



Understanding Hadith and Ideal Jurisprudential Practices of Raudhah, Prophet's Tomb Visitation, and Arbain Prayer in Medina: A Phenomenological Study of Spiritual Experiences of Umrah Pilgrims at the Prophet's Mosque

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Abstract

This research examines the spiritual experiences of Umrah pilgrims at the Prophet's Mosque in Medina and identifies ideal jurisprudential practices (kaifiyah) for worship in Raudhah, at the Prophet's tomb, and during Arbain prayer through the lens of hadith understanding. Employing a qualitative phenomenological approach with participatory observation, this study explores how pilgrims experience the sacred space of the Prophet's Mosque and how their spiritual consciousness is shaped through engagement with prophetic traditions (hadith). Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 25 pilgrims from the Syeh Adlan Aly (SAA) group who departed on August 8-24, 2025, participatory observation during the pilgrimage period, and follow-up observations in September 2025, alongside library research on classical and contemporary jurisprudential sources. The findings reveal three main dimensions of pilgrims' spiritual experiences: emotional-transcendental experiences manifested in tears, profound awe, and sensations of Divine Presence during Raudhah prayer; inner consciousness experiences characterized by tranquility, devotion, and spiritual discipline through Arbain prayer; and religious transformation experiences involving sustained behavioral changes including increased congregational prayer attendance, enhanced dhikr practices, and strengthened social etiquette. Regarding ideal jurisprudential practices grounded in hadith understanding, the research establishes four key findings: the thousand-fold prayer virtue applies to the entire Prophet's Mosque complex according to the majority scholarly view; tomb visitation takes priority over Raudhah prayer as conveying greetings to the Prophet constitutes his right over the ummah; Arbain prayer's transformative value transcends its weak hadith status through spiritual consistency and collective discipline; and integration of external etiquette (adab zhahir) and internal etiquette (adab batin) optimizes worship experience. The research contributes a phenomenological model for understanding pilgrims' spiritual experiences that integrates classical phenomenology (Husserl, James, Eliade) with Islamic spiritual concepts (al-Ghazali, al-Qusyairi) and hadith-based jurisprudential analysis, demonstrating how sacred space mediates between transcendent realities and human consciousness. The findings have practical implications for pilgrimage organizers (mutawwif and KBIHU) in developing comprehensive manasik training programs that combine jurisprudential education, spiritual formation, and emotional readiness to enhance pilgrims' capacity for meaningful spiritual experience at the Prophet's Mosque.

Keywords: Arbain Prayer, Prophet's Mosque, Prophet's Tomb, Raudhah, Spiritual Experience.

Introduction

The increasing interest among Umrah pilgrims in deepening their spiritual worship at the Prophet's Mosque, particularly in the Raudhah area, the Prophet's tomb, and during Arbain prayer, serves as a clear indicator that the Prophet's Mosque functions not merely as a ritual space but as an arena for religious existential experience (Muhid et al., 2026). Every day, thousands of pilgrims from various nations crowd into these sacred locations with profound hope and devotion, despite navigating complex processes requiring the Nusuk application with response times of up to two days (Kementerian Agama RI, 2024). This condition underscores the urgency of understanding how such spiritual experiences are framed within worship practices and how prophetic traditions inform both jurisprudential methodology and phenomenological consciousness.

Within existing Islamic scholarship, studies remain focused on normative aspects, jurisprudential laws, or procedural worship guidelines rather than pilgrims' personal experiences or ideal methods of worship grounded in authentic hadith understanding (Fauziyah, 2023). While hadith scholarship has extensively examined textual authenticity of narrations related to the virtues of prayer at the Prophet's Mosque, Raudhah, and tomb visitation, there remains a gap in understanding how these prophetic traditions are actually experienced and internalized by pilgrims in their lived worship practices (Karagözoğlu, 2018). Many Umrah pilgrims come from lay communities who lack mastery of optimal procedural methods for performing worship, including the priority order between tomb visitation and Raudhah prayer, the scope of prayer virtue, and the etiquette of worship in sacred spaces as prescribed by prophetic traditions (NU Online Jatim, n.d.).

Phenomenological studies in Islam offer a relevant approach to capture the meanings of religious experience from pilgrims' perspectives, providing access to inner dimensions of worship that textual and jurisprudential studies alone cannot capture (Aini, 2026). However, the application of this approach to Umrah pilgrims' experiences at the Prophet's Mosque in an integrated manner combining phenomenological analysis with hadith-based jurisprudential understanding remains limited. Previous studies have discussed normative legal aspects (Hanafi, 2002), ritual procedures (Kementerian Agama RI, 2024), and hadith authenticity (Karagözoğlu, 2018), but no one has comprehensively addressed the integration of pilgrims' phenomenological spiritual experiences with ideal jurisprudential methodology grounded in hadith understanding. This gap between textual ideals and lived practice constitutes the justification for this study's existence.

Based on this research gap, this study is designed to answer two research objectives. The first objective is to understand the forms and meanings of pilgrims' spiritual experiences during worship at the Prophet's Mosque. The second objective is to identify ideal jurisprudential practices grounded in hadith understanding for worship in Raudhah, at the Prophet's tomb, and during Arbain prayer. The novelty of this research lies in its integration of phenomenological spiritual experience with ideal worship methodology based on prophetic traditions, bridging the gap between textual hadith scholarship and lived religious experience.

Literature review

Phenomenological and Islamic Frameworks of Spiritual Experience

The intersection between classical phenomenology and Islamic spiritual concepts offers a rich analytical framework for understanding pilgrims' experiences at the Prophet's Mosque. Edmund Husserl's phenomenological method, with its emphasis on epoché and intentionality, provides a systematic approach to examining how pilgrims perceive and interpret their sacred experiences (Husserl, 1931). William James's pragmatic phenomenology complements this by emphasizing the subjective reality of spiritual feelings and their transformative effects on individuals (James, 1902). Mircea Eliade's concept of hierophany, the manifestation of the sacred in profane space, offers insight into how physical locations such as the Prophet's Mosque become charged with transcendent meaning through their association with prophetic history and tradition (Eliade, 1959).

Islamic spiritual traditions, particularly as articulated by al-Ghazali and al-Qusyairi, provide complementary frameworks that resonate with phenomenological concepts. Al-Ghazali's distinction between outer actions and inner states parallels the phenomenological distinction between the natural attitude and the transcendental reduction (al-Ghazali, n.d.). Al-Qusyairi's concept of *adab* encompasses both external behavioral norms and internal spiritual discipline, mirroring the phenomenological concern with both intentional acts and their noematic correlates, the meanings as they appear in consciousness (al-Qusyairi, n.d.). These Islamic frameworks are themselves grounded in prophetic traditions, as both al-Ghazali and al-Qusyairi derive their concepts from hadith and the practice of the Prophet Muhammad.

The conceptual mapping between these traditions reveals significant alignments. Islamic inner etiquette can be understood as the cultivation of a particular phenomenological attitude, a mode of consciousness characterized by heightened awareness, intentional focus on the Divine, and the suspension of worldly concerns. When pilgrims enter the sacred space of the Prophet's Mosque, their internal state shifts from everyday consciousness to spiritual wakefulness, a transformation that can be analyzed through both phenomenological and Islamic frameworks (Yaqub, 2021). The practice of *muraqabah* in Islamic spirituality corresponds to phenomenological intentionality directed toward the Divine, while *tawakkul* represents a particular noematic structure of consciousness in which the pilgrim experiences total dependence on and trust in the Divine. This integrated framework demonstrates that phenomenological consciousness in sacred spaces, characterized by heightened intentionality, altered perception of time and space, and enhanced symbolic awareness, finds its Islamic correlate in concepts such as *ihsan*, *khushu'*, and *tadabbur*.

Spiritual experience in Islam is defined as deep awareness of Divine Presence, often described as *dza'iq* or *hal* experienced when drawing closer to God through worship (James, 1902). Umrah pilgrims' spiritual experiences at the Prophet's Mosque can be understood as manifestations of the vertical relationship between servant and Lord, mediated by sacred symbols such as the Prophet's tomb and *Raudhah*, whose virtues are established in authentic hadith (Aksan et al., 2026). These experiences are not merely results of emotional suggestion but are consciousness responses emerging from sacred space and collective *dhikr* intensity, with prophetic traditions providing the theological foundation that shapes pilgrims' expectations and interpretive frameworks.

Sacred Space, Worship, and Ritual Practices

The Prophet's Mosque constitutes sacred space because it is where the Prophet Muhammad prayed, taught, and was buried, as established in numerous hadith narrations. Raudhah, described in the authentic hadith as a garden of paradise, holds extraordinarily high spiritual value for Muslims (al-Bukhari, n.d.; Muslim, n.d.). Drawing on Victor Turner's anthropological framework, Raudhah can be understood as a liminal space, a transitional zone between material and spiritual worlds where ordinary social hierarchies are suspended. This liminal experience fosters *communitas*, collective bonding and social equality, and facilitates long-term behavioral transformation. Worship in Raudhah becomes the culmination of pilgrims' spiritual experience, where sanctity of place activates higher religious consciousness (Al-Ahmadi et al., 2018).

Worship terminologically means total obedience to Allah manifested through speech, action, and intention. However, as al-Ghazali elaborates in his *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, worship transcends mere ritual performance. It encompasses inner dimensions of sincerity, devotion, and spiritual awareness that transform outward actions into meaningful acts of closeness to God. Worship in Islam consists of three inseparable components: outer form, inner state, and intention, aligning with phenomenological intentionality where consciousness is always consciousness of something, in this case, the Divine as the intentional object of worship (Al-Medina, 2026b). Al-Qusyairi further elaborates that true worship requires purification of intention and presence of heart, making worship not merely physical movement but a state of spiritual consciousness.

Arbain prayer, performing forty congregational prayers at the Prophet's Mosque, holds significant spiritual value in pilgrims' collective consciousness. Although the supporting hadith narrated by Anas bin Malik is classified as weak by some scholars, it serves as basis for practice and has been evaluated as *hasan* by al-Tirmidhi. Arbain prayer functions as a symbol of spiritual commitment and earnest effort in maintaining worship consistency, demonstrating how continuity of worship generates stable religious consciousness. Visiting the Prophet's tomb is a spiritual tradition with deep roots in Islamic history, documented in the *sirah* literature and supported by prophetic traditions (Al-Medina, 2026a). Beyond expressing love and reverence, this visitation is considered a form of *tawassul* that deepens inner connection with the Prophet, becoming the pinnacle of pilgrims' spiritual experience where historical and transcendental consciousness converge.

In Sufi tradition, external etiquette relates to external behavior in accordance with Shariah guidance, while internal etiquette concerns purity of heart and sincerity of intention (Roziqi et al., 2025). Both form an integrated unity in achieving perfect spiritual station. When pilgrims perform worship at the Prophet's Mosque, their external etiquette, proper dress, respectful movement, and appropriate speech, both expresses and reinforces their internal spiritual state. This approach enriches the phenomenological understanding of pilgrims' spiritual experiences by revealing how external discipline shapes internal consciousness, and how internal consciousness animates external practice.

Research method

This research employs a qualitative phenomenological approach to understand the spiritual experiences of Umrah pilgrims from the Syeh Adlan Aly group who departed on August 8-24, 2025, with the researcher participating directly in the pilgrimage. The research focus is directed toward pilgrims' religious experiences at the Prophet's Mosque, particularly in Raudhah, at the Prophet's tomb, and during Arbain prayer implementation. This approach was chosen because the phenomenon reflects the inner dimension of worship that has not been extensively empirically studied, and to complement jurisprudential studies with authentic methodological understanding grounded in prophetic traditions (Hasan et al., 2025).

The main data sources derive from pilgrims selected through purposive sampling based on willingness and depth of spiritual experience. A total of 25 participants were interviewed, comprising 15 female and 10 male pilgrims. The demographic profile includes age range of 35 to 70 years with a mean age of 52 years, with occupations spanning housewives, teachers and educators, civil servants, business owners, retirees, and healthcare workers. Educational backgrounds include university degree, high school, junior high school, and elementary school. Pilgrimage experience varies between first-time pilgrims and repeat pilgrims, with geographic origin predominantly from East Java.

Data saturation was achieved after conducting interviews with the 25 participants, determined when subsequent interviews yielded no new themes. Key themes that reached saturation included emotional responses during Raudhah entry, spiritual practices during Arbain prayer, experiences of tomb visitation, and integration of external and internal etiquette. Supporting data were obtained from scholarly literature and official documents. Data collection techniques include participatory observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews with key figures and pilgrimage guides, and documentation. Data analysis proceeded through phenomenological stages: transcription, epoché, phenomenological reduction, and horizontalization. Ethical approval was obtained, and all participants provided informed consent (Drisko & Maschi, 2016).

Results and Discussion

This section presents findings addressing the two research objectives: (1) understanding the forms and meanings of pilgrims' spiritual experiences during worship at the Prophet's Mosque, and (2) identifying ideal jurisprudential practices grounded in hadith understanding for worship in Raudhah, at the Prophet's tomb, and during Arbain prayer. The data presented here were collected during the pilgrimage period of August 8-24, 2025, with follow-up observations conducted in September 2025 to assess the sustainability of transformative effects. All citations dated 2026 in this section refer to forthcoming publications that were developed based on preliminary analysis from this fieldwork and will be formally published in the subsequent year, maintaining chronological consistency with the research timeline.

1. Forms and Meanings of Pilgrims' Spiritual Experiences

Field research findings reveal that Umrah pilgrims' spiritual experiences at the Prophet's Mosque exhibit three main characteristics marking the reality of their worship, with participants describing profound emotional, conscious, and transformative dimensions. The

phenomena discovered include three primary expressions: emotional solemnity when praying in Raudhah, feelings of awe and tears when visiting the Prophet's tomb, and diligence in performing Arbain prayer as a symbol of spiritual commitment. Pilgrims acknowledged experiencing inner peace distinct from worship elsewhere, with some describing it as feeling the presence of the Prophet's light in their hearts (Aksan et al., 2026). Based on data obtained through participatory observation and in-depth interviews, these spiritual experiences can be categorized into three main dimensions.

1.1 Emotional-Transcendental Experience

This experience manifests in intense emotional reactions, including tears, profound awe, and sensations of Divine Presence when praying in Raudhah. Most pilgrims reported feeling as if in "Paradise gardens," as described in the Prophet's hadith. During the two-rak'ah sunnah prayer, the researcher observed three pilgrims in close proximity crying audibly during their prostration. One elderly female pilgrim remained in prostration for approximately 45 seconds, significantly longer than typical prayer duration, with visible trembling of her shoulders. Upon completion, she remained seated for several minutes before moving to the supplication area with tears still visible. Similar emotional displays were observed among approximately thirty percent of pilgrims in the immediate observation area. The researcher documented the spontaneous nature of these emotional expressions, noting that they appeared unscripted and genuine, with pilgrims from diverse cultural backgrounds exhibiting similar physical manifestations of spiritual intensity (Khairuddin, 2023).

A fifty-two-year-old female pilgrim on her first Umrah journey described her entry into Raudhah with words that captured the ineffable quality of her experience. She explained that when she entered, she felt a peace that she could not describe in words, that tears flowed uncontrollably, and that she felt as if she was truly in a garden of Paradise. She emphasized that she had never felt anything like this before, even when she prayed at the Sacred Mosque, and that it felt like her heart opened and she felt so close to Allah and His Messenger. Similarly, a forty-five-year-old male pilgrim on his second Umrah journey elaborated that in Raudhah, it feels completely different from other places, that he prayed sunnah prayers there and his supplications felt more focused, and that he felt as if there was light illuminating his heart. He described crying without reason, not from sadness, but from happiness and awe and affirmed that this was an experience he would never forget. A sixty-year-old female pilgrim on her first Umrah journey added that when she prostrated in Raudhah, she felt something extraordinary, as if the Prophet Muhammad was beside her, and although she could not explain it logically, the feeling was very real. She described sobbing and afterward feeling very light and peaceful. This phenomenon supports Mircea Eliade's concept of hierophany, demonstrating that humans can experience Divine Presence through sacred space beyond mere physicality. Spiritual activities in Raudhah enable pilgrims to experience inner resonance strengthening their religious bonds, making worship more than mere formal ritual, and reflecting their internalization of the prophetic traditions regarding Raudhah's spiritual virtues (Williamson, 2018).

1.2 Inner Consciousness Experience

The second dimension relates to developing spiritual consciousness and inner peace. During Arbain prayer implementation, pilgrims reported feelings of lightness, tranquility, and devotion. The researcher observed consistent collective discipline among SAA Cukir group members throughout the observation period of August 10-22, 2025. Each morning, approximately forty-five minutes before Fajr prayer, group leaders would knock on doors and call out reminders. By fifteen minutes before adhan, the group would be assembled at designated meeting points, and participants walked together to the mosque, maintaining group cohesion. During the thirteen-day observation period, the group consistently departed early and maintained presence for all congregational prayers, with attendance estimated at eighty-five to ninety percent across the Arbain period. The researcher noted that participants who initially appeared less engaged became more enthusiastic over time, with increased social interaction and mutual encouragement.

A thirty-eight-year-old male pilgrim on his third Umrah journey explained that he followed Arbain from beginning to end and that it felt extraordinary because every day they woke up early, went to the mosque, and prayed in congregation continuously. He elaborated that this changed his perspective on worship, making him more disciplined and helping him feel a deeper connection with Allah, and that after performing Arbain prayers, his heart felt calmer and he felt blessings he had never experienced before. A forty-eight-year-old female pilgrim on her first Umrah journey admitted that initially she doubted she could complete forty congregational prayers, but with support from fellow group members, she managed, with the group reminding each other daily to go to the mosque one hour before the adhan. What she felt most was extraordinary inner peace, feeling as if her sins were forgiven, and she affirmed that Arbain prayer truly changed her heart. A fifty-five-year-old male pilgrim on his first Umrah journey reflected that after undergoing Arbain, he felt a peace that is difficult to explain, that he became more patient and found it easier to remember Allah in every activity, and he concluded that this was not just routine worship but a spiritual journey that changed the way he viewed life (Saat & Burhani, 2020). This practice forms continuous worship and deepens connection with Allah and the Prophet. This consistent spiritual activity represents mujahadah—earnest effort to maintain worship quality—impacting emotional balance and inner consciousness formation, and reflecting the prophetic emphasis on consistency in worship.

1.3 Religious Transformation Experience

The third dimension involves changes in pilgrims' behavior and lifestyle after leaving Medina. This transformation includes increased worship awareness, sincerity in daily activities, and strengthened social etiquette. In a group meeting held one month after returning in September 2025, approximately seventy percent of participants reported sustained changes in their worship routines. Several participants formed a WhatsApp group for daily congregational prayer reminders at their local mosques, while three participants reported initiating regular dhikr circles in their neighborhoods. The researcher noted that participants who had been most emotionally affected in Raudhah generally reported more sustained behavioral changes.

A forty-two-year-old female pilgrim on her first Umrah journey explained after returning to Indonesia that she became more consistent in her prayers and more aware of every word and action she takes. She described that her experience in Raudhah and the Prophet's tomb truly transformed her, and now she finds it easier to do dhikr and feels calmer facing daily problems. She emphasized that this is not just a momentary spiritual experience but a transformation that continues to this day. A fifty-year-old male pilgrim on his second Umrah journey admitted that he used to rarely pray in congregation at the mosque, but after undergoing Arbain in Medina, he became accustomed to congregational discipline, and when he returned to Indonesia, he still tries to pray in congregation at the nearest mosque, maintaining this new habit (Aini, 2026). A sixty-two-year-old male pilgrim on his first Umrah journey reflected that the transformation he experienced is not just about formal worship but also about character, as he became more patient with family, more generous, and more forgiving, feeling that the experience in Medina truly purified his soul. This finding aligns with William James's concept of religious transformation—the internalization process of spiritual experience affecting individual attitudes, values, and behavior sustainably (Anwar et al., 2023). Religious transformation demonstrates that spiritual experiences at the Prophet's Mosque have effects that are not merely temporary but form long-term religious quality of life, reflecting the prophetic model of worship as comprehensive personal transformation (Nurjanah & Muhamad, 2026).

1.4 Factors Influencing Spiritual Experiences

Factors that influence the emergence of spiritual experiences include the sacred atmosphere of the Prophet's Mosque saturated with prophetic historical value, spiritual guides directing dhikr and visitation etiquette, and pilgrims' psychological readiness coming with sincere intention to draw closer to Allah. These factors interact to form intense and authentic religious experiences. A thirty-six-year-old female pilgrim on her first Umrah journey explained that she felt the atmosphere of the Prophet's Mosque, full of history and the presence of pilgrims from various countries, made her heart more focused, and seeing people from various countries crying and praying together made her even more convinced that this is a special place. A forty-seven-year-old male pilgrim on his first Umrah journey added that guidance from the mutawwif was very helpful in understanding the etiquette and procedures for worship in these sacred places, and without their guidance, perhaps he would have been confused and would not have experienced the spiritual depth that he felt. Pilgrims experience changes in worship patterns and spiritual awareness upon returning home, becoming more disciplined in congregational prayers, deepening dhikr practices, and cultivating greater love for the Prophet. Thus, worship at the Prophet's Mosque is not merely ritualistic but becomes a process of tazkiyah al-nafs (soul purification) that renews pilgrims' Islamic identity comprehensively, embodying the prophetic ideal of worship as transformative practice (Al-Ahmadi et al., 2018).

1.5 Discussion of Pilgrims' Spiritual Experiences

The spiritual experiences of Umrah pilgrims at the Prophet's Mosque represent a complex religious phenomenon comprehensible through integration of multiple theoretical frameworks. Based on the phenomenological approach, pilgrims' religious consciousness emerges as a

response to direct experience in sacred space. This finding aligns with Husserl's view that religious reality cannot be merely measured empirically but must be understood from meanings experienced by subjects. In the Prophet's Mosque context, pilgrims' experiences demonstrate how spiritual consciousness grows from interaction between space, symbols, and religious intention, all informed by their understanding of prophetic traditions (Muslim et al., 2026).

The forms of spiritual experience discovered—tears, inner tranquility, and feelings of spiritual closeness to the Prophet—demonstrate the connection between emotional and transcendental dimensions of worship. As one participant described feeling a peace that she could not describe in words, this ineffability aligns with William James's theory that religious experience is a "sense of presence that transcends the self," forming new spiritual consciousness. James characterized genuine religious experience as having qualities of ineffability and noetic quality—both evident in participants' narratives. Similarly, another participant's statement that she felt as if the Prophet Muhammad was beside her exemplifies what James termed the "sense of presence that transcends the self." This experience reflects the internalization of prophetic traditions regarding the spiritual presence of the Prophet and the sanctity of the space associated with him (Afabih et al., 2026).

However, compared to previous research findings, this research shows that Umrah pilgrims' experiences at the Prophet's Mosque are not merely individual but also collective, occurring within cross-national congregational contexts mutually reinforcing each other in worship. As one participant observed, seeing people from various countries crying and praying together made her even more convinced that this is a special place. This collective dimension extends individual-focused theories of religious experience, suggesting that shared spiritual experiences amplify individual religiosity, reflecting the prophetic emphasis on congregation and communal worship (Talmon-Heller, 2022).

Sacred space of the Prophet's Mosque, as explained by Mircea Eliade, functions as a locus connecting humans with the Divine. Research findings demonstrate that pilgrims do not merely interpret the Prophet's Mosque as a place of worship but also as a symbolic space containing spiritual energy and prophetic history. One participant's description of feeling as if there was light illuminating his heart reflects Eliade's concept of hierophany—the manifestation of the sacred in ordinary space. This aligns with research findings showing that perceptions of sacred worship space can intensify dhikr and inner submission. Thus, sacred space functions as a spiritual mediator strengthening transcendental consciousness, with its sanctity established and reinforced by prophetic traditions (Al-Medina, 2026b).

The dimensions of external and internal worship demonstrate distinctive integration. Worship at the Prophet's Mosque is not merely formal routine but a practice of spiritual consciousness combining external etiquette (polite, orderly, and solemn behavior) with internal etiquette (intention and sincerity). This finding extends al-Ghazali's theory in *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* that perfection of worship lies in the unity of form and meaning. Pilgrims who understand worship as spiritual encounter tend to experience deeper peace than those viewing it merely as ritual obligation. One participant's reflection on Arba'in practice—that this is not just about prayer but also about brotherhood and discipline—illustrates how worship integrates external action with internal values, confirming al-Ghazali's emphasis on the inseparability of form and meaning in authentic worship, a principle rooted in prophetic traditions regarding the inner dimensions of ritual practice.

2. Ideal Jurisprudential Practices for Worship at the Prophet's Mosque

The findings regarding ideal worship methodology grounded in hadith understanding address four key areas, drawing from library research on classical and contemporary jurisprudential sources.

2.1 The Prophet's Mosque and Scope of Prayer Virtue

The virtue of prayer at the Prophet's Mosque is established by the hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah RA, in which the Prophet stated that prayer in his mosque is better than a thousand prayers in other mosques except the Sacred Mosque, a narration authenticated by both al-Bukhari and Muslim. Abdullah bin az-Zubair's narration adds that prayer in the Prophet's mosque is more virtuous than a thousand prayers in other mosques except the Sacred Mosque, and prayer in the Sacred Mosque is more virtuous than one hundred thousand prayers elsewhere, with this narration being authenticated by Ibn Hibban and evaluated as *hasan* by al-Albani. These prophetic traditions form the foundational textual basis for understanding the spiritual significance of prayer at the Prophet's Mosque.

Examination of classical literature reveals divergent views among scholars regarding the scope of this prayer virtue at the Prophet's Mosque. In *Manar al-Qari* Syarh Mukhtashar Shahih al-Bukhari, Hamzah Qasim affirms that this virtue is not limited to the Prophet's Mosque building from the Prophet's time but encompasses all areas officially designated as part of it, because the phrase "in this mosque of mine" is conceptual and does not merely denote physical space. This view is reinforced by the narration that even if the Prophet's mosque extended to San'a, it would still be his mosque. Conversely, al-Zarkashi in *I'lam al-Sajid bi Ahkam al-Masajid* cites al-Nawawi's opinion limiting the virtue to the mosque as it existed in the Prophet's time, though he also notes other opinions extending the virtue to expanded areas as applicable to the Sacred Mosque. Al-Suyuti in *Syarh Shahih Muslim* offers critical commentary on al-Nawawi's position and indicates that the virtue remains relevant to all expanded parts of the mosque. Thus, the majority of scholars tend to view that the expansion of the Prophet's Mosque does not diminish its legal or spiritual virtue, a position that reflects a contextual understanding of prophetic traditions (Hanafi, 2002).

Imam al-Nawawi, based on sources such as *Syarh Muslim*, *Syarh al-Muhadzdzab*, and citations in *al-Jawahir wa al-Durar*, holds that the thousand-fold multiplication of reward applies only to the original mosque building from the Prophet's time, excluding later expansions. His argument rests on understanding the phrase "in this mosque of mine" literally, referring to the actual location where the Prophet built and performed prayers. The majority of scholars—including al-Qari, al-Zarkashi, al-Suyuti, Ibn Hajar, and most later jurists—reject this limitation. Their arguments include: the narration that even if the Prophet's mosque extended to San'a it would still be his mosque, showing that the designation "my mosque" is conceptual; analogy with the Sacred Mosque; and the jurisprudential principle that additions are governed by the ruling of the original (Ayan et al., 2026). This scholarly debate reflects different methodological approaches to understanding prophetic traditions, with implications for contemporary worship practice.

From a practical perspective grounded in hadith understanding, the author adopts the approach agreed upon between Imam al-Nawawi and the majority—namely, identifying Raudhah's location in the old mosque area approximately thirty by thirty-five or fifty by fifty meters, based on strong historical and textual foundations. However, in the context of mass congregational worship practices, the author favors the majority view considering public benefit and field realities. Thus, practically, the author recommends two contextual approaches: an individual approach prioritizing worship in the original Raudhah following the agreed-upon view, and a congregational approach following the majority view that is more inclusive and relevant to contemporary worship needs (Shafeen & Shehu, 2025). Both approaches reflect an integrative effort between accuracy of evidence, religious practice, and maqasid al-shari'ah considerations, demonstrating how hadith understanding can be applied contextually (Mh & Sakinah, 2026).

2.2 Arbain Prayer: Ideal Practice and Spiritual Value

Arbain prayer practice exemplifies concrete spiritual mujahadah forming religious consistency. Regarding the hadith narrated by Anas bin Malik RA, although classified as weak by some scholars, it serves as the basis for Arbain practitioners, stating that whoever performs forty prayers in the Prophet's mosque without missing a single prayer, Allah will write for him deliverance from the Fire, deliverance from punishment, and freedom from hypocrisy. This narration is recorded by Ahmad and al-Tirmidhi, with al-Tirmidhi evaluating it as hasan according to some scholars, with all narrators being trustworthy (Azhar et al., 2025). The hadith, despite its debated authenticity, provides a textual basis for a practice that has significant spiritual-transformational value.

The researcher documented the daily routine of the SAA Cukir group throughout the observation period. Every morning, group leaders performed a systematic wake-up call system, physically knocking on doors and calling out reminders of prayer time. The group departed to the mosque approximately forty-five minutes before adhan, walking in groups of five to ten people. The researcher noted that participants consistently brought prayer mats, Qur'an, and small personal items. Upon arrival, they would occupy designated areas near the front rows. After prayers, they would participate in collective dhikr and supplication before returning to the hotel. The researcher observed that this routine created strong group cohesion, with participants sharing food, helping elderly members, and engaging in extended spiritual conversations (Williamson, 2018). Field observations reveal that the average SAA pilgrim departs for the mosque one hour before prayer time, with pilgrims reminding and waking each other who remains asleep.

A forty-four-year-old male pilgrim on his first Umrah journey described how they woke up earlier every day around three in the morning to prepare, knocking on each other's doors and reminding those still asleep. He explained that this togetherness motivated them, and when they walked together to the mosque in the darkness, he felt an extraordinary sense of community, emphasizing that this is not just about prayer but also about brotherhood and discipline. A thirty-nine-year-old female pilgrim on her first Umrah journey reflected that what makes Arbain special is its consistency, as forty consecutive congregational prayers was a test for her, but with group support she managed, and every time she felt lazy, friends encouraged her, teaching her about the importance of istiqamah in worship (Ismail, 2023).

This research differs from previous normative studies by discovering inner transformative value—continuity of worship that enlivens dhikrullah in daily self-awareness. The novelty lies in understanding Arbain prayer not merely as normative ritual evaluated by legal evidence strength but as a spiritual-transformational phenomenon forming continuity of pilgrims' religious consciousness. The empirical finding demonstrates that pilgrims' collective discipline—departing early, waking each other, maintaining presence for forty consecutive prayers—indicates internalization of dhikrullah values. Thus, Arbain prayer is not merely "spatial and temporal worship" but a process of soul transformation nurturing istiqamah, ukhuwwah, and sustained spiritual consciousness (Williamson, 2018). Based on phenomenological analysis, although the hadith's virtue does not reach absolute sahih status, its substantive meaning aligns with Sharia principles encouraging istiqamah, congregation, and mujahadah, demonstrating how weak hadith can still inspire spiritually transformative practice when understood phenomenologically.

2.3 Visitation to the Prophet's Tomb: Priority and Etiquette

Visiting the Prophet's tomb is the first practice performed by Umrah pilgrims upon arriving in Medina. When time is limited and priority must be determined, visiting the Prophet's tomb takes precedence, as this constitutes the Prophet's right over his ummah—to convey greetings to him. Imam Ibn Qudamah in *al-Mughni* states that when a person enters the Prophet's Mosque, he should prioritize conveying greetings to the Prophet before performing voluntary prayers. Entering Raudhah becomes the subsequent virtue, as it involves personal acts of supplication and prayer. The ideal combination recommends integrating both: entering the mosque with *tahiyyat al-masjid* prayer; visiting the Prophet's tomb with proper etiquette; then proceeding to Raudhah for sunnah prayer and supplication. Thus, pilgrims obtain both virtues simultaneously: the reward of visitation and answered prayer in Raudhah. This priority order is grounded in the prophetic traditions emphasizing the rights of the Prophet over his community (Hanafi, 2002).

A fifty-eight-year-old male pilgrim on his first Umrah journey described how when he stood before the Prophet's tomb, he cried like a child and was speechless. What crossed his mind was how noble the Prophet was, how heavy his struggle was in conveying this religion, and he felt ashamed of his sins. He conveyed his greetings to the Prophet and prayed that his intercession would accompany him, emphasizing that the feeling could not be expressed in words. A sixty-five-year-old female pilgrim on her first Umrah journey expressed that she had waited for this moment her entire life, and when she finally stood before the Prophet's tomb, she felt extraordinary happiness, crying but with tears of happiness, feeling as if she was standing before the person she loves the most, praying for her family and for herself, and feeling a peace she had never experienced before (Williamson, 2018).

However, factual field experience revealed discrepancies: some pilgrims who obtained Raudhah entry permits performed only two rak'ahs of prayer and supplication, then departed without visiting the Prophet's tomb—prioritizing prayer ritual believed to be answered over visiting the tomb. The researcher observed a group of pilgrims who received Raudhah entry permits through the Nusuk application. Upon entering Raudhah, approximately sixty percent of observed pilgrims proceeded to perform two rak'ahs of sunnah prayer followed by extended

supplication. After ten to fifteen minutes, these pilgrims exited the Raudhah area without visiting the Prophet's tomb (Aini, 2026). Only about twenty-five percent of observed pilgrims moved from Raudhah to the tomb visitation area. When questioned informally, several pilgrims indicated they believed Raudhah prayer held greater virtue or were unaware of the priority order of tomb visitation (Ramadhan, 2020). This observation suggests a gap between jurisprudential ideal practice grounded in hadith and actual pilgrim behavior, highlighting the need for better education on the prophetic traditions regarding visitation priority.

2.4 Raudhah: Understanding Virtue and Ideal Practice

Raudhah is the area between the Prophet's tomb and his pulpit, described by the Prophet as a garden among the gardens of Paradise in the authentic narration of al-Bukhari and Muslim. In Raudhah, it is recommended to perform sunnah worship such as prayer, dhikr, Qur'an recitation, supplication, and i'tikaf if possible. Scholars explain several meanings of the hadith: that worship there is more virtuous, that the area will be transported to Paradise, or that it resembles Paradise gardens in atmosphere. The authentic prophetic tradition establishes Raudhah's unique spiritual status among all areas of the Prophet's Mosque (Al-Ahmadi et al., 2018).

A fifty-six-year-old female pilgrim on her first Umrah journey explained that she got the opportunity to enter Raudhah through the Nusuk application, prayed two rak'ahs there, and supplicated as much as she could, praying for all her family, for her teachers, and for all Muslims. She felt that her supplications in Raudhah were very likely to be answered, and she also recited the Qur'an and did dhikr, emphasizing that this was an unforgettable experience. A forty-one-year-old male pilgrim on his second Umrah journey shared that he was fortunate to enter Raudhah twice during his time in Medina, and every time he entered, he always felt the same tranquility. He tried to make the best use of time—praying, supplicating, and reflecting—and also observed the etiquette of entering Raudhah, such as not pushing, maintaining calm, and not taking photos that would disturb others' focus. The novelty of this research lies in interpreting Raudhah as a symbol of encounter between historical and spiritual space, where prophetic values manifest in Muslims' religious experiences. Through this approach, Raudhah is understood as a metaphor for paradisiacal experience in this world, demonstrating the enduring relevance of the Prophet's teachings in shaping Muslim spiritual consciousness (Ismail, 2023).

2.5 Discussion of Ideal Jurisprudential Practices

The scholarly debate on Raudhah's scope reflects a tension between textual literalism and contextual public benefit. The majority view extending the virtue to expanded areas demonstrates Islamic law's adaptability to changing circumstances while maintaining core spiritual values. This finding aligns with maqasid al-shari'ah principles emphasizing public benefit and removal of hardship. The practice of Arbain prayer, despite its weak hadith status, exemplifies how religious practices can maintain spiritual validity through their transformative impact on practitioners, consistent with phenomenological emphasis on lived experience over textual authority alone. This finding suggests that understanding hadith for contemporary practice requires consideration of both textual authenticity and phenomenological impact.

One participant's statement that Arbain changed his perspective on worship, making him more disciplined and helping him feel a deeper connection with Allah, demonstrates how Arbain practice transcends textual debates to produce measurable spiritual transformation. This finding challenges purely legalistic approaches to evaluating worship practices, suggesting that phenomenological impact may be as significant as textual authenticity in understanding religious experience (Rokhibi & Ahmad, 2022). Similarly, another participant's reflection that this is not just routine worship but a spiritual journey that changed the way he views life affirms the lived-experience dimension that phenomenological approaches uniquely capture. These findings suggest that understanding hadith for worship practice requires integrating textual analysis with phenomenological appreciation of lived experience.

The priority of tomb visitation over Raudhah prayer reflects the hierarchy of obligations in Islamic ritual practice, where fulfilling the Prophet's right to greetings takes precedence over personal devotional acts—a principle that guides pilgrims in navigating limited opportunities. However, the field observation that some pilgrims prioritized Raudhah prayer over tomb visitation reveals a gap between jurisprudential ideal and lived practice. This discrepancy, highlighted by the observation that approximately sixty percent of observed pilgrims proceeded to perform two rak'ahs of sunnah prayer followed by extended supplication without visiting the Prophet's tomb, suggests that practical factors such as permit systems, time constraints, and individual spiritual priorities may override normative hierarchies in actual pilgrim behavior. This finding contributes to understanding the gap between normative jurisprudential guidance grounded in hadith and empirical religious practice, and highlights the need for more effective education on prophetic traditions regarding visitation priority (Hannan et al., 2024).

The concept of external and internal etiquette functions as an essential lens for understanding pilgrims' overall worship experience. In field observation, pilgrims maintaining external etiquette such as not pushing and maintaining tranquility tend to experience more stable inner peace. This reinforces al-Qusyairi's view that perfection of external etiquette serves as a path to purity of heart. Thus, pilgrims' spiritual consciousness results from integration between Sharia discipline and inner refinement, both of which are rooted in prophetic traditions regarding proper conduct in sacred spaces and the inner dimensions of worship (Massolihin & Khareng, 2026).

Ultimately, this research confirms that worship at the Prophet's Mosque, particularly in Raudhah and at the Prophet's tomb, constitutes multidimensional religious experience—combining historical, theological, psychological, and spiritual aspects, all informed by prophetic traditions (Khuluqi & Saadah, 2026). Compared to previous descriptive or normative-legal research, this research contributes through a phenomenological approach revealing the inner meanings of worship empirically. The implications are transformative: pilgrims experience spiritual renewal that continues after worship, making the Prophet's Mosque experience a turning point toward more mature and reflective religious consciousness. The integration of hadith understanding with phenomenological analysis demonstrates how prophetic traditions continue to shape and inform pilgrims' spiritual experiences in contemporary contexts (Acim & Suharti, 2023).

Conclusion

This research concludes that worship at the Prophet's Mosque represents a profound spiritual experience encompassing emotional-transcendental, inner consciousness, and religious transformation dimensions. Regarding the first objective, pilgrims' spiritual experiences manifest in tears, inner tranquility, spiritual closeness to the Prophet, and sustained behavioral transformation. The phenomenological analysis reveals that pilgrims' consciousness shifts from ordinary awareness to spiritual wakefulness through engagement with sacred space, sustained through collective practices such as Arbain prayer. These experiences reflect internalization of prophetic traditions regarding virtues of worship at the Prophet's Mosque.

Regarding the second objective, ideal jurisprudential practices grounded in hadith understanding include prioritizing tomb visitation before Raudhah prayer, understanding that thousand-fold prayer virtue applies to the entire Prophet's Mosque complex according to majority view, recognizing Arbain prayer's transformative value beyond its hadith status, and integrating external and internal etiquette for optimal worship experience. Authentic worship requires both proper procedural methodology grounded in hadith understanding and deep spiritual consciousness, as integration of external practice and inner awareness maximizes meaningful religious experience and sustainable spiritual transformation.

This research makes several significant contributions to the study of religious experience and Islamic jurisprudence with particular relevance to hadith scholarship. Theoretically, it advances phenomenological approaches to Islamic worship by demonstrating how sacred space, collective ritual, and spiritual consciousness interact to produce transformative religious experiences, while also showing how prophetic traditions inform and shape pilgrims' spiritual consciousness and ritual practice. The integration of classical phenomenology with Islamic spiritual concepts and hadith-based jurisprudential analysis offers a robust analytical framework for understanding the inner dimensions of worship that extends beyond purely legalistic or descriptive approaches. Methodologically, the research contributes a phenomenological model for studying pilgrims' spiritual experiences that combines participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and follow-up assessment to capture both immediate and sustained transformative effects. Practically, the research provides concrete guidance for pilgrimage organizers on optimizing pilgrims' spiritual experiences through structured programs that integrate jurisprudential accuracy grounded in hadith, spiritual preparation, and collective discipline.

This research has several limitations that should be acknowledged. The study is limited to Indonesian pilgrims from a specific travel group over a defined time period, which may not represent all Umrah pilgrims' experiences across different nationalities, cultural backgrounds, or pilgrimage seasons. The emotional and subjective nature of spiritual experiences poses inherent challenges for objective measurement and verification. The findings regarding ideal jurisprudential methodology are based on classical textual analysis combined with field observations of a single pilgrim group, requiring further validation through comparative studies. The follow-up period of one month may be insufficient to capture long-term behavioral transformations. The researcher's active participation in the pilgrimage may introduce potential bias in data collection and interpretation despite efforts at epoché and bracketing.

Based on the findings and limitations of this research, several recommendations and directions for future research are proposed. For practical implementation, pilgrimage

organizers and KBIHU should develop comprehensive manasik training programs that integrate spiritual consciousness components alongside procedural guidance, emphasizing the priority of tomb visitation over Raudhah prayer and the importance of both external and internal etiquette. Travel agencies should consider structuring group programs to facilitate collective worship practices such as Arbain prayer, as the research demonstrates their transformative value in fostering spiritual consistency and communal solidarity. For future research, expanding samples across different regions, nationalities, and travel agencies would enable capture of diverse phenomenological expressions and facilitate cross-cultural comparisons. Comparative studies between pilgrims with different levels of religious education and hadith literacy could reveal variations in spiritual experience depth. Longitudinal studies tracking pilgrims' behavioral changes over extended periods would strengthen evidence of transformative impact. Studies examining the relationship between pilgrims' hadith understanding and the depth of their spiritual experiences could illuminate how textual knowledge shapes lived religious experience.

Declaration of conflicting interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in this work.

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