

# The Therapeutic Dimensions of Prostration: Bridging Islamic Spiritual Practice with Modern Grounding-Based Ecotherapy

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## Abstract

Ecotherapy has emerged as a contemporary holistic approach that emphasizes restoring human well-being through connection with the natural environment. One prominent method within this field is grounding therapy, which promotes direct physical contact with the earth as a means to stabilize the body's electrical state and enhance physiological balance. In Islamic practice, sujud (prostration) is a core component of daily prayer that similarly involves intentional contact with the ground. This study investigates sujud through the lens of Islamic ecotherapy, examining its parallels with grounding therapy in terms of spiritual, physiological, and scientific dimensions. Utilizing a qualitative content analysis, this research explores relevant prophetic traditions (hadith), classical Islamic interpretations, and biomedical studies related to the physical and neurological benefits of sujud. Comparative analysis reveals notable therapeutic overlaps between the two practices, including improved emotional regulation, cerebral blood flow, and nervous system equilibrium. The findings suggest that sujud may be understood as a spiritually grounded form of natural therapy within the Islamic tradition. This research contributes to the growing discourse on integrative healing practices and encourages further exploration of other Islamic rituals within the context of modern ecotherapy frameworks.

**Keywords:** Sujud, Ecotherapy, Grounding Therapy, Mental Health, Hadith

## Introduction

Ecotherapy has emerged as a growing alternative treatment approach within modern health sciences, emphasizing the human-nature relationship as a natural therapeutic mechanism to improve physical and mental well-being. One particular branch of ecotherapy that is gaining scientific attention is grounding therapy—a practice that involves direct physical contact with

the earth's surface to help balance the body's bioelectrical charges and support overall health (Ober et al., 2010). Scientific research has shown that grounding therapy may reduce oxidative stress, regulate the autonomic nervous system, and improve sleep quality and cardiovascular health (Chevalier et al., 2012).

In Islam, the human connection with nature is not limited to physical well-being but also encompasses spiritual and devotional dimensions. Sujud (prostration), a core component of the Muslim prayer (salat), involves direct contact between the forehead and the ground, which may carry therapeutic benefits similar to those of grounding therapy. Numerous hadiths highlight the virtues of sujud, both spiritually and physically. For instance, in a hadith narrated by Muslim:

أَقْرَبُ مَا يَكُونُ الْعَبْدُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَهُوَ سَاجِدٌ فَأَكْثِرُوا الدُّعَاءَ

"The closest a servant can be to his Lord is during prostration, so increase your supplications." (Sahih Muslim, no. 482)

This hadith illustrates not only the spiritual significance of prostration but also suggests psychological benefits, where sujud can serve as a moment of stillness and relief from anxiety. Beyond its spiritual essence, the posture of prostration has been shown in neurophysiological studies to promote cerebral blood flow, reduce muscular tension, and aid in nervous system balance (Khaleefa, 2018).

Despite the growing interest in grounding therapy within modern medical discourse, research connecting it to Islamic devotional practices remains scarce. Existing studies on grounding therapy tend to focus primarily on bioelectrical and physiological outcomes, often neglecting the spiritual dimension inherent in religious rituals. Similarly, scientific discussions about sujud remain general and seldom compare it directly to grounding therapy. This gap in literature highlights the need to investigate sujud as a potential form of Islamic ecotherapy, integrating both physical and spiritual healing elements.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the correlation between sujud and grounding therapy within the framework of Islamic ecotherapy. Specifically, it seeks to assess the benefits of sujud through the lens of prophetic traditions (hadith) and scholarly interpretations, while drawing parallels with the physiological effects of grounding therapy in contemporary science. The study also attempts to identify similarities in how both practices influence bioelectrical balance and contribute to holistic healing.

This research holds significant potential in broadening the scope of Islamic ecotherapy and enriching the understanding of grounding therapy by incorporating spiritual dimensions. Furthermore, it contributes to the growing body of Islamic health sciences literature by proposing sujud as a natural therapeutic practice rooted in faith. Practically, the findings may benefit Islamic health practitioners and mental health counsellors by offering spiritually integrated approaches to mental and physical well-being. Ultimately, this study aspires to pave the way for future interdisciplinary research in Islamic health and deepen our understanding of the hidden wisdom behind prostration as both a spiritual and therapeutic act.

### Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design with a textual analysis approach to explore sujud (prostration) as a form of Islamic ecotherapy and its correlation with grounding therapy within the framework of holistic health. This approach is appropriate as the study involves the interpretation of hadiths, scholarly perspectives, and scientific findings related to the physiological and psychological effects of both practices.

The core of the analysis is based on content analysis methodology, focusing on the examination of selected hadiths from the two most authoritative hadith collections in Sunni Islam, namely Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim. These hadiths, which highlight the virtues and physical-spiritual benefits of sujud, are analyzed to extract underlying themes relevant to therapeutic effects and the human connection with the earth.

In addition, the study reviews contemporary scientific literature and medical research on grounding therapy, particularly those addressing its effects on the human bioelectrical system, autonomic nervous regulation, hormonal balance, and the reduction of oxidative stress. Key references include empirical studies by Ober et al. (2010) and Chevalier et al. (2012), among others, which document the physiological and psychological benefits of grounding through direct contact with the earth.

A comparative analysis is employed to identify similarities and distinctions between sujud and grounding therapy, especially in terms of their influence on human-nature interaction, electrical stability in the body, and therapeutic contributions to physical and mental health. This comparative framework allows for a critical evaluation of sujud as a potential Islamic grounding practice within the broader context of ecotherapy.

Through this methodology, the study aims to offer a deeper understanding of sujud not only as a spiritual act of devotion but also as a natural therapeutic practice with scientifically observable benefits. Ultimately, the findings are intended to contribute to the growing field of Islamic health sciences and holistic medicine by bridging devotional acts with contemporary wellness paradigms.

### Dapatan Dan Perbincangan

#### *The Concept of Ecotherapy*

Ecotherapy is a therapeutic approach that stems from the broader field of ecopsychology, emphasizing the role of the natural environment as an alternative treatment method for addressing mental health challenges. This approach is grounded in the principle that a healthy ecosystem contributes directly to human well-being (Orr, 2019). Etymologically, the term "ecotherapy" is a compound of two words: "eco," derived from the Greek word *oikos*, meaning home or environment (Fisher, 2013), and "therapy," which refers to the process of healing or psychological treatment.

Conceptually, Geoff Berry (2023) defines ecotherapy as an umbrella term that encompasses various forms of psychotherapy which incorporate human-nature relationships and acknowledge the healing power of the natural world (Berry, 2023; Buzzell & Chalquist, 2009). Ecotherapy can also be understood as a mental health and wellness strategy that

involves engagement with nature to help individuals alleviate stress, overcome depression, and restore emotional balance (Bryers, 2022).

Expanding the scope further, Thomas J. Doherty (2015) includes therapeutic activities such as counseling, psychotherapy, social work, mental health prevention, and self-help programs under the banner of ecotherapy. He emphasizes that ecotherapy is not limited to outdoor physical activities but also requires a heightened ecological awareness—an understanding of the deep interconnection between human identity, behavior, and the natural environment. Consequently, the application of ecotherapy can operate at multiple levels, ranging from individual therapy to broader initiatives involving environmental stewardship at the global scale.

In summary, ecotherapy can be described as a psychological intervention that utilizes elements of the natural world as the central medium for therapeutic healing. It is often referred to by other terms such as green therapy, earth-centered therapy, and nature-based therapy (Buzzell & Chalquist, 2009), all of which point to the same core principle: integrating nature into the healing of mental and emotional conditions. Andy McGeeney (2016) also outlines several key features commonly found in ecotherapy practices, which will be presented in the following table:

Table 1

*Core Characteristics of Ecotherapy*

Nu	Ecotherapy Characteristics	Description
1	Conducted outdoors	Ecotherapy activities are carried out outdoors and are not confined to buildings or specific facilities.
2	Inclusive for all	Ecotherapy is accessible to everyone, including those who may feel marginalized.
3	Participant engagement	The relationship between the therapist and the client is crucial in planning and making decisions for the healing process.
4	Partnership with collaborators	Collaboration with other institutions is encouraged to enhance funding opportunities and the quality of treatment.
5	Cooperation with authorities	Partnerships with local authorities are fostered to promote community health and well-being.
6	Boosts self-confidence	Ecotherapy helps restore and enhance clients' self-confidence.
7	Monitoring and evaluation	All processes are continuously monitored and evaluated, with outcomes shared with others.
8	Sustainable and long-term	Ecotherapy is designed to provide lasting change and focuses on future well-being.
9	Holistic approach	A holistic approach is employed, involving more than just medical interventions.
10	Sharing results with others	Treatment outcomes are shared with others to provide wider benefits to the community.

(Reference: Andy McGeeney 2016)

Ecotherapy is founded on the theory that direct interaction with the natural environment can positively influence an individual's mental well-being, particularly for those experiencing anxiety, depression, and stress. Over time, various ecotherapy models have been developed to cater to the needs of holistic healing. Among these is Horticultural Therapy, which emphasizes engagement with plants and gardening activities as a means of emotional and psychological restoration. Green Exercise involves physical activity conducted in natural settings, aiming to improve mood and reduce stress levels through movement in green spaces.

Another recognized form is Animal-Assisted Therapy, which utilizes human-animal interaction to enhance emotional regulation and psychological well-being. Wilderness Therapy combines outdoor adventure activities and group experiences in natural environments to support behavioral and emotional development, particularly in adolescents. Natural Lifestyle Therapy encourages individuals to adopt a way of living that aligns with natural ecosystems and rhythms, promoting overall harmony between humans and their environment.

In addition, Eco-Dream Work explores the connection between human psychology and natural elements through symbolic interpretations of dreams, while Community Ecotherapy focuses on the healing potential of social interaction within shared natural spaces. These diverse forms of ecotherapy demonstrate the breadth of nature-based interventions now available to support mental health and well-being (Berget et al., 2011; Russell, 2001; Jordan & Hinds, 2016).

#### *Grounding Therapy in the Context of Ecotherapy*

Grounding therapy, also referred to as earthing, is a form of ecotherapy that has gained increasing attention in health research since the 1990s (Ober et al., 2010). This technique involves connecting the human body directly with the natural environment and is believed to enhance emotional regulation and mental stability (Komariah et al., 2022).

Scientific studies suggest that direct contact with the earth may promote a deep healing state in the human body. This is attributed to the earth's continuous flow of direct current (DC) energy, which circulates throughout the planet—including plants, animals, human beings, and the earth's surface. This energy plays a vital role in maintaining essential bodily functions such as heartbeat, muscle movement, and brain activity (Koniver, 2023).

In the context of mental health, grounding therapy has been found to reduce stress and anxiety, improve sleep quality, and stabilize emotional responses by supporting the body's nervous system and hormonal balance. Research has also shown that grounding helps regulate brain wave activity, reduce neural overstimulation, and facilitate mental calmness (Brown et al., 2010; Chevalier et al., 2013, 2015; Komariah et al., 2022; Oschman et al., 2015; Sinatra & Chevalier, 2010). Refer to the diagram below:

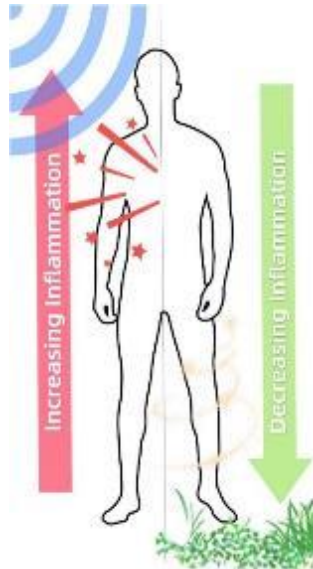


Figure 2: The Effects of Grounding on the Human Body.

Reference: (Koniver, 2023)

From a practical perspective, grounding can be integrated with any form of therapy, medication, or treatment recommended for stress, depression, and anxiety (Jokela et al., 2016; Koniver, 2023). However, its benefits are most effective when practiced consistently as part of a daily routine rather than sporadically (Köhler et al., 2014). To incorporate grounding into everyday life, individuals are encouraged to engage in outdoor activities that promote direct contact with nature. Some recommended grounding practices for mental well-being include:

- I. Gardening – Whether planting flowers, herbs, or vegetables, gardening provides daily therapeutic interaction with the earth.
- II. Bird Watching – Observing birds in natural settings can bring about a sense of peace and presence.
- III. Nature Photography – Spending time outdoors to capture the beauty of landscapes and natural surroundings.
- IV. Outdoor Exercise or Stretching – Walking barefoot on grass or soil while performing light physical movement.
- V. Journaling or Reading Outside – Sitting in nature with bare feet on the ground while reflecting or reading.
- VI. Listening to Music or Podcasts Outdoors – Enjoying audio content while seated on grass or sand, absorbing the calmness of the environment (Koniver, 2023).

By integrating grounding into one's daily lifestyle, its cumulative effects can lead to long-term improvements in emotional balance and resilience against psychological stressors.

In essence, ecotherapy provides diverse therapeutic options that reconnect humans with natural elements such as earth, plants, animals, and water. Within the Islamic tradition, the practice of *sujud* (prostration) may be viewed as a natural form of grounding that functions not only as a physical act of worship but also as a means to achieve emotional and spiritual well-being. Therefore, examining *sujud* through the lens of Islamic ecotherapy is crucial in understanding how the natural components embedded in this act of devotion contribute positively to individual mental health..



*Prostration and Its Correlation with Modern Ecotherapy*

The term *sujud* (prostration) is derived from the Arabic root word (سَجَدَ - يَسْجُدُ - سُجُودًا), which conveys the meaning of humility (*khudhu'*) and submission (*tawādhu'*). In Islamic terminology, *sujud* refers to the physical act of placing specific body parts on the ground as a symbol of devotion and servitude to Allah SWT (Wahbah Zuhaili, 2002). It is not merely a ritual movement within prayer (*salat*), but also represents the deepest form of humility and surrender to the Creator (Muhammad Bagir, 2002).

Faidullah al-Husni (n.d.) notes that the word *sujud* and its derivatives are mentioned approximately 90 times in the Qur'an, in various contexts—either as a command to perform *sujud* or in reference to the honour and status of those who prostrate before Allah. While the Qur'an emphasizes the concept and spiritual merit of *sujud*, the specific procedures and conditions of its practice are outlined in the Prophetic traditions (*hadith*).

In Islam, several types of *sujud* are prescribed:

1. Obligatory prostration during the five daily prayers – an integral pillar of *salat*.
2. *Sujud al-Tilawah* – performed upon reciting or hearing specific verses of the Qur'an.
3. *Sujud al-Shukr* – an expression of gratitude for a particular blessing.
4. *Sujud al-Sahwi* – performed to compensate for minor errors or forgetfulness during prayer.
- 5.

This study compiles selected *hadiths* from *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim* that discuss the psychological and spiritual effects of *sujud*. These sources were referenced from primary printed editions, specifically the editions of *Sahih al-Bukhari* published by Dār Ibn Kathīr (edited by Dīb al-Bughā) and *Maktabah al-Sultāniyyah*, as well as the editions of *Sahih Muslim* printed by Matba'ah al-Halabī (edited by Fu'ād 'Abd al-Bāqī) and Dār al-Tabā'ah al-Āmirah.

The selection of these editions was based on their availability in the al-Maktabah al-Shāmilah digital library, which facilitated accurate referencing and cross-verification. For systematic discussion, each *hadith* has been coded for simplified reference throughout this study. To ensure concise and focused analysis, only the key phrases (*atrāf al-hadith*) are cited, and duplicate *hadiths* appearing in both collections are counted as a single entry.

Table 2

*Distribution of Hadiths Related to Sujud as a Therapeutic Practice:*

Code	Text of Hadith	Translation
H1	ثُمَّ اسْجُدْ حَتَّى تَظْمَنَ سَاجِدًا	Then perform sujud (prostration) until you are calm and still in the position (ṭuma'nīnah).
H2	"أَقْرَبُ مَا يَكُونُ الْعَبْدُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَهُوَ سَاجِدٌ. فَأَكْثِرُوا الدَّعَاءَ	The closest a servant is to his Lord is when he is in sujud, so increase your supplications during it
H3	أَسْأَلُكَ مُزَافَقَتَكَ فِي الْجَنَّةِ. قَالَ "أَوْ غَيْرَ ذَلِكَ؟" قُلْتُ: "هَؤُلَاءِ." قَالَ "فَأَعِنِّي عَلَى نَفْسِكَ بِكَثْرَةِ السُّجُودِ"	I asked the Prophet: 'I ask to be your companion in Paradise.' He replied: 'Is there anything else you wish for?' I said: 'That is all I desire.' The Prophet then said: 'Help me achieve your request by increasing your sujud.
H4	عَلَيْكَ بِكَثْرَةِ السُّجُودِ لِلَّهِ. فَإِنَّكَ لَا تَسْجُدُ لِلَّهِ سَجْدَةً إِلَّا رَفَعَكَ اللَّهُ بِهَا دَرَجَةً	Increase your sujud to Allah, for every time you prostrate to Allah, He will raise you one rank and remove one sin from you.
H5	فَيَعْرِفُونَهُمْ بِعَلَامَةِ آثَارِ السُّجُودِ، وَحَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى النَّارِ أَنْ تَأْكُلَ مِنْ ابْنِ آدَمَ أَثَرَ السُّجُودِ	The angels will recognize them by the marks of sujud, for Allah has forbidden the Hellfire from consuming the parts of the body that touched the ground in sujud.
H6	فَيَعْرِفُونَهُمْ بِعَلَامَةِ آثَارِ السُّجُودِ، وَحَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى النَّارِ أَنْ تَأْكُلَ مِنْ ابْنِ آدَمَ أَثَرَ السُّجُودِ	"They (the angels) will recognize them by the mark of sujud (prostration), and Allah has forbidden the Hellfire from consuming the part of the son of Adam that bore the mark of sujud."

This section explores the understanding of selected hadiths from the perspective of fiqh al-ḥadīth, which involves the deep analysis of hadith texts to extract their correct interpretation, meaning, and implications. This discipline draws upon various Islamic sciences to ensure that the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) are understood comprehensively by all levels of society (Devisuci Windariyah, 2022).

In reference to H1, al-Zaydānī (2012) explains that the term iṭma'anna denotes calmness and stillness—implying that one should perform sujūd (prostration) with tranquility and composure. The Prophet SAW employed the word ṭaṭma'inna to emphasize that sujūd is a moment of spiritual stability and serenity, where one is encouraged to extend their supplication. Al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ (1998), while commenting on H2, asserts that the closeness mentioned in the hadith refers to nearness to Allah's mercy and divine grace. Hence, the Prophet SAW encouraged believers to increase their prayers and requests during this intimate posture. This closeness to Allah is reached when a servant is at the peak of humility and submission—a state fully embodied in sujūd (Yahya Ḥubayrah, 1997). Al-Nawawī (1972) further emphasized that this hadith serves as a basis for the opinion that sujūd is superior to other pillars of prayer, and that one should prolong it for its spiritual benefits.

Hadiths H3 to H6 appear as natural extensions of the spiritual insights in H1 and H2. Yahya Ḥubayrah (1997) describes sujūd as the ladder to divine proximity and a means to elevate one's rank in the sight of Allah. It represents the pinnacle of servitude and surrender,



wherein the worshipper places their most honored body part—the face—onto the lowest material—the earth. This symbolic act of submission brings about peace of mind and spiritual tranquility, as one draws closer to the Creator, is elevated in rank, and has their sins forgiven. The correlation between spiritual proximity and inner calmness is affirmed in the Qur'an:

“Those who believe and whose hearts find peace in the remembrance of Allah. Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest.” (Surah al-Ra'd: 28)

According to al-Ghazālī (2007), when the soul becomes distant from Allah, it becomes vulnerable to despair, demotivation, and social withdrawal—symptoms often manipulated by Shayṭān. Therefore, acts of worship such as prayer, particularly sujūd, function as spiritual therapy that soothe the restless soul (Hiilmi Wan Abdullah et al., 2020).

From a scientific standpoint, modern studies have also revealed the therapeutic potential of sujūd. Research indicates that ten seconds of prostration can positively affect brain activity, particularly in the prefrontal cortex—responsible for emotional regulation, attention, and executive function (Yousefzadeh et al., 2019). These findings support the view that sujūd offers relaxation and emotional control benefits similar to other mindfulness techniques. The physical posture of prostration has also been linked to enhanced brain performance, improved focus, and emotional stability, while potentially reducing the risk of brain hemorrhage (Zainuddin et al., 2014). Additionally, sujūd has been found to improve sleep quality, alleviate insomnia, and promote a sense of inner calm (Fatimah Ibrahim et al., 2009).

Prominent physician Dr. Joseph Mercola describes sujūd—which involves placing the forehead, hands, knees, and feet onto the earth—as a natural form of grounding. Beyond its spiritual significance, it serves as a physical reconnection between the human body and the earth, aligning with the principles of grounding therapy. Grounding has been scientifically shown to mitigate the effects of electromagnetic radiation from devices, stabilize emotional well-being, and enhance overall health (The Deen Show TV, 2016).

In summary, sujūd is not merely a ritual requirement in Islamic prayer but a practice with profound spiritual, psychological, and scientific wisdom. From the perspective of fiqh al-ḥadīth, sujūd signifies the deepest form of humility and surrender to Allah, offering the believer the closest proximity to the Divine. This connection fosters inner peace, spiritual elevation, and emotional stability, as affirmed by Islamic scholars and Qur'anic teachings.

Simultaneously, contemporary research affirms that sujūd promotes neurological health, emotional balance, cardiovascular wellness, and overall mental well-being. Its resemblance to grounding therapy—through direct contact with the earth—also contributes to regulating the body's bioelectrical system and hormonal equilibrium.

Thus, sujūd can be recognized as a holistic Islamic form of ecotherapy, integrating spiritual devotion, psychological healing, and physical grounding. It not only brings the servant closer to the Creator but also offers a natural pathway to restoring harmony and well-being in both body and soul..

**Conclusion**

This study reveals that sujud (prostration) is not only a central act of worship in Islam but also possesses therapeutic qualities that align with the principles of grounding therapy in modern ecotherapy. From the perspective of fiqh al-hadith, sujud is understood as an embodiment of humility, inner calm, and spiritual closeness to Allah SWT, fostering emotional serenity and elevating spiritual status. The findings further confirm that sujud has a positive impact on nervous system regulation, emotional stability, and cognitive function, as evidenced by recent neuroscience studies. The physical posture of sujud, which involves direct contact with the ground, parallels the principles of grounding therapy—shown to reduce oxidative stress, stabilize the body's bioelectrical system, and improve sleep quality and mental health. Therefore, sujud may be considered a holistic natural therapy that integrates spiritual, physical, and psychological dimensions within the framework of Islamic ecotherapy. This study encourages the development of holistic therapies grounded in Islamic values and recommends further research into other acts of worship that may contribute to comprehensive human well-being.

This research offers a significant theoretical contribution by bridging the gap between Islamic spiritual practices and modern ecotherapy frameworks. It introduces sujud as a form of spiritually rooted grounding therapy, thereby expanding the conceptual boundaries of both ecotherapy and Islamic health sciences. From a theoretical standpoint, this study contributes to the formulation of an Islamic ecotherapy model that integrates physical, psychological, and spiritual healing within a unified practice. Contextually, the study addresses the growing demand for faith-based therapeutic interventions in Muslim communities, particularly in response to rising mental health concerns. By situating sujud within the discourse of holistic mental wellness, this research also provides a culturally congruent alternative to secular therapeutic methods, offering new insights for Muslim healthcare professionals, counselors, and spiritual practitioners. Furthermore, it encourages the exploration of other Islamic rituals as potential therapeutic modalities, paving the way for interdisciplinary studies that harmonize religious tradition with modern science.

**Author Contributions**

Dzulfaidhi Hakimi Dzulraidi: Conceptual framework and manuscript drafting. Umar Muhammad Noor, Mohd Solleh Ab Razak, and Mohd Dahlan A. Malek: Intellectual contributions, manuscript review, and critical revision after peer feedback.

**Conflict of Interest**

This manuscript has not been previously published and is not under consideration by any other journal. All authors have approved the final version, agreed to its submission, and declare no conflict of interest related to this manuscript.

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