

POST-TRAUMATIC GROWTH IN THE QURAN: Psychological Insights from the Story of Prophet Ayyub

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Abstract

Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG), developed by Tedeschi and Calhoun, describes the positive transformations that may emerge following profound suffering or trauma. These include strengthened interpersonal relationships, enhanced personal strength, a renewed appreciation for life, openness to new possibilities, and spiritual development. Although PTG has been widely examined in contemporary psychology, its application within Quranic exegesis remains limited. Employing a qualitative approach through library research, this study analyzes the story of Prophet Ayyub AS in Q.S. al-Anbiyâ [21]:83-84 and Q.S. Sâd [38]:41-44 through a comparative exegesis (*tafsîr muqâran*), drawing on classical (al-Tabârî), medieval (Ibn Kathîr), and contemporary (Quraish Shihab) commentaries. The comparative analysis, with a thematic focus on suffering and recovery, is mapped onto five domains of PTG. It shows how Ayyub AS's ordeal catalyzes meaning-making, moral refinement, relational restoration, and spiritual strengthening. It operationalizes spiritual resilience as *sabr* (patient steadfastness) and *tawakkul* (trustful reliance on God) that stabilize cognition and affect, sustain moral commitment (*istiqamah*), and convert affliction into disciplined, hopeful action. Spiritual resilience thus functions both as a mediator and an outcome of PTG, integrating divine mercy with human initiative. Hence, the study presents a Quranic-based

framework for resilience and psychological transformation, interpreting suffering not merely as a test of endurance but as a process of growth, meaning-making, and spiritual elevation. It contributes to contemporary Quranic scholarship by integrating exegetical perspectives across classical, medieval, and modern periods and contextualizing them within the framework of PTG, thereby enriching the interdisciplinary dialogue between Islamic exegesis and modern psychology.

Keywords: prophet ayyub; post-traumatic growth; quranic exegesis; spiritual resilience

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Introduction

Suffering constitutes an intrinsic dimension of human existence. Across diverse religious and philosophical traditions, it is not merely regarded as a burden to be borne, but often as a potential gateway to meaning, insight, and transformation. In contemporary psychological discourse, the concept of Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG), developed by Richard G. Tedeschi and Lawrence G. Calhoun, posits that individuals can experience profound psychological development in the aftermath of trauma. This growth may be expressed through deepened spirituality, enhanced personal strength, improved social relationships, and a renewed sense of life purpose. As such, the PTG framework presents a paradigm in which crises are not solely sites of psychological breakdown, but also opportunities for breakthrough and constructive transformation (Brady & Jayawickreme 2025, 796). The Quran, as the central scripture of Islam, has long been the subject of complex and multifaceted scholarly engagement (Purnama 2020, 238), a tradition of inquiry that continues to inform contemporary attempts to read its narratives in dialogue with modern disciplines. In this regard, the Quranic narrative of Prophet Ayyub AS stands as a paradigmatic account of suffering and resilience, offering insights that resonate deeply with both religious spirituality and modern psychological paradigms.

Intriguingly, the Quran articulates a parallel structure of human experience, conveyed through narrative and spiritual discourse, particularly in its prophetic stories (Syarifah 2010, 144). Among these, the story of Ayyub emerges as a paradigmatic case. The Quranic

depiction of Ayyub consistently emphasizes his patience, unwavering faith, and spiritual resilience in the face of immense suffering (Somad & Fahrudin 2019, 380). Far from being a simple account of misfortune, the narrative offers a sophisticated schema of spiritual recovery and moral elevation, rendering it highly relevant for rereading through the lens of PTG. In the Quran, Ayyub's trials encompass physical affliction, social isolation, and emotional anguish. Nevertheless, the arc of his story culminates in the restoration of meaning, the renewal of social bonds, and the deepening of spiritual awareness (Tottoli 2022, 89), elements that closely correspond with the five core domains of PTG. These dynamics are especially evident in Q.S. al-Anbiyâ' [21]:83-84 and Q.S. Sâd [38]:41-44, where the concentrated portrayal of Ayyub's afflictions and subsequent restoration invites a closer psychological and exegetical inquiry (Johns 1999, 1).

Despite the theological and existential depth of this narrative, previous scholarship on the story of Ayyub in the Quran has largely emphasized normative and pedagogical dimensions. Somad and Fahrudin (2019), for example, highlighted Ayyub's patience as a moral model for education, while Jayash (2023) offered thematic reflections on his suffering in Q.S. al-Anbiyâ', and Istianah (2022) explored Ayyub's resilience through the lens of adversity quotient in *Tafsir al-Misbah*. Parallel to this, a growing body of research has examined Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG) in Islamic contexts. Masoodi and Maqbool (2017) conceptualized PTG with reference to the Quran and Sunnah; Almas et al. (2021) investigated PTG among Muslim women survivors of violence; and Bentley et al. (2021) developed an Islamic trauma-healing model grounded in prophetic narratives. Yet, these studies either approach Ayyub's story in normative terms without engaging contemporary psychological theory or discuss PTG in Muslim contexts without anchoring it in Quranic exegesis.

To date, no study has integrated a comparative analysis of the Ayyub narrative in Quranic exegesis with the theoretical framework of PTG. In response to this lacuna, the present article examines the story of Prophet Ayyub through a comparative exegetical approach, focusing thematically on suffering and recovery, and analyzes how classical, medieval, and modern *tafsîr* (exegesis) have received this narrative. By mapping exegetical insights onto the five domains of PTG, the study contributes to contemporary Quranic scholarship and to the broader

development of a Quranic-psychological paradigm. More profoundly, it demonstrates that the Quran, through its rich prophetic narratives, is not only a source of spiritual guidance but also a repository of narrative structures that mirror the psychological processes underlying post-traumatic growth. This offers ethically grounded and theologically resonant resources for confronting the existential challenges of modern suffering.

Research Method

This study employs a qualitative approach through library research, focusing on an in-depth examination of the story of Ayyub in the Quran as both a theological construct and a psychospiritual model of Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG). The primary data consists of Quranic verses that narrate Ayyub's suffering and recovery, particularly in Q.S. al-Anbiyā' [21]:83-84 and Q.S. Sâd [38]:41-44, supported by authoritative exegesis works (*mu'tabarah*) across different periods: *Jâmi‘ al-Bayân fi Ta’wil al-Qurâن* by Abû Jafar Muhammad ibn Jarîr al-Tabârî, *Tafsîr al-Qurân al-Adzîm* by Abû al-Fidâ’ Ismâ‘îl ibn Umar ibn Kathîr, and *Tafsîr al-Misbah* by M. Quraish Shihab.

Tafsîr or exegesis, as a sacred scholarly endeavor, is traditionally understood not only as an effort to uncover the divine message in the Quran but also as an exegetical activity shaped by historical and social responsibilities (Daud 2020, 25). The selection of these exegetical sources is based on their canonical authority and representativeness across the significant periods of exegesis. Al-Tabârî’s *work* epitomizes the classical tradition of narration-based exegesis (*tafsîr bi al-ma’thûr*), situating Ayyub’s trials within the paradigm of divine testing and patient submission (al-Dzahabî n.d., 174). Ibn Kathîr’s interpretation, while known for his rigorous scrutiny of *hadîth* transmission and preference for sound narrations (al-Khâzin 2004, 534), nevertheless displays methodological inconsistencies in its treatment of Ayyub’s story by incorporating reports from questionable transmitters and elements of *isrâ’iliyyât*, thereby inviting hermeneutical critique (al-Hijâzî n.d., 151). As a contemporary counterpart, Shihab’s *Tafsîr* adopts a modern thematic-linguistic approach, reframing Ayyub’s suffering in psychological and ethical terms that closely resonate with the PTG framework. His exegetical authority has been widely recognized, particularly for his moderate stance and consistent application of *al-munâsabah* to explore

textual coherence. Together, these three exegetes provide a diachronic spectrum through which the Quranic narrative of Ayyub can be reread as a paradigm of resilience and transformation (Ishaq et al. 2025, 2).

Methodologically, this research applies comparative exegesis (*tafsir muqāran*) as its primary framework, examining how exegetes from classical, medieval, and modern periods have received and interpreted Ayyub's narrative. While rooted in comparative analysis, the study is guided by a thematic focus on the motif of suffering and recovery, which is then analyzed through the PTG conceptual framework. Rather than adopting a rigid stepwise model, the analytical process proceeds narratively: identifying the theme of post-traumatic transformation in Ayyub's story, gathering and comparing exegetical interpretations, analyzing their linguistic, theological, and contextual dimensions, and situating the findings within the five domains of PTG.

Epistemologically, this approach is descriptive-analytical and interpretive-critical, aiming to bridge the exegetical tradition with contemporary psychology. By engaging both Quranic exegesis and PTG theory, the method highlights the moral, theological, and psychological relevance of Ayyub's narrative in addressing the spiritual and psychosocial challenges faced by contemporary Muslim communities.

Results and Discussion

Post-Traumatic Growth: An Interdisciplinary Theoretical Perspective

Within the domain of positive psychology, the concept of Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG) offers a significant framework for understanding how individuals not only survive but also undergo positive transformation following traumatic experiences (Akbay-Safi & Simsek 2024, 54; Tedeschi & Calhoun 1996, 456). Coined by Richard G. Tedeschi and Lawrence G. Calhoun in 1996, PTG was subsequently operationalized through the development of the Post-Traumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI) (Güven et al. 2024, 3), a psychometric instrument designed to assess growth across five major domains: improved interpersonal relationships, personal strength, newfound appreciation for life, openness to new possibilities, and spiritual growth (Ibrahim et al. 2022, 3; Tedeschi & Calhoun 2004, 6).

Unlike the concept of resilience, which emphasizes the ability to recover and return to baseline functioning, PTG focuses on a more profound restructuring of meaning systems, values, and personal identity

in the aftermath of trauma (Cameron et al. 2023, 3). Its central mechanism is deliberate rumination, a reflective, intentional cognitive process through which individuals confront their traumatic experience and grapple with shattered assumptions—the collapse of fundamental beliefs about the self and the world. This process frequently engages spiritual dimensions that aid in reconstructing a more coherent and resilient existential framework (Ryninks et al. 2022, 3).

This concept becomes particularly relevant when contextualized within Islamic studies, primarily through the thematic approach (*tafsîr mawdû'i*) to Quranic narratives that capture the interplay between suffering and spiritual growth. One of the most emblematic examples is the story of Prophet Ayyub, which encapsulates physical, social, and spiritual suffering simultaneously. The narrative does not merely dwell on themes of patience (*sabr*) or surrender (*tawakkul*); rather, it illustrates an intense transformation of meaning anchored in existential proximity to the Divine.

Classical scholars such as Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzîyah viewed suffering as a form of *tarbîyah ilâhiyah*, a divine pedagogy that elevates the individual's spiritual rank. In this framework, calamity is not simply a test, but a vehicle for deconstructing worldly attachments and affirming *tawhîd* (divine oneness) in the consciousness of the servant (Almas et al. 2021, 227). Such a perspective reinforces the thesis that the spiritual dimension of PTG has long been embedded within the Islamic theological heritage, albeit articulated through different terminologies and ontological assumptions.

Accordingly, the interdisciplinary integration of PTG as a theoretical framework in Quranic studies should not be construed as a psychologization of divine revelation. Instead, it constitutes a methodological endeavor to rearticulate the meanings of sacred texts in dialogue with contemporary knowledge systems, without compromising the foundational ethos of Islamic spirituality. Within this framework, the narrative of Prophet Ayyub may be interpreted as a spiritually rooted exemplar of PTG, an account grounded in *tawhîd*, patience, and the transcendental reconstitution of meaning.

The implications of such an approach are not merely theoretical. It significantly enriches the thematic exegetical tradition by enabling a more communicative and contextually relevant articulation of Quranic messages in the language of psychology. This corresponds with the

broader orientation of *tafsîr mawdû'i*, which seeks not to interpret Quranic verses atomistically, but to extract and integrate thematic insights in a holistic, reflective, and context-sensitive manner. As such, it opens new horizons for engaging the Quran as both a theological and existential resource for addressing the spiritual needs of modern believers.

Prophet Ayyub in the Quran: The Meaning of Suffering

The Quran, as the ultimate revelation that gathers the essential messages of the previous scriptures, puts the story of Prophet Ayyub within a broader theological framework that reaffirms both divine mercy and prophetic dignity (Iman 2020, 88). Ayyub is one of the most prominent Quranic figures whose narrative embodies the themes of humans' suffering, endurance, and divine mercy. His story is not confined to a single surah but is repeated across four distinct passages, each serving unique theological and historical purposes. Based on the chronological order of revelation, the sequence of these *surahs* is as follows: first, Q.S. al-An'âm [6]:83-87, revealed in the late Makkhan period; second, Q.S. al-Anbiyâ [21]:83-84, from the mid-Makkan phase; third, Q.S. Sâd [38]:41-44, also from the mid-Makkan period; and fourth, Q.S. al-Nisâ [4]:163-165, which belongs to the Madinan period (Nöldeke et al. 2013, 100).

Among these four surahs, only Q.S. al-Anbiyâ and Q.S. Sâd that explicitly depict Ayyub's suffering. In contrast, Q.S. al-An'âm and Q.S. al-Nisâ merely include Ayyub's name in enumerations of earlier prophets, reaffirming the doctrine of belief in divine messengers (*al-imân bi al-rusul*) without offering a narrative account (Johns 1999, 1). This placement indicates that Ayyub's presence in the Quran is not merely historical or moralistic, but also a theological affirmation of prophethood in Islam.

The core narrative of Ayyub's suffering appears in two passages. First, it is mentioned in Q.S. al-Anbiyâ [21]:83-84,

"And (remember) Ayyub, when he cried to his Lord, 'Indeed, distress has seized me, and You are the Most Merciful of all those who show mercy.' So, We responded his call and removed the distress that was on him. And We restored his family to him (that he had lost) and the like thereof along with them as a mercy from Us and a Reminder for all worshipers (of Allah)."

In these verses, Ayyub's suffering is conveyed succinctly yet profoundly through the supplication: *Innî massaniya al-durru wa anta arhamu al-râhimîn*. This prayer, devoid of complaint or resentment, exemplifies absolute submission and spiritual clarity in the face of affliction, capturing the essence of monotheistic faith. Second, it is written in Q.S. Sâd [38]:41-44,

“And remember Our servant Ayyub, when he invoked his Lord (saying): ‘Verily, Satan has touched me with hardship (by ruining my health) and torment (by ruining my wealth).’ (Allah said to him): ‘Strike the ground with your foot, this is (a spring of) water to wash in, cool and a (refreshing) drink.’ And We gave him (back) his family, and along with them the like thereof, as a mercy from Us and a Reminder for those of understand. (We said), ‘And take in your hand a bunch of thin grass and strike therewith (your wife) not break not your oath’. Truly, We found him patient. How excellent a servant. Verily, he was one repeatedly turning back (to Allah).”

These two verses in Q.S. Sâd, conversely, present a more elaborate narrative. It explicitly attributes Ayyub's suffering to Satan's influence, stating: *Innî massaniya al-shaytânu bi-nusbin wa ‘adhâb*. Here, the depiction encompasses both physical and emotional dimensions of the trial. Notably, Ayyub is commanded: “*urkud bîrijlik*”, through which water gushes forth for bathing (*mughtasal*) and drinking (*sharâb*). This act has been interpreted as a symbol not only of physical recovery but also of the necessity of human effort in attaining divine mercy, thereby showing that healing involves both divine intervention and active human engagement. (Shihab 2002, 150).

Furthermore, Q.S. Sâd [38]:44 introduces another layer of resolution: *Wa khudh bîyadika dîghtan fadrib bihi wa lâ tahnât*. This directive illustrates how divine mercy transformed a potential punitive act into a compassionate concession, enabling Ayyub to uphold his oath without causing harm. In this way, the narrative illustrates not only physical and spiritual restoration but also the preservation of ethical integrity and relational harmony within the family. By resolving a moral dilemma through divine intervention, the verse foregrounds a transformative process in which suffering becomes a site for ethical growth and deepened spiritual awareness. This aspect resonates strongly with the domains of Post-Traumatic Growth.

This distinction also extends to the portrayal of Ayyub's resilience. Q.S. al-Anbiyâ' underscores a spiritual response marked by calm trust in

divine mercy. By contrast, Q.S. Sâd emphasizes active resilience and agency, reflecting a more dynamic model of spiritual perseverance. These variations are systematically summarized in Table 1.

Table 1
Comparative Wording of the Story of Prophet Ayyub

Thematic Aspect	Q.S. al-Anbiyâ' [21]:83-84	Q.S. Sâd [38]:41-44
Expression of suffering	<i>annî massaniya al-durru</i>	<i>annî massaniya al-shajtân</i>
Source of affliction	<i>bi al-durri</i>	<i>binâsbin wa adhâbin</i>
Explicit supplication	<i>wa anta arham al-râhimîn</i>	—
Active action	—	<i>urkud birijl</i>
Divine intervention	<i>fastajabnâ lahu wa kashafnâ</i> <i>mâ bihi min dâurri</i>	—
Family restoration	<i>wa Âtaynâhu ahlahu</i>	<i>wawahabnâ lahu ahlahu</i>
Ethical-spiritual closure	<i>rahmatan min indinâ wa</i> <i>dhikrâ lil abidîn</i>	<i>rahmatan minnâ wa dhikrâ</i> <i>li ulil al-albâb</i>

From this comparison, it is evident that Q.S. Sâd provides a more dramatic and multidimensional portrayal of suffering, integrating metaphysical causality (Satan), physical distress, and active recovery. In contrast, Q.S. al-Anbiyâ' highlights inner spiritual steadfastness through passive endurance and supplication. These variations are not merely stylistic but reflect the Quran's nuanced theological and rhetorical strategies in articulating suffering as a divine test and opportunity for spiritual refinement.

As Johns has noted, the plurality of Quranic narrative expressions enriches textual structure while addressing the diverse rhetorical and spiritual needs of its audiences. Within this framework, the story of Ayyub emerges not simply as a personal tale but as a layered discourse integrating divine providence, human endurance, and ethical reflection (Johns 2002, 50).

A cross-surah comparative approach to the story of Ayyub is therefore essential in discerning the Quran's internal discourse on suffering and patience. Ayyub's perseverance is not portrayed as passive resignation but as a spiritually active process that embodies sincerity, resilience, and participatory healing. Ultimately, his story offers an

ethical-spiritual paradigm for believers: to face life's trials with both contemplative surrender and constructive response, transforming suffering into a vehicle for spiritual elevation and divine proximity.

The Hermeneutical Evolution of Prophet Ayyub in the Quran

To advance a nuanced understanding of the theological construction of suffering and resilience in the story of Ayyub, this study critically engages with the exegeses of three authoritative *mufassirūn*, each emblematic of a significant historical phase in the evolution of Quranic exegesis: the classical, medieval, and contemporary periods. This periodization draws on the framework proposed by Nashruddin Baidan, who categorizes the development of Quranic exegesis as a reflection of shifting hermeneutical methodologies, socio-intellectual conditions, and theological orientations across different eras (Baidan 2003, 14-20). Through this lens, the narrative of Prophet Ayyub is not merely an isolated tale of individual affliction, but a dynamic theological and moral discourse that has been continually reinterpreted in light of the evolving religious and ethical concerns of successive generations.

From the classical period, ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī constructs a profound narrative centered on *ibtilā'* (divine trial) and *sabr* (patience), employing the method of *tafsīr bi al-ma'thūr*. He draws significantly on a report from Wahb ibn Munabbih, in which God's praise of Ayyub before the angels evokes Iblīs's jealousy. Iblīs questions the sincerity of Ayyub's worship, suggesting it is driven solely by material comfort. With divine permission, Iblīs subjects Ayyub to successive trials, beginning with the loss of wealth, followed by the death of his children, and culminating in severe physical affliction. In this reading, suffering is not construed as divine punishment but rather as a means to authenticate sincere faith. The statement *al-hamdu lillāh hīna a'tānī wa hīna naza'a minnī* (Praise be to God, when He gives and when He takes away), as cited by al-Ṭabarī, exemplifies a theology of radical submission wherein authentic faith is grounded in unconditional servitude to God (al-Ṭabarī 2001a, 333-367).

While al-Ṭabarī includes *isrā'iliyyāt*, such as those narrated by Wahb ibn Munabbih, he does so with a discerning methodology. Wahb's accounts, particularly regarding Ayyub's suffering, are widely considered a mixture of *haqq* (truth) and *bātil* (falsehood), thus not acceptable as definitive exegetical sources without rigorous scrutiny (al-Hijāzī n.d., 158). Al-Ṭabarī shows notable methodological awareness by

discarding any narration that compromises the dignity of prophethood. In his interpretation, the restoration of Ayyub is framed as an act of *karâmah* (divine grace) and a recognition of spiritual victory, rather than a mere material reward (al-Tabarî 2001b, 105-113). In this way, al-Tabarî's Quranic exegesis offers not only narrative richness but also a cohesive and transcendent theological framework.

From the medieval period, the work of Ibn Kathîr represents a canonical post-al-Tabarî contribution within the *tafsîr bi al-mâ'thûr* tradition (al-Dhahabî n.d.-b, 174). Although Ibn Kathîr is known for his cautious approach to narrations, especially those involving the prophets (al-Khâzin 2004, 534), his exegesis of the Ayyub narrative includes numerous reports from transmitters whose reliability is debated (al-Hijâzî n.d., 151). These include al-Suddî, noted for his *munkar al-hadîth* (al-Mizzî n.d., 393) and his Shî'î affiliations (al-Dhahabî, n.d.-a, 92), which made him popular among certain exegetical circles (Ma'rifah n.d., 388). Other cited transmitters include Jarrîr ibn Hâzim (through Qatâdah), whose chain is considered weak (al-Asqalânî n.d., 20; al-Halabî 1988, 73), as well as Nauf al-Bikâlî, reportedly influenced by Ka'b al-Ahbâr (Sa'd 1968, 452), a prominent figure in the transmission of *isrâ'iliyyât* (Khodijah & Kholid 2025, 86). Even Yûsuf ibn Mihrân, a fourth-generation *tâbi'i*, is classified by Ibn Hajar as *layyin al-hadîth* (weak in transmission) (al-Wâsili 2010, 96).

Among the narratives Ibn Kathîr transmits regarding Ayyub, some report severe trials, including the loss of wealth, children, physical health, and social standing. Certain narratives describe his flesh as falling from his bones, leaving only skin and skeleton, while his wife is said to have worked as a servant. Some accounts even claim that Ayyub was temporarily ostracized due to a disfiguring skin condition and cared for only by two brothers (Kathîr 1999a, 359-363). Many of these narratives originate from transmitters whose reliability has been debated, which warrants caution in their interpretation. Consequently, some scholars have critiqued the more extreme depictions. Abû Shahbah argues that such portrayals contradict the *maqâm* of prophethood, as it is unlikely that a prophet would be entirely abandoned (Shahbah n.d., 280), while 'Abd al-Rahmân ibn Saqâf contends that such degrading afflictions undermine prophetic dignity (al-Ash'arî 2015, 18). Similarly, al-Âlûsî and al-Tabarsî emphasize that although trials involving illness or loss may

occur, they should be interpreted in a manner that preserves the sanctity and honor of prophethood (al-Âlûsî n.d., 199).

Nevertheless, Ibn Kathîr's Quranic exegesis does convey a deep spiritual insight. He underscores Ayyub's delay in seeking relief as an expression of *ridâ bi al-qadâ'* (contentment with divine decree) and gratitude for prior blessings. The command for Ayyub to strike the ground with his foot, in two gushing springs, is seen as symbolic of holistic healing: physical, emotional, and spiritual (Ibn Kathîr 1999b, 74–76). This suggests that divine healing requires human receptivity and action. However, the presence of unverified *isrâ'ilîyyât* raises an important question: Can a narrative offer theological validity if its epistemological foundation is compromised?

From the contemporary period, Quraish Shihab, in *Tafsîr al-Misbâh*, explicitly rejects *isrâ'ilîyyât* that portray Ayyub's suffering in grotesque terms, such as decaying flesh or social abandonment, because they contradict reason and violate the prophetic dignity upheld by the Quran. His exegetical stance reflects a deliberate attempt to root prophetic narratives in rational Quranic principles, free from speculative or mythical embellishments. Interpreting the phrase *masâniyya al-shaytân bi nusbin wa 'adhâb* mentioned in Q.S. Sâd [38]:41, Shihab follows the approach of Ibn 'Âshûr, who understands *shaytân* as a metaphor for inner psychological or existential distress, rather than a literal demonic presence. This approach broadens the conceptualization of suffering to include emotional, psychological, and spiritual dimensions, consistent with the contextual and psychological hermeneutics of modern Quranic exegesis.

Furthermore, Shihab interprets Ayyub's striking of the ground as a symbol of human initiative in response to divine command, comparable to Maryam being told to shake the date palm despite her weakened state. For Shihab, healing is a synergistic process that combines divine mercy with human agency. Accordingly, he refutes deterministic or fatalistic readings, such as that of al-Tabâtabâ'î, who portrays Ayyub as utterly paralyzed, and instead affirms Ayyub's retained physical and volitional capacity to act, thereby embodying resilience and faith in the midst of suffering. For Shihab, God's mercy does not merely restore Ayyub's health but also reintegrates him socially and reunites him with his family. Thus, the narrative is not simply a tale of affliction but a moral and theological lesson on patience, agency, and divine compassion

(Shihab 2002, 148-153). His reading offers a rational, ethical, and contextually grounded vision of the prophetic experience, purged of speculative elements lacking the Quranic basis.

A comparative analysis of these three exegetes across the classical, medieval, and contemporary periods reveals that the theological framing of suffering and recovery in the story of Prophet Ayyub has undergone significant hermeneutical transformation. From the *riwâyah*-dominated paradigm of the classical era, to the more elaborate narrative interpolations of the medieval period, and finally to the rational-psychological hermeneutics of the modern era, the exegetical treatment of Ayyub reflects an evolving intellectual engagement with a central theological concern: how human suffering is to be understood in light of divine wisdom and mercy. To clarify the points of convergence and divergence among these approaches, a thematic comparison is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Spectrum of Quranic Exegesis on the Story of Prophet Ayyub according to al-Tabarî, Ibn Kathîr, and Quraish Shihab

Analytical Aspect	Al-Tabarî	Ibn Kathîr	Quraish Shihab
Source of Narrations	Wahb ibn Munabbih (selectively filtered)	al-Suddî, Nauf al-Bikâlî, others (problematic)	Critical stance toward <i>isrâ’îliyyât</i>
View on Suffering	Legitimate spiritual trial	Extreme suffering with multidimensional aspects	Psychological and existential dimensions
Role of Iblis/Satan	Metaphysical spiritual tester	Intermediary of affliction (divine test)	Symbol of psychological pressure
Recovery Process	Divine <i>karâmah</i>	Active miracle (two springs)	Participatory process involving personal effort

Although all three exegetes refer to the same Quranic verses, the historical context, epistemic sources, and hermeneutical approaches they adopt significantly shape their respective constructions of meaning. Al-Tabarsî presents the narrative within the classical theodicy framework; Ibn Kathîr expands the scope of suffering while raising concerns about

the reliability of transmitted reports; whereas Quraish Shihab steers the story toward an ethical and psychological horizon more attuned to contemporary realities. These differing approaches do not diminish the Quran's message but rather enrich the articulation of suffering as a dynamic and contextual spiritual process. Thus, the story of Ayyub becomes a reflective space across time to respond to trauma, seek meaning, and cultivate resilient faith.

Mapping the Domains of Post-Traumatic Growth in the Ayyub's Story

The Quranic narrative of Ayyub is a multidimensional account that not only portrays extreme suffering but also affirms a process of meaningful recovery that aligns with the five core domains of Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG) as formulated by Tedeschi and Calhoun (Tedeschi & Calhoun 1996, 456). Through an interpretive reading of the Quranic exegesis by al-Tabarsî, Ibn Kathîr, and Quraish Shihab, it becomes evident that the Quran encapsulates a comprehensive framework of post-traumatic growth—spiritually, psychologically, and socially—thereby reflecting the resilient ethos embedded in prophetic experiences.

The first domain, relating to others (the restoration of interpersonal relationships), is reflected in God's act of restoring and even multiplying Prophet Ayyub's family, as mentioned in Q.S. Sâd [38]:43. Shihab emphasizes that this restoration is not merely material in nature, but serves as a symbol of emotional and social reintegration that had previously been severed due to the trials he endured. According to this exegesis, Ayyub's healing encompasses the recovery of social dignity and relational bonds that the stigma of suffering had eroded.

The second domain, personal strength, is most vividly portrayed in the narrative of Ayyub's unwavering patience and perseverance. As detailed by Ibn Kathîr, despite the near-total loss of his physical faculties, leaving him with only his heart and tongue to remember God, Ayyub remained firm and never voiced a complaint. This spiritual resilience exemplifies profound inner strength, rendering Ayyub a symbol of inner fortitude in the face of multidimensional affliction.

The third domain, appreciation of life, emerges from Ayyub's decision not to immediately ask for relief, given the years of good health he had enjoyed, which were far longer and thus more deserving of gratitude. As narrated by Ibn Kathîr, this decision reflects a deep

reflective awareness of the temporal nature of blessings, the meaning of trials, and the value of time. His appreciation for life does not arise after the suffering ends, but rather during the very crisis itself, signaling a rare depth of spiritual maturity.

The fourth domain, new possibilities, is symbolized in God's command for Ayyub to strike the ground with his foot (Q.S. *Sâd* [38]:42). Shihab interprets this act as an emblem of the essential role of human agency in initiating the process of healing. Much like Maryam, who was instructed to shake the palm tree despite her weakened state, Ayyub was called to action as well. This illustrates that transformation and hope often begin with a person's willingness to respond proactively to divine directives. The fifth and culminating domain, spiritual growth, is encapsulated in the divine declaration of Q.S. *Sâd* [38]:44. The term *awwâb* signifies a holistic spiritual cycle, patience, connectedness with God, and complete servitude. According to al-Tabarî, Ayyub's patience is not merely the capacity to endure pain, but rather a profound existential expression of *tawhîd*, in which praise continues despite loss.

Thus, all five domains of PTG are not only identifiable in the story of Prophet Ayyub, but are also integral to the Quranic narrative design that presents suffering as a transformative field. This cross-temporal exegetical approach demonstrates that the story of Ayyub is not a tragedy, but a paradigmatic model of spiritual growth in Islam. The narrative affirms that, when faced with faith and consciousness, suffering can yield deep and lasting psychospiritual transformation. From a Quranic perspective, trauma is not an endpoint but the beginning of an elevation in the human condition, an enhanced capacity to persevere in solitude, to express gratitude amidst limitation, and to trust in divine wisdom amid life's uncertainties.

The Quranic-Psychological Paradigm of Trauma and Transformation

The story of Ayyub in the Quran represents far more than a mere account of suffering; it manifests a profoundly complex and spiritually transformative journey. In the framework of positive psychology, Tedeschi and Calhoun developed the concept of Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG) to explain how individuals can experience profound spiritual, emotional, and social development after enduring severe trauma (Masoodi & Maqbool 2017, 50). The Quranic-psychological approach to the narrative of Ayyub offers a significant integration of religious

meaning-making and psychological interpretation within a cohesive hermeneutical framework.

This paradigm emphasizes the interplay between *tawhîd*, which underscores God's centrality in understanding suffering, and *tawakkul*, which represents proactive trust and reliance on God in coping with adversity. While *sabr* (patience) is traditionally associated with Ayyub's trials, *tawakkul* is highlighted here because it operationalizes the self's active engagement in seeking divine guidance and psychological growth. *Sabr* remains implicit in the narrative, as patience underpins the successful exercise of *tawakkul*, situating it within a broader theocentric and psychologically actionable framework (Jayash 2023, 94).

In Q.S. Sâd [38]:42, God's command to Prophet Ayyub to strike his foot against the ground becomes a symbolic act of human agency in the healing process, a gesture that Quraish Shihab interprets as an invitation to proactive engagement in recovery. Furthermore, this interpretive model shares strong affinities with the Islamic Trauma Healing model, an evidence-based psychospiritual intervention that merges cognitive-behavioral therapy with prophetic narratives to cultivate inner resilience in the face of psychological wounds (Bentley et al. 2021, 186). In line with this, contemporary trauma-healing frameworks emphasize that the process is not limited to alleviating psychological suffering but also seeks to overcome the lingering effects of violence by dismantling negative stigma through value-based and community-oriented practices (Miftahuddin et al. 2022, 322). The story of Prophet Ayyub serves as a reflective centerpiece in this program, employed to facilitate the reframing of traumatic experiences and to support meaning reconstruction through the values of *tawhîd* and *tawakkul*.

Within the metaphysical framework of *Tasawwuf*, Ibn 'Arabî interprets the suffering of prophets, including that of Ayyub, as moments of divine potentiality manifesting in the human self. Through the total surrender to God (*al-takhallî wa al-tahallî*), trauma becomes a turning point toward *tanwîr al-qalb* (illumination of the heart) and *tazkiyah al-nafs* (purification of the soul). This perspective emphasizes that spiritual transformation through suffering is not pathological, but essential for reaching the elevated *maqâm* of a patient and penitent servant (*sâbir* and *awwâb*) (Lala 2023, 16). Methodologically, this Quranic-psychological paradigm significantly advances Islamic psychology and value-based counselling practices. The integration of prophetic narratives with PTG

theory creates opportunities to develop holistic and contextually relevant intervention models, particularly for addressing trauma among Muslim communities that are often underserved by secular Western clinical approaches.

Conclusion

The story of Prophet Ayyub in the Quran is not merely a narrative of suffering; it serves as a paradigmatic representation of spiritual resilience and post-traumatic growth (PTG) from a Quranic perspective. Through thematic exegesis and comparative analysis of the works of al-Tabarī, Ibn Kathīr, and Quraish Shihab, this study demonstrates that the narrative structure of Prophet Ayyub implicitly embodies the five core domains of PTG as formulated by Tedeschi and Calhoun: relating to others, personal strength, appreciation of life, new possibilities, and spiritual growth.

The extreme afflictions experienced by Prophet Ayyub are not portrayed as divine punishment but as a process of *tazkiyat al-nafs* and a verification of faith. Each phase of his trial opens space for ethical reflection, spiritual actualization, and the reconstruction of meaning that ultimately elevates him to the highest spiritual station. Classical exegesis emphasizes the themes of trial (*ibtilā'*) and patience (*sabr*) as essential virtues. At the same time, contemporary commentary, such as that of Quraish Shihab, offers a psychologically attuned and contextually relevant reading aligned with the psychosocial dynamics of today's Muslim communities.

The integration of the PTG framework with Quranic exegesis reveals that the Quran not only offers spiritual guidance for enduring suffering but also presents a comprehensive and transformative paradigm of recovery. This research affirms the importance of interdisciplinary approaches in exegetical studies—approaches that effectively bridge classical heritage with the contextual needs of the modern world. Conceptually, these findings enrich the discourse on prophetic resilience and open avenues for developing Islamic trauma healing models rooted in Quranic values. Thus, the story of Prophet Ayyub remains profoundly relevant as an ethical and psychospiritual reference for confronting existential challenges, both individually and collectively, in the contemporary era.

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