment from religious figures are so strong that many feel the positive impact of the treatment³⁹. This is the predisposing factor that makes people choose *rajab* treatment.

Rajab using verses from the Quran is used by many alternative medicine practitioners. It is believed that the Quran is not only a holy book and a guide to life for Muslims, but also has healing properties⁴⁰. The Qur'an is a source of healing and treatment for all physical and mental illnesses. Many verses of the Qur'an reveal the treatment of physical and mental illnesses and mental health⁴¹. Based on an interview with one of the therapists, KH. Farihin from Jatibarang, Brebes Regency, he uses tattoos from Al-Quran verses for medical practice. The verses used are seven greeting verses, namely Surah Yasin verse 58, Ash-Shaffat verse 79, Ash-Shaffat verse 109, Ash-Shaffat verse 1, Ash-Shaaffaat verse 130, Al-Qadr verse 5, Ash-Shaffat verses 181-182. The verses are written on a piece of paper and put in a jug of water then left for a day and night, after which the patient drinks it. Respondents who are patients of KH. Farihin is Mr Musofiyuddin who suffered a mild stroke which made him often forgetful and his head often dizzy. After two months of drinking the water soaked in the verse, his condition gradually improved, and he no longer forgot and felt dizzy.

³⁸ Md Imdadul Haque et al., "Traditional Healing Practices in Rural Bangladesh: A Qualitative Investigation," *BMC Complementary and Alternative Medicine* 18, no. 1 (2018): 1–15, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12906-018-2129-5>.

³⁹ Rita Desrianti, "Tradisi 'Ngidu Urasan' Studi Living Qur'an Di Desa Surulangun Kecamatan Rawas Ulu Kabupaten Musi Rawas Utara," *El-Furqania Jurnal Ushuluddin Dan Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 07, no. 01 (2021): 1–17, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.54625/elfurqania.v7i01.4265>.

⁴⁰ Hechehouche, Dzulkifli, and Alias, "The Quranic-Based Healing through Sound and Its Psychological Effect."

⁴¹ Mohammadhiwa Abdekhoda and Fatemeh Ranjbaran, "The Holy Quran and Treatment of Mental and Physical Diseases," *Pastoral Psychology* 71, no. 4 (2022): 423–35, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11089-022-01002-6>.

Although predisposing factors are the main determinants of people choosing certain health services, enabling components must also be considered as determining factors. The condition where a health service is chosen by the community because there is a need to meet the need for treatment is called an enabling factor. Enabling factors which include economic conditions and ease of access to health services greatly influence people's behavior in seeking treatment. Enabling conditions can be measured by family income, or the presence or absence of health insurance and access to health services⁴².

Many people choose *rajah* treatment because practitioners never charge a fee. Patients who come for treatment can give whatever money they can. Mbah Temu's treatment in Sidoluhur Village, Jaken District, Pati Regency, never charges fees for all its patients. The *rajah* written is a fragment of Yasin's letter, verse 58.

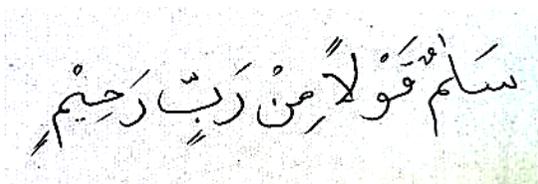


Figure 6. *Rajah* written by the therapist.

KH Farihin took Q.S. Yasin verse 58 (figure 6) which means "Peace!" will be 'their' greeting from the Merciful Lord. This *ayah* is believed to be able to help who reads it to get what him/her want, including healing from diseases.

The way to write the *rajah* is that the therapist writes the verse and reads it three times while holding his breath. The *rajah* paper is then placed in water for the patient to drink. The patient who received treatment from Mbah Temu was Ahmad Zainudin. Mbah Temu's residence is about 5 km from his house. He complained of migraines that would not go away even though he had gone to the doctor. After several days of drinking the *rajah* water, he felt better, and his feelings became calmer. The need factor is determined by the level of disease and the patient's condition. Patient behavior in seeking appropriate health services is greatly influenced by the level of disease, whether their health condition means they cannot carry out daily activities or not and the symptoms of the disease⁴³.

Kyai Sayyidin Lugianto's *rajah* treatment in Gombong District, Kebumen Regency is one of them. In carrying out his medical practice, Kyai Sayyid usually writes *rajahs* containing Arabic letter symbols, *asma' al busna* or monotheistic sentences on a piece of paper which is then dissolved in water.

⁴² N. K Pushpalata and K. B Chandrika, "Health Care Seeking Behaviour-A Theoretical Perspective," *Paripex Indian J Res* 6, no. 1 (2017): 790–92, <http://shodhganda>.

⁴³ Pushpalata and Chandrika.

The water is then drunk by the patient. There are also two other methods; write the *rajab* on a bowl or plate then ask the patient to eat using that and write the *rajab* on the patient's back using wind oil or massage oil. The patient is also asked to drink boiled water from the leaves and read a certain amount of dhikr or prayer according to the patient's condition.

The *rajab* writing comes from the books of *Shams al Ma'arif al Kubra* and *Al Mujarrabat*. According to Kyai Sayyid, to be able to write a medical *rajab*, it is not enough just to quote these two books. There are several penances that must be done so that the *rajab* has healing properties. These penances include David's fasting, mutih fasting, ngerowot fasting, *dalailul kbairat* fasting and reading certain *wirids*. According to the confession of Mr. Salam, who once received treatment from Kyai Sayyid, he chose this treatment because his stomach acid disease did not heal even though he had gone to the doctor. Apart from stomach acid, there were other complaints that made him feel that there were non-medical factors causing him to get sick. Every time he was about to perform ablution and pray, he suddenly fell as if someone had pushed him from behind. On the advice of his neighbor, Mr Salam then went to Kyai Sayyid's house for treatment. Kyai Sayyid saw a spirit creature attached to the patient's leg. Mr Salam then shared his work experience as a mortuary guard at a Community Health Center. Kyai Sayyid explained that this was what made it difficult for him to perform ablution and prayer. He then wrote a *rajab* on the patient's back with oil, asked him to drink boiled water from the leaves and read more prayers.

According to Mr. Salam, after that his illness healed, and no one pushed him every time he wanted to perform ablution and pray. Mr. Susilo, another patient, said that when he was working in Jakarta, he was invited to accompany his friend for treatment at a paranormal, but when he returned from there, he experienced various physical and psychological disorders. He often became dizzy; his words could not be controlled. When he heard someone talking badly, his head automatically turned to the left. He also frequently felt panic and fear without any reason. Mr Susilo had already gone to doctors and psychics but there was no change. He decided to return to Kebumen. From Mr. Salam, who is also his neighbor, he heard about Kyai Sayyid's ability to treat supernatural illnesses, so he went for treatment at his residence. There, Kyai Sayyid wrote a *rajab* on his back with oil, and asked him to read more prayers. After several weeks Mr Susilo recovered from his complaints.

Another traditional medicine practitioner is Mbah Sam, whose address is Jatihadi Village RT 02 RW 03 Sumber District, Rembang Regency. Mbah Sam wrote *rajab* on paper. The *rajab* written comes from the Qur'an, Surah Al Isra verse 105 juz 15 page 293. The *rajab* is then soaked in water and then drunk by the patient. The patient who came to ask for treatment was suffering from an

internal disease, namely heart disease, which had been suffering for a long time and had not been cured.

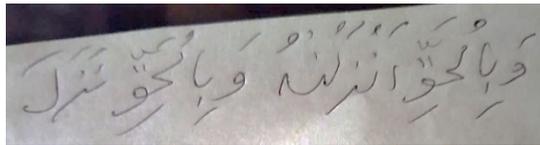


Figure 7. *Rajah* written by the therapist.

Mbah Sam took Surah Al Isra verse 105 (figure 7) which means “and with the truth We have sent the Qur’an down, and with the truth it has descended”. This *rajab* is believed can be healer of many diseases because Qur’an itself is a healing based on Surah Yunus verse 57: O humanity! Indeed, there has come to you a warning from your Lord, a cure for what is in the hearts, a guide, and a mercy for the believers.

A similar treatment technique was also applied by Mr Sholihin, who lived in Sumber Village RT 01 RW 02 Sumber District, Rembang Regency. Mr. Sholihin wrote the *rajab* on paper, which was then soaked in water, and then drunk by the patient. The *rajab* written by Mr. Sholihin was obtained from a Kyai diploma when studying traditional medicine.

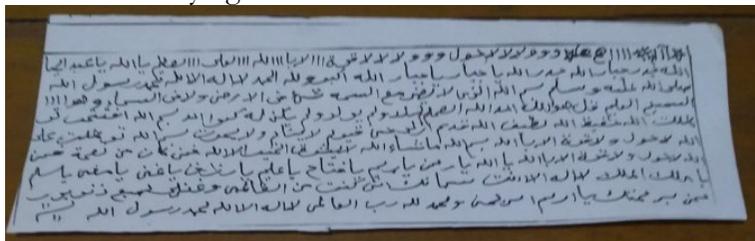


Figure 8. *Rajah* written by the therapist.

Mr Sholihin wrote a diagram (figure 8) which contains the meaning “Allah is the self-subsisting, Ooo Almighty. Allah is The Dominant, Ooo Almighty, Ooo Almighty Allah is the greatest, praise be to Allah, there is no God but Allah, Muhammad peace be upon him is the messenger of Allah. In the Name of Allah, Who with His Name nothing can cause harm in the earth nor in the heavens, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing. Say, “He is Allah, [who is] One, Allah, the Eternal Refuge. He neither begets nor is born, nor is there to Him any equivalent. I start with the name of Allah. I put my trust in Allah. Allah is the Protector. Allah is The Subtle. Allah is the pre-existing. Allah is The Ever Living, The self-subsisting. He does not sleep and does not die. In the name Allah I put my trust in Him. There is no power and no strength except with Allah. In the name of Allah, Allah willed it. There is no one can guide to the kindness but Allah. There is no power and no strength except with Allah. Ooo The Merciful, Ooo the Most Merciful, Ooo the Opener, Ooo All Knowing One, Ooo the Creator, Ooo the Wealthy, Ooo the Enricher, Ooo the

Flawless, Ooo the Owner of Absolute Sovereignty, there is no god except You. Exaltations to You! I was among the harmdoers. There is no God but Allah, Muhammad peace be upon him is the messenger of Allah”. This *rajab* contains of praises and acknowledgement that Allah is the almighty one, and every patient put his/her trust in Him to get cured and healed.

Patients get spiritual satisfaction after visiting traditional medicine practitioners. The prayers and *rajab* given by the therapist bring a feeling of comfort so that the pain is reduced. These therapists prioritize treatment by strengthening spiritual potential (sharpening the heart to recognize happiness) and fortifying the evil potential of lust and lust (diverting worldly pleasures to real pleasures in the afterlife)⁴⁴.

A person's belief system, in the Islamic view, is an intrinsic component of a person's soul. If someone has a strong belief in the function of a drug and is willing to take it with full confidence, it is very likely that the drug will be successful in curing that person. Belief is software and is a kind of feeling that cannot be physically touched or manipulated. The soul is the main center of Islamic beliefs, and the body is in second place, so if a person is at peace in his soul, then his body will be at peace too⁴⁵.

Conclusion

The treatment techniques used by therapists differ from one patient to another. Most traditional medicine therapists use *rajab* wrote in Arabic. *Rajah* in traditional medicine is used to treat various kinds of patient complaints. The *rajab* writing comes from the books of *Shams al Ma'arif al Kubra* and *Al Mujarrabat*. Apart from taking sources from these two books, the therapist also wrote *rajab* derived from verses from the Qur'an. The *rajab* written by the therapists provide positive suggestions to the patients so that the patients feel calm. This calmness helps the patient to recover from the illness he is suffering from.

The need factor is determined by the level of disease and the patient's condition. Patient behavior in seeking appropriate health services is greatly influenced by the level of disease, whether their health condition means they are

⁴⁴ Toto Edidarmo, Achmad Fudhaili, and Muhammad Rizal Mahfuzo, “The Power of Spiritual Motivation: A Conceptual and Theoretical Review of Arabic Language Learning,” *Arabiyatuna: Jurnal Bahasa Arab* 7, no. 1 May (2023): 315, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jba.v7i1.5629>.

⁴⁵ Tajwar Ali and Haseena Sultan, “An Islamic Perspective on Infection Treatment and Wound Healing,” *Religions* 14, no. 8 (2023): 1044, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14081044>.

unable to carry out daily activities or not and the symptoms of the disease⁴⁶. Alternative medicine based on faith and spirituality is often chosen by people who have tried medical treatment but have not been cured⁴⁷. As an alternative treatment, *rajab* is believed to be able to cure diseases that cannot be cured medically. These diseases are caused by non-medical factors, such as witchcraft or black magic, but they influence a person's physical health⁴⁸.

Rajab, which is used as a means of healing, comes from verses from the Qur'an which were rewritten in the book of medicine. Proper interpretation and use of the Qur'an can provide effective improvements to a person's weak mental and psychological condition. Certain *surah* in the Qur'an, such as Yasin, al-Maryam, and ar-Rahman, can provide greater calm and peace to patients. Correct Al-Qur'an therapy, which includes listening to and reading the Al-Qur'an carefully, can have a big impact on people who need physical and mental treatment, as well as bringing other great benefits to Muslims.

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⁴⁶ Pushpalata and Chandrika, "Health Care Seeking Behaviour-A Theoretical Perspective."

⁴⁷ Orin Veronika Damayanti and Michael Seno, "Health Belief Model Pada Pasien Yang Berobat Ke Pengobatan Alternatif," *Experientia Jurnal Psikologi Indonesia* 6, no. 2 (2018): 57–66, <http://journal.wima.ac.id/index.php/EXPERIENTIA/article/view/2721>.

⁴⁸ Ulfah Ainun Hafidzoh, Hadirman, and Meiskyarti Luma, "Pergumulan Islam Dan Budaya Lokal Di Pulau Nain Kecamatan Wori Kabupaten Minahasa Utara Tahun 2019-2020 (Studi Kasus Mandi Safar)," *Jurnal Interdisiplin Sosiologi Agama (JINSA)* 01, no. 1 (2021): 1–19, <http://ejournal.iain-manado.ac.id/index.php/jinnsa/article/view/82/69>.

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