

**The Position of Signs of *Hikayat* in the Tafsir *Al-Ibriz* by Bişri Mustofa****Kedudukan Tanda *Hikayat* dalam Tafsir *Al-Ibriz* Karya Bişri Mustofa****Ela Sartika**[elasartika@stiq.assyifa.ac.id](mailto:elasartika@stiq.assyifa.ac.id)

As-Syifa College of Quranic Sciences, Subang

**Ruli Jafrullah**[rulizafrullah48@gmail.com](mailto:rulizafrullah48@gmail.com)

As-Syifa College of Quranic Sciences, Subang

**Kiki Dasuki**[kikidasuki@gmail.com](mailto:kikidasuki@gmail.com)

As-Syifa College of Quranic Sciences, Subang

**Abdul Rauf bin Rimi**[Abdulrauf@gmail.com](mailto:Abdulrauf@gmail.com)

Institute Kemahiran Islam Malaysia

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**Abstract**

**Background and Objectives:** This study aims to examine the position of hikayat signs in Tafsir Al-Ibriz by Bişri Mustofa, a Nusantara mufassir known for his communicative and narrative approach in conveying the message of the Qur'an. The background of this research is based on the need to understand how hikayat, which are often considered mere folk tales or additional elements, actually play an important role in grounding the messages of the Qur'an to the general public.

**Method:** This research uses a descriptive analysis method with a semiotic approach. Data collection techniques were carried out through a literature study of the Tafsir Al-Ibriz manuscript and the reference sources used, including classical tafsir such as Tafsir Al-Khazin.

**Main Results:** The signs of hikayat in Tafsir Al-Ibriz do not merely serve as complementary stories, but as semiotic devices that connect the denotative aspects of the Qur'anic text with the connotative aspects of Javanese culture through the mechanism of myth as a second level of meaning, while also reconstructing classical sources such as Tafsir Al-Khazin in the local context of the archipelago.

**Contributions:** This study contributes to enriching the study of Nusantara interpretation by revealing the strategic role of hikayat as a semiotic sign that reinforces the delivery of moral messages and contextualization of the Qur'an in Tafsir Al-Ibriz by KH. Bişri Mustofa.

**Conclusions:** This study concludes that the use of hikayat signs in Tafsir Al-Ibriz is an effective semiotic strategy for grounding the message of the Qur'an through the integration of revelatory texts, classical exegetical traditions, and Javanese cultural symbols, thereby enriching the contextual and culturally sensitive hermeneutic tradition of the archipelago.

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**Keyword:** Position; Hikayat; Tafsir Al-Ibriz; Bişri Mustofa; Local

**Abstrak**

**Latar Belakang dan Tujuan:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji kedudukan tanda hikayat dalam Tafsir Al-Ibriz karya Bişri Mustofa, seorang mufassir Nusantara yang dikenal dengan pendekatan komunikatif dan naratif dalam menyampaikan pesan Al-Qur'an. Latar belakang penelitian ini didasari oleh kebutuhan untuk memahami bagaimana hikayat yang sering kali dianggap sekadar cerita rakyat atau unsur tambahan justru memainkan peran penting dalam membumikan pesan Al-Qur'an kepada masyarakat awam.

**Metode:** Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif analisis dengan pendekatan semiotik. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui studi pustaka terhadap naskah Tafsir Al-Ibriz serta sumber-sumber rujukan yang digunakan, termasuk tafsir klasik seperti Tafsir Al-Khazin.

**Hasil Utama:** Tanda hikayat dalam Tafsir Al-Ibriz tidak sekadar berperan sebagai cerita pelengkap, tetapi sebagai perangkat semiotik yang menghubungkan aspek denotatif teks Al-Qur'an dengan aspek konotatif budaya Jawa melalui mekanisme mitos sebagai pemaknaan tingkat kedua, sekaligus merekonstruksi sumber-sumber klasik seperti Tafsir Al-Khazin dalam konteks lokal Nusantara.

**Kontribusi:** Penelitian ini berkontribusi dalam memperkaya kajian tafsir Nusantara dengan mengungkap peran strategis hikayat sebagai tanda semiotik yang memperkuat penyampaian pesan moral dan kontekstualisasi Al-Qur'an dalam Tafsir Al-Ibriz karya KH. Bişri Mustofa.

**Kesimpulan:** Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa penggunaan tanda hikayat dalam Tafsir Al-Ibriz merupakan strategi semiotik yang efektif untuk membumikan pesan Al-Qur'an melalui integrasi antara teks wahyu, tradisi tafsir klasik, dan simbol-simbol budaya Jawa, sehingga memperkaya khazanah hermeneutika Nusantara yang kontekstual dan peka budaya.

**Kata kunci:** Kedudukan; Hikayat; Tafsir Al-Ibriz; Bişri Mustofa; Lokal

**A. INTRODUCTION**

The emergence of Qur'anic studies in Indonesia was marked by the persistence and agility of Islamic missionaries in Indonesia. In Java, for example, the spread of Islam and the teaching of the Qur'an were developed by the *Wali Songo* by establishing Islamic boarding schools. Since the process of Islamization led by the *Wali Songo*, the teaching of the Qur'an has continued to develop in Java. As a result, the teaching of the Qur'an has led to several developments, particularly in understanding the contents of the Qur'an, which are written in the form of interpretations. Additionally, the emergence of Nusantara literature on Qur'anic studies demonstrates that Muslims in the Nusantara region have a profound interest in the Qur'an, especially with the introduction of Malay-language literature, which facilitates interaction with the Qur'an (Gusmian 2013).

Literature in Malay also influenced the writing of interpretations in Indonesia, for example *Turjaman al-Mustafid* by 'Abd Rauf al-Kinkili, which was written in Malay-Jawi (Lakmana, Nasution, and Fitriani 2023). However, this style of writing did not become very popular because only certain people were familiar with this language and script. Nevertheless, in 1980, a non-Malay language interpretation was discovered, but it was still written in Jawi script (Arabic Pegon). This interpretation was called Tafsir *Al-Ibriz* and was written by Bişri Mustofa (Fahmi 2019).

Another unique feature of *Al-Ibriz's* interpretation is its ability to bridge the vision of the Qur'an as *hudan linnas* (guidance for mankind) with the social context of society. Thus, the existence of the Qur'an as Al-Qur'an *Şahih likulli zaman wal makan* (the authentic Qur'an for all times and places) remains inherent in the Qur'an. For example, interpreters can use familiar local language metaphors or similes to explain complex concepts in the Qur'an.

Similarly, each interpretation has its own distinctive characteristics, including the *Al-Ibriz* interpretation. The uniqueness of the Tafsir *Al-Ibriz* includes the use of the local language, Javanese, writing in Arabic-Javanese script, translating using the *Gandul* script, and using symbols to reinforce interpretation, such as *faidah*, *muhimmah*, *tanbih*, *qisah*, and *hikayat*. The use of these symbols aims to balance the interpretive aspects with the beauty of the local language (Igisani 2018). In addition, it is an innovation in the writing of interpretations among Islamic boarding school communities and other communities in general.

In the context of semiotics, the term *hikayat* sign not only refers to the existence of stories, but also to the narrative function as a signifier that carries local cultural values and religious meanings that the mufassir wishes to communicate. Referring to Roland Barthes, *hikayat* can be read as a myth, namely a second-level signifying system that contains the ideology, morality, and collective imagination of Javanese society (Octaviyani 2024). Thus, it can be understood from the outset that the stories in Tafsir *Al-Ibriz* are not merely aesthetic elements or entertainment, but semiotic devices that work to contextualize the message of the Qur'an for the people of the archipelago.

Vernacularization in the *Al-Ibriz* Exegesis is viewed from two aspects: the linguistic aspect, as it uses the Javanese language, and the terminological aspect, such as the use of terms like *rojo*, *koyo*, *galak*, and others. Thus, the

*Al-Ibriz* Exegesis is regarded as an exegesis that reflects the social context of Islamic society (Abidin, Thoriqul Aziz, and Rizqa Ahmadi 2022). Similarly, this interpretation was influenced by great scholars such as Muhammad Abduh and Tantawi Jauhari, who studied scientific interpretation in Mecca and Medina. Therefore, it is these scientific interpretations that give Tafsir *Al-Ibriz* its scientific tone (Muwaffaq 2020). Thus, in his interpretation, for example, the relationship between God, nature, and humans is reflected in human actions in the real world. Humans are central to this world and have a duty to protect and utilize it as best as possible. Consequently, humans must always worship God and maintain good relationships with other humans (Ghozali 2020).

To clarify the focus and direction of the study, this research is formulated through the following research questions: *First*, how does Bişri Mustofa use the *hikayat* sign in Tafsir *Al-Ibriz* and what are the forms of *hikayat* that appear in his interpretation. *Second*, how is the process of identifying and sorting between *hikayat* and *qishah* carried out in the context of Bişri Mustofa's interpretation. *Third*, to what extent is the use of *hikayat* in Tafsir *Al-Ibriz* influenced by classical reference sources, particularly Tafsir *Al-Khazin*.

The research method used in writing this article is descriptive analysis with Roland Barthes' semiotic approach, particularly the concepts of denotation, connotation, and myth as a second-order signification, to read how *hikayat* functions as a cultural and interpretive sign in the structure of interpretation. *First*, the author identified the data by searching through all volumes of Tafsir *Al-Ibriz* to find sections that were explicitly marked as *hikayat* by Bişri Mustofa. *Second*, the author distinguished between *hikayat* and *qishah*. This distinction is based on the theoretical framework of classical and contemporary literature, which distinguishes *qishah* as stories based on revelation (the Qur'an and hadith), while *hikayat* refers to additional stories, whether in the form of *Israiliyyat* accounts, local traditions, or educational narratives. *Third*, an analysis was conducted between the *hikayat* in *Al-Ibriz* and the explanations in Tafsir *Al-Khazin*, because Bişri Mustofa himself mentioned *Al-Khazin* as one of his main references. *Fourth*, this study uses Roland Barthes' semiotic approach, particularly the concepts of denotation, connotation, and myth as a second-order signification, to examine how the *hikayat* in Tafsir *Al-Ibriz* function as cultural and interpretive signs. At the denotative level, the stories are understood as additional narratives that

appear within the structure of the tafsir, but at the connotative level, the stories play a strategic role as a medium for conveying moral values, da'wah, and Javanese locality.

From the above discussions, there is a research gap, namely that this study focuses on the study of signs or symbols separately, which the author has not found in previous studies. Therefore, given the uniqueness and distinctiveness of the Tafsir *Al-Ibriz*, particularly in its use of narrative signs, the author aims to explore the meanings employed in the interpretation using narrative signs in the Tafsir *Al-Ibriz*.

Other studies on the function of narrative in exegesis show that the use of stories is not merely illustrative, but rather an interpretive device that shapes meaning. For example, Walid A. Saleh explains that classical exegesis often utilizes additional accounts and stories as an interpretive strategy that helps readers understand the context of the verse (Saleh 2004). From the perspective of source criticism, Harald Motzki shows how the tradition of stories and histories developed through complex transmission, including non-Qur'anic elements such as *Israiliyat* (Motzki 2000). Thus, this study attempts to fill the gap in research by combining the Nusantara interpretation approach and semiotic narrative theory in global interpretation studies.

## **B. DISCUSSION**

### **1. Definition of *Hikayat***

*Hikayat* is generally defined as a form of classical *Malay* storytelling, often in prose form, containing fantastical tales, adventures, and palace life, which aims to entertain while imparting moral lessons or values of goodness (Kusumasari et al. 2023). Another definition also defines *hikayat* as an old prose literary work containing fictional stories, biographies, or histories that embody heroic, religious, and social values. These characteristics make *hikayat* an important medium for the transmission of culture and noble values from one generation to the next (Lusianti, Faridah, and Ningsih 2025).

A story, or *al-qassu* in Arabic, means to follow in someone's footsteps or to search. A story can also be understood as a sequence of events or experiences that are told or narrated, whether factual or fictional. A story is a form of information delivery that involves plot, characters, and setting, designed to convey a specific message or meaning to the listener or reader. This means that a story is not merely a collection of events (Humaedah 2021).

Terms in Arabic that refer to stories are *qishah*, *hikayat*, *riwayah*, *hadiś*, and *taṣwir*. As explained above, the difference between *qishah* and *hikayat* lies in the stories that are used (Amin 2024). If *hikayat* tends to focus more on folklore or traditional stories (Kusumasari et al. 2023). Meanwhile, *qishah* is often interpreted broadly to mean both fictional and non-fictional stories that have diverse themes, plots, and styles of language. However, the term “*qishah*” is frequently used in the Quran to refer to past narratives, such as the stories of the prophets, the tales of specific communities, and the accounts of prominent figures enshrined in the Quran, including the stories of Maryam, Aisyah, Lukman, and others (Amin 2024).

Uniquely, *Al-Ibriz's* interpretation uses the term *hikayat* to explain several verses, albeit in smaller numbers, and also uses the term *qishah*. It is interesting to examine what distinguishes *mufassir* in including these terms in their interpretations.

From the perspective of exegesis studies, stories and narratives in exegesis books are understood as an important part of interpretive strategy. Andrew Rippin refers to narratives in exegesis as interpretive strategies, which use stories to build a bridge of meaning between the text and the reader's experience. Through the symbolic associations that emerge from these narratives, readers can grasp moral messages and cultural values that are not always explicitly stated in the text of the Qur'an (Rippin 2016). Walid Saleh also points out that stories in classical interpretations do not merely repeat narratives, but function as cultural signifiers that serve to instill certain values in readers (Saleh 2004). Using a semiotic approach, the stories in *Tafsir Al-Ibriz* can be understood as signs that produce new meanings through the relationship between the Qur'anic text and the Javanese cultural context.

From a semiotic perspective, *hikayat* is not only understood as a Malay-Javanese literary text of a narrative nature, but as a series of signs that produce meaning through symbols, cultural conventions, and social associations (Barthes 2001). *Hikayat* works on a symbolic level (Peirce) because its meaning arises from cultural agreement, not from direct resemblance to reality (icon) or cause-and-effect relationships (index). This explains why *hikayat* has such a high didactic capacity: it activates the collective memory of readers and places the message of the Qur'an within a familiar cultural framework.

## 2. Biography of Bişri Mustofa and Tafsir *Al-Ibriz*

Bişri Mustofa is known as a Javanese scholar and creative writer. He was born in Rembang, Central Java, more precisely in the village of Pasawahan in 1344 H/1915 AD. Bişri Mustofa was born into a wealthy merchant family of Makassar descent, but after his father died, Bişri Mustofa lived with and was raised by his uncle. The name Bişri Mustofa is not the original name given to him by his parents; his given name was Masyadi. However, after performing the Hajj pilgrimage, his name was changed to Bişri (Sartika and Amin 2023).

Bişri grew up in a pesantren (Islamic boarding school) environment. However, he also studied at the Ongko Loro school in Rembang. His intellectual journey did not stop there. Bişri also sought religious knowledge at several other Islamic boarding schools, such as the Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School in Jombang, under the guidance of KH Hasyim Asy'ari. Finally, in 1936, Bişri decided to study in Mecca to learn tafsir, fiqh, and hadith from several teachers, such as KH Bakir, Sheikh Umar Hamdan, Sheikh Ali Maliki, and others (Misnawati 2023).

As a result of his journey in search of knowledge, Bişri became known as a *santri* (Islamic student) with a traditional education alongside NU figures. Thus, although his knowledge was traditional in nature, his thinking was very progressive, especially when it came to decision-making, because Bişri always used a *fiqh* approach and *uşul fiqh* principles (Gufron Maksun 2024). During his lifetime, Bişri married a woman from the family of a religious leader, specifically Kiai Khalil Kasingan, named Ma'rufah. Eventually, Bişri established a new Islamic boarding school in Rembang, which still exists to this day, known as the *Rauḍatul al- Ṭalibin* Islamic Boarding School. Bişri passed away at the age of 62 on February 17, 1977 (Ikhsan 2022).

Branding Bişri as a productive Islamic boarding school scholar, resulting in numerous works written across various fields of study, including ethics, *hadis*, *syari'a*, *fiqh*, *Quranic* exegesis, Arabic grammar, Arabic morphology, and others. Additionally, his writing style not only uses the Pegon script but also *Latin* script and Arabic. His most monumental work in the field of exegesis is *Tafsir Al-Ibriz li Ma'rifati Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-Aziz* (Permatasari et al. 2024).

The *Tafsir Al-Ibriz*, a more widely known interpretation, is the result of Bişri's reading and understanding of the verses of the Qur'an and other

realities surrounding it. This is evident in the preface of his commentary, where one of Bişri Mustofa's objectives is to enable the community to understand the Quran not merely as a text but also its meaning, particularly in Java. Additionally, he was motivated to write this tafsir as part of his religious devotion, as by interpreting the Qur'an, Bişri was able to provide insights into verses that require deeper understanding of Islam through the Qur'an's own explanations (Mustofa, n.d.).

The socio-religious conditions at that time proved that the Javanese Muslim community had difficulty understanding the contents of the Qur'an. Therefore, as part of his service, Bişri made efforts to provide an understanding of the content to the entire Javanese Muslim community using the Arabic *Pegon* script, a writing style widely used in Islamic boarding schools. Before printing, this commentary underwent revision by several prominent scholars, including Kiai Arwan Amin, Kiai Abu Umar, Kiai Hisyam, and Kiai Sya'roni from Kudus. The writing of this tafsir took four years and was published in three volumes: Volume 1 (Juz 1-10), Volume 2 (Juz 11-20), and Volume 3 (Juz 21-30), published by Menara Kudus Publishers (Mustofa, n.d.).

The *Al-Ibriz* commentary employs a methodological approach to interpretation that heavily relies on sources of personal opinion (*bil ra'yi*), as the author states in his introduction that his commentary draws extensively from reputable commentaries such as the Tafsir *Jalalain*, Tafsir *Baidawi*, and Tafsir *Al-Khazin*. The interpretation method tends to be general or global, but in some verses, Bişri also explains them in detail by placing the Quranic verse in the center and accompanied by the characteristic meanings of Javanese *pesantren*. The interpretations are listed on the margins according to the sequential number of each verse. Additionally, Bişri has added several key terms such as *tanbih*, *faidah*, *muhimmah*, *qışah*, and *hikayat* (Mustofa, n.d.).

Bişri Mustofa, who is known as a cultural and social scholar, is closely associated with the Nahdatul Ulama (NU) organization, which undoubtedly influences his interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an. His position as the head of a boarding school also indicates that he is a guardian of tradition. Additionally, he has a strong connection to the multicultural national context and values modernity. Therefore, this serves as a benchmark for assessing Bişri's tendencies in writing his commentary. In some verses, Bişri places special emphasis when dealing with verses related to legal rulings,

mysticism, and social issues. Therefore, Bişri's Tafsir *Al-Ibriz* can be described as a combination of tendencies between social etiquette, jurisprudence, and Sufism (Ikhsan 2022).

### 3. The Position and Implementation of *Hikayat* Signs in the Interpretation of *Al-Ibriz*

The *Al-Ibriz* interpretation uses the everyday language of the Javanese people, as the community is required to use Javanese appropriately according to the status of the person being addressed. In writing the *Al-Ibriz* interpretation, the interpreter mostly uses krama language, which is commonly used to show respect and politeness, especially when speaking to older people. Krama is a more formal language compared to ngoko Javanese, which is often used in formal situations (Maghfiroh 2023).

The *Al-Ibriz* interpretation also has its own characteristics apart from the language used, namely in the use of additional terms in its interpretation, such as *hikayat*, which indicates the existence of a story told based on folklore, whether orally, in writing, or through actions (Mustafa, n.d.). There are fewer signs of *hikayat* than signs of *qishah*. Among them, the signs of *hikayat* are mentioned in only five verses, namely QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 248, 252, QS. Al-Maidah [5]: 115, QS. Al-Buruj [85]: and QS. Al-Fil [105].

#### a. *Hikayat* sign in QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 248.

Bişri Mustofa's interpretation of this verse: *Nabi Syamuel dawuh manéh: yén Thalut dipilih daning Allah ta'ala, Allah ta'ala bakal nurunaken pati kang isi perkara kang ngantengakeun ati iro kabéh lan kekarané saking tinggalané Nabi Musa lan Nabi Harun. (Hikayat) temenan. Nalika Bani Israil isih sajeroné kumpul ana ing siji panggunan, ana peti dawané telung dira' ambané rong dira'. Géyong-géyong ana ing owang-owang nuli sumeléh ana ing sandingé raja Talut. Bareng dibuka, isiné macem-macem. Nomer siji kang asli kang dadi sababé antengé ati, nuli telumngahé Nabi Musa. Tongkaté Nabi Musa, serbané Nabi Harun, nuli saduna manni lan pecahané lauh. Bareng peti mahu temenan tumurun ana ing ngersané raja Talut, Bani Israil nuli lagi pada percaya lan pada melu berangkat perang* (Mustofa, n.d.).

The story of the chest carried by the followers of King Talut, containing three people and two others, as well as objects such as the staff of Prophet Musa, the turban of Prophet Harun, and plates, clearly contains narrative elements that are not explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an or authentic hadiths. Although the Qur'an mentions the existence of the ark (chest) in Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 248 as a sign of Allah's power for Talut, containing tranquility (*sakīnah*) and the relics of the families of Moses and Aaron, the details about the contents of the chest, its shape, the number of people

carrying it, and their reactions to the event are additions from outside the Qur'an. Therefore, this story can be categorized as part of *Israiliyyat*, which are narratives from Yahudi-Kristen traditions that entered Islamic exegetical literature through the transmission of scholars of the scriptures who converted to Islam.

This analysis reinforces the idea that the mufassir or writer who conveyed the story most likely used *Israiliyyat* narrative materials to supplement the interpretation of symbolic or concise verses. In classical exegetical traditions, such as Tafsir *Lubab at-Ta'wil fi Ma'ani at-Tanzil* or known as Tafsir *Al-Khazin*, such stories are often added to clarify the meaning of verses or to attract readers' interest. However, since they lack a valid foundation in Islam, these stories are classified as *Israiliyyat*, whose status is disputed. This means they may be accepted if they do not contradict Islamic teachings, rejected if they deviate from doctrinal principles, or postponed if there is no certainty. Therefore, the mention of details such as Moses' staff, Aaron's turban, and the tablets in the ark are not part of the *asbāb an-nuzūl*, but rather additional narratives that must be read critically and contextually.

b. *Hikayat* is found in QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 252.

Bişri Mustofa's interpretation of this verse: *mengkono-mengkono iku ayat-ayatté Allah ta'ala kang di waca aké dening Allah ta'ala marang kanjeng Nabi Muhammad SAW kalawan hak. Lan satuhuné siro Muhammad iku yakti satengah saking utusan Allah ta'ala. (Hikayat) nalika kadadiyan parang antarané raja Talut lan Raja Jalut, ana salah sawijinétentarané Raja Talut kang asmané Isya putrané Telusan kang cilik arané Daud nalika iku malah durung balig. Bareng perangan wus genting, balané Jalut wus akéh pada mati, Jalut muring-muring lan nuli ana ing gelanggang karo sumbar-sumbar. Nalika raja Talut takon: sapa kang wani ngadepi? Ora ana kang wani, jalaran Raja Jalut panji wong luar biasa, wong-wongané gedé duwur nganggo kulu wesi bobot telung dacin kurang sitik. Nuli Raja Talut ngundangaké, sopo kang wani matiné Raja Jalut bakal di pundut mantu lan di parengi separu saking kerajaané. Inggaling cerito Daud nyakuhé. Sahingga biso matiné Raja Jalut lan temenan ogé diganjar di pundut mantu dining Raja Talut lan di parengi separo kerjaan. Wallahu a'lam (Mustofa, n.d.).*

The story of the battle between Talut and Jalut, as well as the courage of the young David who defeated Jalut, is indeed part of the story of the Qur'an in QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 246–251. However, additional details such as the name of David's father (Isya bin Telusan), the weight of Goliath's armor (just under three tons), and Talut's promise of half the kingdom and marriage to his daughter, are elements of *Israiliyyat* that do not originate from authoritative Islamic sources. In Tafsir *Al-Khazin*, this story is explained in

detail, referencing narrations from the People of the Book that were accepted to a limited extent by classical exegetes. *Al-Khazin* does include some narrative additions, such as Talut's motivation for offering the reward, Jalut's physical description, and David's origins, but these remain within the framework of exegesis that combines verse explanations with narrative material from *Israiliyyat* (Al-Khāzin 1415).

This analysis shows that Tafsir *Al-Khazin* tends to be accommodating toward *Israiliyyat* narratives as long as they do not contradict the principles of Islamic creed. These stories are used to expand readers' understanding of the verses, but they are not used as legal evidence or the basis of faith. Bişri Mustofa, in Tafsir *Al-Ibriz*, seems to follow this approach by presenting the story in a more narrative and communicative manner in Javanese, for the purposes of local da'wah. Thus, although this story originates from *Israiliyyat*, its presence in Tafsir *Al-Khazin* demonstrates that classical exegetes utilized such narratives as educational illustrations to explain the historical context of Quranic verses, particularly those pertaining to the stories of earlier communities.

c. *Hikayat* is found in QS. Al-Maidah [5]: 115.

*Allah ta'ala dawuh kang surasané: temenan ingsun (Allah) bakal nurunaké lampatan marang siro kabéh, sing sopo wongé kafir sawusé tumuruné lumpatan, sa temené ingsun (Allah) bakal bikso wong-wong mahu kalawan sikso kang ora tahu ingsun (Allah) tiba aké marang wong sa alam. (hikayat) sa wusé Nabi Isa rampung oléhi du'a nuli malaikat tumurun sangking langit kanti anggo lampatan. Rupa roté pitu iwa pitu nuli hawariyyun pada dahar sangking lampatan mahu, nganti pada wareg ana ing hadits di terangaké: nalika lampatan wus tumurun wong-wong pada di dawuhé daning Nabi Isa supaya aja pada cindera. Lan aja pada nyimpen kanggé sésuwé dumadaan ana kang pada cidera. Wong-wong kang pada cidera iku di sikso, dibusek ganti lan babi (Mustofa, n.d.).*

The story of the descent of food from heaven to the followers of Prophet Jesus, accompanied by details such as the number of disciples, the prohibition against harming others, and the punishment of being transformed into pigs, is part of the *Israiliyyat* tradition that developed among exegetes. In this context, the story illustrates how narratives from the traditions of the People of the Book are often inserted into exegesis as supplements or explanations for verses whose narratives are concise, such as in Surah Al-Ma'idah [5]: 112–115. However, when compared to Tafsir *Al-Khazin*, this story is not explained in detail. *Al-Khazin* only generally mentions the request of the *Hawāriyyun* for food from heaven and the

warning of Prophet Jesus that they should not become unbelievers after receiving that blessing, without expanding the narrative into forms of punishment or transformation of form as found in some other exegetical works or circulating tales (Al-Khāzin 1415).

This analysis shows that Bişri Mustofa, in Tafsir *Al-Ibriz*, tends to add distinctive narrative elements that are not entirely sourced from classical interpretations such as *Al-Khazin*. The insertion of more complete and dramatic stories like this is likely intended as a means of preaching and reinforcing moral values to the general public, especially in the context of pesantren culture in Java. Although these stories are classified as *Israiliyyat*, Bişri does not outright reject them, as long as they do not contradict the basic teachings of Islam. Rather, he utilizes them to convey important messages about obedience, the consequences of disbelief, and the importance of following the Prophet's commands as a form of submission to Allah. Thus, this interpretive difference also reflects the local-cultural approach employed by Nusantara exegetes in developing communicative and contextual interpretations.

Semiotically, this tale acts as an interpretive symbol that expands the meaning of the verse through associations with local culture. The tale is not intended as historical information alone, but as a marker that helps readers grasp the moral and spiritual values emphasized in the text of the Qur'an. Thus, the function of the story is closer to mythologies in Barthes' framework, namely conveying religious messages through narratives that are rich in values and collective imagination.

d. Bişri Mustofa also uses *hikayat* in QS. Al-Buruj [85].

*(Hikayat) kacarito: kira-kira pitung puluh tahun sadurungé kahu nusé kangjeng Nabi Muhammad saw ana sawiji wong islam penganut agamané Nabi Isa a.s nyebut gawé buruh ana ing umahé siji wong kafi, ana ing senggang muslim mahu maca kitab injil. Barang kitab injil mahu di waca, ana wedoné kafir weruh nur cahya kang mencorong kang metuné saking wacané injil mahu, bocah wedon mahu nuli lapur marang bapané, bapané nuli takon marang buruhé nanging sakawit buruh ora ngaku bares, barang di dedes buruh ngaku sabarés, yaitu ngaku yén déwéké iku netepi agama islam agamané Isa a.s. kersané pangéran bapané bocah wedon mahu nuli insap lan manut agamané buruhé, semono ogé keluarga lan familiné-familiné atawa konco-konconé akéh kang pada milu. Jumlahé kabéh nganti ana welung puluh pitu (lanang wedon). Bareng wong-wong kang kurang ajar kerungu, nuli inggal gawé jokangan diisiné kayu nuli di urupaké. Bareng wus ambulat wong-wong welung puluh pitu mahu di tangkeb nuli di tarisiji-siji gelem murtad apa ora. Sopo kang ora gelem murtad di jekuraké jokangan geni. Sopo kang gelem murtad ora di jekuraké. Wong welung puluh pitu mahu, kang sida di jakuraké*

*jalaran tetep iman (ora gelem murtad) akéhi pitung puluh pitu dené kang ora sida di jekuraké jalaran gelem murtad akéhi sepuluh. Wallahu a'lam minal jamal (Mustofa, n.d.).*

The story told by Bişri Mustofa in interpreting Surat Al-Buruj reflects a strong *Sufi*-narrative approach in the work Tafsir *Al-Ibriz*. The story of the followers of the religion of Jesus, peace be upon him, who remained steadfast in their faith despite facing torture and death, is interwoven to bring to life the meaning of the verses about “*aşhab al-ukhdud*” (those who were burned in a fiery trench because of their faith). Through this story, Bişri not only explains the historical context of the verses but also presents a concrete example for readers about the meaning of loyalty to faith. The narration of this story serves as a means of internalizing the values of courage, steadfastness, and patience in upholding one's beliefs amid the threat of oppressive power.

Furthermore, this interpretive style reflects Bişri Mustofa's da'wah strategy, which combines classical exegesis with cultural locality. The story, though seemingly an additional narrative, holds significant moral power and is contextually relevant to the lives of the pesantren community and the general public who are its target audience. The emphasis on the number of martyrs who remained faithful 77 compared to the 10 who apostatized, conveys a symbolic impression of the moral victory of true believers. Through this story, Bişri also instills the idea that loyalty to religion is not an easy matter, but one filled with trials and requiring sacrifice, as taught in Surat Al-Buruj and exemplified by previous generations. However, this story bears a resemblance to the account described in *Al-Khazin's* Tafsir about the people of the trench, though *Al-Khazin* provides a more detailed explanation in his commentary.

e. *Hikayat* signs is found in Qs. Al-Fil [105].

In this letter, Bişri Mustofa included (*hikayat*) *tahun babaré kangjeng Nabi iku di arané tahun gajah. Caritané mengkéné: ka'bah ana ing Makkah iku wiwit zaaman kuna, zaman kangjeng Nabi Ibrahim wus dadi pepundéné wong endi-endi saban tahun-tahuné ditekani wong-wong saking mancanegara. Raja Abrahah gawé geréja kang istimewa ana ing Yaman, kang agamané nasrani, kepingin gawé saningan: Raja abrahah gawé geréja kang istimewa ana ing Yaman, tujuhané kanggo embelu aké perhatiné wong-wong mareng geréja mahu supaya Ka'bah kurang olé perhatian, Syukur-syukur ora oleh perhatian babar pisan. Temenan sawetara tahun geréja Yaman olé perhatian bagus, Ka'bah rada sepi nuli ana siji wong Mekkah kang ora seneng ningali perbuatan Raja Abrahah iku. Wong mahu nuli teka ing Yaman, menuju geréja. Geréja mahu di isingi nuli melayu. Raja Abrahah kerungé lapuran bendu banget, tentarané di siapaké, perlu arep anggempur Ka'bah. Tentarané*

*akéh sewida ewu, gawé gajah akéhi séwu, kang gedé déwé arané gajah Mahmud. Wesoné lagi bahé ngawité nyerang, Allah ta'ala nurunaké (ngutus) manu-manu kang anggowa watu panas saking naraka, ngamuk ambalangi balané Abrahah nganti bosah baseuh ora karuan. Abrahah déwé derijiné meritil, nuli awak-awaké neritili. Getih lan nanah deleweran ora karuan, durung biso mati-mati nganti tekan pecah dadané lagi biso mati. Nalika iku wong-wong Mekkah ora ngalawan mala pada ngungsi ana ing gunung-gunung, kuwatir kana bala saking Allah ta'ala (Mustofa, n.d.).*

In his commentary *Al-Ibriz*, Bişri Mustofa interprets Surat Al-Fil using a distinctive narrative approach through the insertion of the story (*hikayat*) of Abrahah's attack on the Ka'bah. The use of *hikayat* in this interpretation is not merely an additional story, but part of a cultural *da'wah* strategy to bring the meaning of the verses to life in a contextual and easily understandable way for the general public. The story of Abrahah is explained in detail, from the construction of a church in Yemen, his intention to destroy the Ka'bah, to the miracle of the Ababil birds descending and throwing stones from the sky. Bişri Mustofa emphasizes this historical event to affirm Allah's omnipotence in protecting His holy house. This narrative is also presented in a familiar and communicative Javanese style, making this interpretation an effective form of communication in the local context of pesantren communities and Javanese society in general.

The use of the story in *Al-Ibriz* demonstrates continuity with classical exegesis methods, particularly *Tafsir Al-Khazin*, which is one of Bişri Mustofa's primary references, as he mentions in his introduction. In *Tafsir Al-Khazin*, the story of Abrahah and the Ababil birds is also presented with a strong narrative, emphasizing the elements of miracles and divine intervention (Chairullah 2022). Bişri did not merely copy the story, but adapted it into a language and style that was acceptable to his community, making the interpretation a medium for education and the transmission of values. This shows that the stories in the interpretation are not merely entertainment or fairy tales, but pedagogical tools that connect the text of the Qur'an with the socio-cultural reality of the readers' community.

From a semiotic perspective, the stories in *Tafsir Al-Ibriz* function not only as illustrative narratives, but also as cultural signs that mediate the meaning of the verses with the Javanese readers' horizon. Referring to Roland Barthes' semiology theory, stories can be understood as myths in a positive sense, namely a second-level signifying system that brings local values, beliefs, and culture into the text of the interpretation. Thus, the stories become interpretive codes that expand the meaning of the verses of the

Qur'an through symbols that are easily recognized by the Javanese community. This pattern is in line with the findings of Walid Saleh (Saleh 2004) dan Johanna Pink (Pink, n.d.) yang menunjukkan bahwa mufassir sering menggunakan narasi tambahan untuk menjembatani pesan ilahi dengan konteks sosial-budaya pembaca. In the context of *Al-Ibriz*, *hikayat* functions as a cultural index that marks the social disposition of readers, as well as a pedagogical symbol that strengthens the internalization of religious values within the framework of locality.

When read semiotically, *hikayat* in Tafsir *Al-Ibriz* functions as a cultural code that mediates the verses of the Qur'an with the social experiences of Javanese readers. Following Barthes' approach, *hikayat* can be understood as signs that have undergone a process of naturalization, which is a process in which certain values are considered normal because they are conveyed through familiar stories. The *hikayat* of Talut–Jalut, Ashab al-Ukhudud, and Abrahah, for example, not only explain the meaning of the verses, but also create a cultural resonance of an interpretive space that makes the values of courage, obedience, and morality easier to accept. In this case, Bişri Mustofa did not merely copy the classical narrative from Tafsir *Al-Khazin*, but carried out a process of re-semanticization, namely the formation of new meanings through the Javanese cultural context.

#### **4. Differences and Similarities in the Meaning of the Use of the Terms *Hikayat* and *Qışah***

The above explanation shows that Bişri Mustofa uses the *hikayat* sign to indicate that the mufassir is including *Israiliyyat* stories or taking story sources from Tafsir *Al-Khazin* (Suri and Akhyar 2020). In the realm of exegesis, *Qışah* often serves as an important tool in clarifying the meaning of verses and bringing the messages of the Qur'an to life, especially when it comes to verses that explicitly describe stories. Conceptually, the two share some overlap in meaning, but they differ in terms of function and orientation. Stories in the Qur'an are more historical and theological in nature, conveying narratives with moral values and guidance for faith (Amin 2024). Meanwhile, tales tend to function as fictional stories or narratives told for entertainment, education, or spiritual reflection, often narrative in nature with a distinctive style of language (Handayani 2022). In exegesis, this difference creates layers of complex meaning when the exegete chooses to insert stories as

supplements or explanations to narrative verses.

Bişri Mustofa in Tafsîr Al-Ibrîz is known as an exegete who frequently uses a narrative approach in his interpretations. He not only presents the stories of the prophets, the earlier peoples, and Qur'anic figures as mentioned directly in the Qur'an, but also adds stories from non-Qur'anic sources, including *Israiliyyat*. In this regard, he demonstrates methodological openness in selecting narrative material that can touch the emotional side of readers or listeners. Some of these tales refer to classical works such as Tafsir *Al-Khazin*, widely recognized as a commentary that extensively includes *Israiliyyat* narratives (Suri and Akhyar 2020).

Unlike other local interpretations, Bişri Mustofa uses stories as a distinguishing feature from other narratives. Stories are used as part of his strategy for preaching and education. These stories are not only sourced from the Qur'an, but also from historical literature, Islamic legends, and even folk tales that have been Islamized. In this tradition, Bişri Mustofa uses stories as a pedagogical tool, namely to ground divine messages in the social context of Javanese society at the time. For example, the story of the people of Prophet Lot is not only explained from a legal perspective but is also supplemented with local narratives depicting parallel moral decay, making it easier for the community to understand (Mustofa, n.d.).

In a comparative context, the similarities between stories and tales are that both are narrative in nature and are used to convey messages or values. However, the difference lies in their sources and level of authenticity: stories (Qishah) originate directly from revelation and have high theological value, while tales originate from oral tradition, additional history, or *Israiliyyat* narratives, which often need to be verified for accuracy. Bişri Mustofa harmoniously combines both, demonstrating that in the Nusantara exegetical tradition, a communicative and contextual approach is prioritized over academic rigidity. In this context, *hikayat* is not merely a story but a means of transforming values within a living exegesis among the community.

The use of stories in Tafsir *Al-Ibriz* is in line with Johanna Pink's view, which emphasizes that local interpretations often use additional narratives as an educational medium to bridge the sacred text with the cultural experiences of its readers (Pink, n.d.). Within the semiotic framework, as stated by Rippin, additional narratives such as tales function as semiotic devices that present cultural meanings from outside the text to reinforce the

moral message that is being conveyed (Rippin 2016). Therefore, Bişri Mustofa's insertion of stories is not only rhetorical, but also an interpretive mechanism that connects the Qur'anic text with the cultural horizon of Javanese readers.

In Barthes' semiotic structure, the Qur'anic qishah can be categorized as an icon, because it bears a direct resemblance to the historical reality referred to in the verse. Conversely, *hikayat* are more accurately categorized as symbols, i.e., signs whose meanings arise from cultural conventions and collective narratives of society. Therefore, when Bişri Mustofa chose to insert *hikayat*, he was actually transferring the Qur'anic message into a second order signification system according to Barthes, which allows the verse to be understood in a more emotional and contextual way.

### C. CONCLUSION

Study of the signs of *hikayat* in Bişri Mustofa's Tafsir *Al-Ibriz* shows that *hikayat* does not merely function as a narrative complement, but as a semiotic device that connects the denotative layer of the Qur'anic text with the connotative layer of Javanese culture, thus forming a myth in Roland Barthes' sense as a second-level system of meaning that naturalizes certain values in the collective imagination of readers. This finding has important implications for the study of Qur'anic exegesis, as it confirms that narrative elements including those sourced from Israiliyyat and local traditions can be read as valid hermeneutic strategies for grounding divine messages as long as they are managed critically and selectively.

Furthermore, this research enriches the discourse of Nusantara hermeneutics by showing that local interpretations such as *Al-Ibriz* are not merely by products of classical tradition, but rather creative laboratories of interpretation, where revelatory texts, classical interpretive traditions, and local cultural symbols are woven into a dynamic network of signs. By making *hikayat* a semiotic object of study, this study opens up new possibilities for examining other Nusantara interpretive works as a meeting ground between sacred texts and locality, thereby encouraging the emergence of an interpretive paradigm that is more sensitive to the context and cultural diversity of Indonesian Muslims.

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