

Al-Qur'an dan Hadis

HUBUNGAN ANTARA ASPEK TILĀWAH
DAN MAKNA AYAT-AYAT AL-QUR'AN:

Sebuah Pendekatan Tajwid

Abdul Jalil

HERMENEUTIKA MAQASIDI:

Studi Kasus Teori Penafsiran Imam al-Syatibi

Mansur

ETIKA NIR-KEKERASAN DALAM ISLAM:

Studi atas Kisah Yusuf AS dalam al-Qur'an

M. Syamsul Hadi

SUNTINGAN TEKS TAFSIR JALALAYN

Muhammad Alfatih Suryadilaga

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M. Nurdin Zuhdi

The Rising of *Isra'iliyyat* in Earlier Exegetical Work and the Effect

Fadli

Abstract

Artikel ini mempertanyakan fenomena masuknya kisah-kisah Isra'iliyyat ke dalam karya-karya tafsir dan bagaimana kisah-kisah tersebut berpengaruh terhadap penafsiran. Isra'iliyyat adalah salah satu jenis riwayat yang ada dalam buku tafsir, terutama sekali literatur tafsir klasik. Terma ini telah dikenal meskipun semenjak era awal Islam, era Sahabat Rasulullah saw. Interaksi yang berjalan dalam waktu panjang diantara orang Arab dengan Ahli Kitab sepertinya menjadi salah satu alasan. Permasalahan mulai muncul ketika interaksi tersebut menghasilkan riwayat-riwayat yang digunakan sebagai salah satu penafsiran dalam corak tafsir bil ma'sur, padahal sebagian besar riwayat tersebut mengandung penyimpangan-penyimpangan terhadap konsep-konsep ushuli dalam Islam. Dalam proses analisis, artikel ini akan mempertanyakan sejarah penafsiran secara umum. Kemudian, demi pemahaman yang lebih baik, artikel akan menampilkan beberapa contoh Isra'iliyyat yang ada dalam literatur-literatur tersebut.

Keywords: Isra'iliyyat, exegesis book, chains-ignored period, early exegetical codification

Introduction

"Isra'iliyyat" has been the unity component inside the books of exegesis which recent Muslims received from the earlier exegetes. So many exegetical works contains this kind of traditions as interpretation on some verses. This kind of traditions particularly releases explanations toward verses talking about the history of ancient people and events which Qur'an mentioned globally.

Since the historical root of *isra'iliyyat* has come during the companions era, such phenomena represents a spirit of companions, and earlier scholars then, in

searching the meaning of Qur'an. They were enthusiastic to find any explanations of Quran from many references; the Qur'an itself, the *Sunnah* of Prophet, their own interpretation (*ijtihad*), and the information from the scribes.¹

The scholars actually formulated a concept and made a clear mapping explaining how this kind of traditions might be appropriately treated. They divided them into three types: the traditions of which are clearly acceptable to *shariah*, the traditions of which are clearly unacceptable to *shariah*, and which are disregarded by *shariah* (*maskut 'anh*). Regarding to the first type, exegetes might refer to indeed, whereas the second might not, and the latter, which usually contain the unnecessary information such the color of the dog of *ashab al-ka'bf*, might neither be referred to nor rejected.² However, this theory came later possibly when the construction of *Ulum al-Quran* developed, and thus it seems excusable for the earlier exegetical work to contain some *isra'iliyyat*.

It is then necessary to say that many of *isra'iliyyat* contains the deviation towards some fundamental doctrine of Islam, the concept of faith in God or Prophet for example. However, even though the content of *isra'iliyyat* is so, majority of classical exegetes, since the earlier period of exegesis, has written them down in their exegetical work. This eventually brings to an assumption that the existence of *isra'iliyyat* within exegetical works represents the carelessness of earlier scholars, honestly or not.³

The article would discuss about the existence of *isra'iliyyat* in the early exegetical codifications period. The research would question what *isra'iliyyat* is, how the explanation or description of *isra'iliyyat* emerging in exegetical work is, and how it affects exegesis itself. To gain the deeper explanation, for the help, the research also discusses about the history of exegesis, of which talking about emerging of *isra'iliyyat* in exegetical codification is completely talking about the history of exegesis codification, from its first day until the early codification of exegesis.

¹ Husain al-Zahabi, *Tafsir wa al-Mufasssirun Juz 1* (Kairo: Maktabah Wahbah, 2000), p. 31.

² M. Hamdi Zagzug, *Mausu'ah al-Quraniyah al-Mukhassisah* (Kairo: Wizartu as-Tsaqofah al-Islamiyah. 2007) p. 296.

³ Husain al-Zahaby, *al-Isra'illiyat fi al-Tafsir wa al-Hadis*, (Kairo: Maktabah Wahbah, 1990), p. 4.

Later, these questions are the path of this paper. The topic is around the questions and these would be discussed descriptively. In attaching some sample, the researcher would provide two exegetical works which are written in the earlier exegesis codification era: *Jami' al-Bayan 'an Ta'wili Ayi al-Qur'an* written by Ibn Jarir al-Thabari and the exegetical work of *Maqatil Ibn Sulaiman*.⁴

This research becomes necessary because these exegetical works is familiar and have been the fundamental references of exegesis, which in turn make every student or expert Muslims read it, while the fact some of them receive every exegetical information inside them literally, taken for granted, without any criticism. It is also important in building the critical thought about these exegetical books.

In the paper, the researcher uses technical term of exegesis in the same meaning of interpreting. Thus, on some occasions, we use exegesis and on the others we use interpretations. This is also applied in the derivations of these terms as the verbal or nominal part of speech.

What is Isra'iliyyat?

The issue dealing with *isra'iliyyat* is a heated debate among many scholars of Qur'anic studies which then deduces many theories on it. Generally, those theories can be divided into two boards. Some says more specific than the others do. According to Muhammad Abu Syahbah, *isra'iliyyat* is a 'knowledge' coming from Israelite (*Bani Isra'il*), their holy book, and even their tale and lies.⁵ Ali Hasan which defines so says that *israiliyyat* much more related to Jews because the sense of Jews is dominant in its content.⁶ Husain al-Zahabi presents the wider definition however; despite defining *isra'iliyyat* is specific for Jews or Israelite, he says that *isra'iliyyat* is the traditions coming from scribes; Jews and Christianity. Talking about *Isra'iliyyat* is

⁴ The researcher use *Jami' al-Bayan 'an Ta'wili Ayi al-Quran muhaqqiq*: DR. Abdullah ibn Abd al-Muhsin al-Tarki (Kairo, Hijr, 2001) as the primer reference, but we could not find the exegesis of *Maqatil ibn Sulaiman* which then force us to use the secondary literature.

⁵ M. Abu Syahbah, *Isra'iliyyah wa al-Mawdu'at fi Kutub al-Tafsir*. (Kairo: Maktabah as-Sunnah. 2006) p. 13-14.

⁶ 'Ali al-Hasan, *al-Manâr* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr al-Araby. 1998) p. 227

indeed talking about these two groups of people even though the first is dominant.⁷ Nevertheless, these definitions in turn grow wider; it is no longer defined as the traditions coming from Scribes, but then every single tradition, information—whether it is referential or not—, or ancient tale relating to Scribes and every other sources which are found whether in Qur'an or Hadeeths.⁸

How could *isra'iliyyat* come to explain any verses of Qur'an? Based on the point of view of companions, Scribes had the great understanding and insight towards their scriptures (Old and New Testaments).⁹ In the same time, they did believe that Qur'an, as the latest-revealed-scripture, came as the complement to the earlier scriptures. Therefore, there is much information inside Qur'an has the similarities with what is in earlier scriptures.¹⁰ This is possibly among the reasons companions took some explanation for Qur'an from the traditions (*riwayat*) of Scribes.¹¹

Thus, to state that *isra'iliyyat* has emerged in exegesis since the earlier period; the period of oral transmission between companions each other seems clearly reasonable. We can see it from the interpretation method used by companions. Ibn Abbas, for example, used information from Scribes as one of references in interpreting Qur'an besides Qur'an itself, Hadeeth, and his own *ijtihad*.¹² He, and many others companions, took the information from Scribes, *isra'iliyyat*, which converted to Islam such as Abdullah ibn Salam, Ka'ab ibn Akhbat, etc. Unlike the verses concerning with the law and theological aspect, Companions just asked converted-Muslim for some complement information especially dealing with the story of ancient messengers, people and events.¹³

⁷ Husain al-Zahaby, *al-Isra'iliyyat fi al-Tafsir ...*, p. 13.

⁸ W. Al-Hafidz Ahsin, *Kamus Ilmu al-Qur'an*, (Jakarta: Amzah, 2006), p. 125-126

⁹ M. Alfatih Suryadilaga dkk., *Metodologi Ilmu Tafsir* (Yogyakarta: Teras, 2005), p. 100

¹⁰ Husain al-Zahabi, *al-Isra'iliyyat fi al-Tafsir ...*, p. 8-11.

¹¹ M. Alfatih Suryadilaga dkk., *Metodologi Ilmu Tafsir ...*, p. 101.

¹² Husain al-Zahabi, *Tafsir wa al-Mufasssirun ...*, hlm. 53-54.

¹³ M. Alfatih Suryadilaga dkk., *Metodologi Ilmu Tafsir ...*, p. 101.

History of Exegesis: A Sort Explanation from Early Period until Codification Period

Exegesis of Qur'an has been the center of science and religiosity development in Islam since its formative period. At that era, Prophet Mohammed directly interpreted Qur'an. He, as the messenger whom revealed Qur'an understood the meaning of it, whether in global or detail scope, whereas the companions, however, even though they spoke and knew Arabic, there was no guarantee that they understood the meaning of Qur'an in detail. They just knew it globally-literally. Not every of them did have good understanding about this, rather than many had better understanding than the others, like Ibn Abbas which is assessed as the great exegete. This brought them to some debates about many cases of interpreting Qur'an.¹⁴ At this point, it is necessary to say that the rule of Prophet Mohammed in the early period of Islam was urgent.

After Prophet Mohammed passed away, it is the companions who held the authority of exegesis. They transmitted exegetical explanations from Prophet Mohammed to another as *riwayah*. This authority then followed many companions as the central figures, as the great exegetes. They were *al-Khulafa' al-Ar'ba'ah*, *Ibn Mas'ud*, *Ibn Abbas*, *Ubay ibn Ka'ab*, *Zayd ibn Tsabit*, *Abu Musa al-Aj'ari*, and *Abdullah ibn Zubair*.¹⁵ Some of them held certain school of exegesis in Mecca, Medina, and *Baghdad*, in which many successors studied or transmitted exegesis from them in each school. Then, there were many successors arose as the next exegetes.¹⁶

In this era, the codification of Islamic discourse had not begun yet. Transmission of knowledge still spread in the oral method. In this kind of method, many companions knew some terminologies such *nasikh-mansukh*, *asbab al-nuzul*, *gharib al-Qur'an*, etc. Despite being systematically constructed in certain discourse, as *Ulum Qur'an*, these terminologies were still separated one to another. Thus, *Ulum al-*

¹⁴ There was a debate around this one of which Ibn Khaldun said that all of companions have entirely understood Qur'an with their Arabic, whereas Husain al-Zahabi disagree and proof that not all of companions understood Qur'an because ability of Arabic is not the only methode to understand Qur'an. See Husain al-Zahabi, *al-Tafsirna al-Mufasssirun...*, p. 28.

¹⁵ Suyuti, *al-Itqan fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 2008), Juz 2, p. 564.

¹⁶ Husain al-Zahabi, *al-Tafsirna al-Mufasssirun...*, p. 77-78.

Qur'an and *exegesis* themselves, at that time, had not found the shape as they had recently.

The codification itself began at about the end of successor's period; at the end of Dynasty Umayyad and the beginning of Abbasid era. Even the codifications of some discourses were beginning, exegesis itself—in the meaning of exegetical work on entire *Qur'an* verses per verses, and *surah* per *surah*, from the beginning until the last—did not. However, the codification of exegesis in the simple way was one part of hadeeths codification. Many successors attempted to finish the codification such as Yazid ibn Harun al-Silmy (d. 117 H), Sya'bah ibn Hujjaj (d. 160 H), Waki' ibn Jarah (d. 197 H), Sufyan ibn 'Uyayyah (d. 98 H), Ruwah Ibn Ubadah al-Basry (d. 205 H), Abd al-Raziq ibn Hamam (d. 211 H), etc. They produced many books of Hadeeths which had many chapters which one of them is *bab al-tafsir* (Chapter of Exegesis).¹⁷ Here was the beginning of historical root of exegesis codification.

Then, exegesis codification developed, and in turn separated from the unity of hadeeths as the independence one. Exegesis as the small part of hadeeths codifications moved to the certain codification of exegesis. The spirit of many scholars appeared to interpret entire *Qur'an*, verses per verses, *surah* per *surah*, from the beginning until the end, as the order of *Mushaf Othmani*. Some of them are Ibn Jarir al-Thabari with his work namely *Jami' al-Bayan 'an Ta'wili Ayi al-Qur'an*,¹⁸ Abu Bakr ibn Munzir al-Naisabury (d. 318 H), Ibn Abi Hatim al-Razi (d. 327 H), Abu Syaikh ibn Hibban (d. 369 H), Ibnu Majah (d. 373 H), etc. All of them collected the exegetical traditions from Prophet Mohammed, companions, and successors.¹⁹

¹⁷ Husain al-Zahabi, *al-Tafsir wa al-Mufasssirun*..., p. 104; M. Abdul Azim al-Zarqany, *Manabil al-'Irfaq fi Ulum al-Qur'an juz 1* (Cairo: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, t.th) p. 30. Al-Zarqani clearly said that three names of these all (Syu'bahibn al-Hajjaj, Waki' ibn Jarah, and Sufyanibn 'Uyainah) were the exegetical writers, whereas al-Zahabi said that they were hadeeth writers who make *tafsir* as a chapter inside.

¹⁸ There were some debates about the name of this exegetical work. Husain al-Zahabi agree with the name *Jami' al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an*, whereas the other said it was *Jami' al-Bayan 'an Ta'wili Ayi al-Qur'an*. And actually there are many other opinions on it.

¹⁹ Husain al-Zahaby, *al-Tafsir wa al-Mufasssirun*..., p. 105. According to al-Zahabi, it was not easy to find out who was the first exegetical writer who wrote it completely from the beginning until

In the next development, there was an era which the trend was disregarding the chains of transmitters (*isnad*). Despite writing the exegetical traditions at once with the chains, many exegetes ignored and deleted this fundamental part of tradition-based-exegesis.²⁰ Such activities stimulated the unacceptable exegesis to appear indeed due to the loss of examining and criticizing instrument upon them. As the result, the false exegesis (*al-wadh'u fi al-tafsir*) arose. It is the era of *isra'iliyyat* highly emerging in exegesis codifications.²¹

The statement above, still leave another questions behind; how could *isra'iliyyat* highly emerge in exegesis codifications within the narrators-chain-ignored period? There is still such explanation to this as below.

The Rising of *Isra'iliyyat* in Exegesis

The following pages will answer and analyze the question; how could *isra'iliyyat* emerge in exegetical work and how it affects exegesis? Explanation above simply said that *isra'iliyyat* began emerging in the world of exegesis when many exegetes were showing the loss of attention to the chains of narrators/transmitters. This ignorance toward *isnad* system preserved the irresponsible exegetical traditions; the number of *isra'iliyyat* therefore increased in exegetical work. However, to the deeper explanation, the interesting of many exegetes in *isra'iliyyat* relates to two indicators: the relation among Qur'an and the other earlier scriptures and the relation between Arabians and Scribes.

Firstly, longtime before Islam, there were two famous religions revealed to the earlier Messengers. Alike Islam, these both religions had their own scriptures talking about their doctrines. They were *Torah* for the Jews and Bible for Christian; but bible

the end. He is in doubt in the theses of Ibn Nadim who said that al-Farra' is the first one with his book named *Ma'ani al-Qur'an*.

²⁰ Generally, exegesis is divided into two categories: traditions-based exegesis (*Tafsir bi al-Ma'sur*) and reason-based exegesis (*Tafsir bi al-Ra'y*). The first restricts the freedom of reason while emphasizing to refer to certain references: Qur'an itself, Sunnah, and the example from the earliest Muslims. Unlike the first, the second on the other hand allows the independent reasoning with certain limitation. See Fahd al-Rumi, *Bubus fi Usul al-Tafsir wa Manahijuhu cet. 4* (t.t: Maktabah al-Taubah, 1419 H), p. 78; Husain al-Zahabi, *al-Tafsir wa al-Mufasssirun...*, p. 183; M. Abdul Azim al-Zarqany, *Manabil al-'Irfan ...*, p. 183.

²¹ Husain al-Zahaby, *al-Tafsir wa al-Mufasssirun...*, p. 106.

contained both Old and New Testaments. As the scriptures potentially shape civilizations, religiosity, and knowledge constructions, the Jews and Christians had their knowledge and religiosity practice from both scriptures.

Besides, all divine scriptures which were revealed to the earlier Messengers have the same missions indeed: inviting human being to the faith of God and teaching the good way in social life. Alike the earlier scriptures, Qur'an, as the last scripture, completely took this role, and even held the other important role as the complementary and the reformer for the earlier books. Not only does Qur'an have such role, it also re-corrects the distorted information or doctrines inside *Torah* and Bible.²² Such relation, among Qur'an, *Torah*, and Bible, implies that Qur'an has much information as it existed in the earlier scriptures.²³

One of the aspects containing same information among those scriptures is about history. Unlike the other scripture which commonly tell the story in detail, Qur'an tells it shorter. Somehow, Qur'an ignores the explanation about time, place, name, etc, like in the story of Adam in *al-Baqarah* and *al-A'raf*. Qur'an does not tell about the place of heaven, variety of forbidden tree, animal which brought devil came into heaven, etc. This seems rational because the purpose of Qur'an in telling the story is the moral value of the story, not chronological narration of events. On the other hand, *Torah* and Bible also contain this story which they tell in detail and even more.²⁴

Secondly, relation among Arabians and Scribes might also be the other indicator for the interesting of many exegetes in *Isra'iliyyat*. Regarding in this point, actually the trend to *Isra'iliyyat* has the long historical explanation from the past time, long time before Islam. Arabians, long time ago, had such an interaction with the scribes, especially Jews. The Jews were actually the immigrants came into the Peninsula of Arab since 70 M. They went out from their homeland scaring of bad

²² There is much information about this distortion in Qur'an; that Scribes changes the content of their scripture, such as QS. Ali Imran [3]: 93 and al-Maidah [5]: 15.

²³ Husain Zahabi, *al-Isra'iliyyat fi al-Tafsir* ..., p. 8-11; as the example, many attributes of Prophet Mohammed mentioned in Qur'an, are existed in bible, like the "*ummiy*" in al-A'raf [7]: 157-158.

²⁴ Husain Zahabi, *Tafsirna al-Mufasssin...*, p. 122.

treatment of King Titus Romani. Then, many Jews lived in Yamane and Sham. On the other side, Arabians had the routine journey every year to both directions; Yamane and Sham for some reasons especially trade. This brought them to the long-routine interactions with Jews indeed. This huge migration which then implied to the big interaction certainly gave such a big effect to the acculturation between both cultures.

Afterwards, Islam came with its own doctrines to human being. The first audiences of Islamic proselytizing were Arabians. Medina, the capital of Peninsula of Arabs at that time, then became the center of Islamic proselytizing due to the rules played by Masjid Nabawi. This masjid is a central-important place holding many religious practices like congregation prayer and developing Islamic knowledge as well. There were many discussions forum between Prophet Mohammed and many others inside. The converted-Moslems, even from Scribes, often attended the forums. There were knowledge transmissions for sure. Sometimes, they also came to Prophet to ask for help to solve their conflict. The other also questioned the truth of his prophetic mission. Such interaction ran in a long time with the wide scope, more over after many of Scribes converted to Islam.²⁵

Both relations, made companions took some information from *isra'iliyyat* upon Qur'an. They personally felt close to the scribes due to long-wide culture acculturation. Some verses inside the earlier scriptures which have similiar spirit and meaning with Qur'an certainly could be some explanations for Qur'an itself. Companions without any difficulties could ask for information to the Scribes.²⁶ Thus, no wonder if companions to some extent selectively regarded information from Scribes as the interpretations upon Qur'an.

The existence of *isra'iliyyat* from the earlier period of Islam, the period of companions, before the codification of exegesis started, continued until the

²⁵ Husain Zahabi, *al-Isra'iliyyat fi al-Tafsir ...*, p. 13-17.

²⁶ However, companions did not take every explanation from Scribes. They did not refer them in the case of theology (*aqidah*) and law (*hukm*). Husain al-Zahabi, *Tafsir wa al-Mufasssirun*, p. 123-124.

codification begun.²⁷ While exegesis was in a unity with hadeeths, *isra'iliyyat* could not emerge the codifications because chain of transmitters (*isnad*) which examined the authenticity, originality, acceptability and correctness of traditions is the important component in hadeeths.

By the time, in *isnad*-ignored period, many unacceptable and non-referential traditions came into the codifications of exegesis. The inexistence of examining instrument made every tradition could be written into exegesis book. This was the period of *isra'iliyyat* emerging in exegesis. No wonder then many exegetes wrote *isra'iliyyat* in their exegesis books like Ibn Jarir al-Thabari, Maqatil ibn Sulayman, al-Khazin, etc.²⁸

***Isra'iliyyat* in the Early Exegetical Works**

Explanation before showed that there are some reasons companions took *isra'iliyyat* as one of references for interpreting Qur'an. They are both relation between Arabians and Scribes which passed many decades and the relation between Islam and earlier religions and Qur'an with earlier holy books as well. In the case of codifications era, or exegetical work, the traditions of *isra'iliyyat* transmitted from companions until successors came into exegetical books through the chains-ignored process.

This phenomenon makes the exegetes pay full attention towards *isra'iliyyat*. Numbers of exegetes gave their commentary—some gave long commentary—about this in introduction chapter of their books. Nevertheless, according to al-Zahabi, majority of exegetes explained *isra'iliyyat* theoretically—including the proper treatment upon them—but still wrote them down in their exegesis book. Moreover,

²⁷ Husain Zahabi stated that the selectivity of companions upon *isra'iliyyat* decreased in the hand of successors, and more decreased after them. Husain al-Zahabi, *Tafsirna al-Mufasssin...*, p. 128.

²⁸ Amal M. Abdurrahman Rabi', *Isra'iliyyah fi Tafsir at-Tobary; Dirosatun fi al-Lughob wal Masadir al-Ibriyah* (Kairo: Majlis ulama' lisuuni al-islamiyah. 2005).

many wrote this without any critical analysis. They mentioned it as if it is true and do not need any criticism.²⁹

For the deeper explanations, in this sub-chapter, we would explore *isra'iliyyat* in early exegetical works:

Isra'iliyyat in Jami' al-Bayan 'an Ta'wili Ayi al-Qur'an

Jami' al-Bayan 'an Ta'wili Ayi al-Qur'an written by Ibn Jarir al-Thabari is the prominent tradition-based exegesis.³⁰ This book is full of praises for the contribution it has.³¹ Thabari wrote numerous of traditions related to Prophet Mohammed, companions, and successors to interpret Qur'an, the main source of Islamic law, knowledge, and religiosity. In many places, he explained the meaning of each tradition. As his responsibility in writing traditions in exegesis, he also wrote the chains in most of traditions. However, he rarely criticized them. He just directed the critique toward linguistic side, nor internal critiques (*naqd al-isnad*).³²

In case of *isra'iliyyat*, Zahabi judges it as a book which contains *isra'iliyyat* at once with the chains of transmitters, nonetheless, these *riwayah* are less-criticized.³³ In many places, this less-criticized-*riwayah* contains deviations on some basic concept in Islamic belief and discourse as well, like the prophetic concept. Let see his commentary QS. Maryam [19]: 8:

قال رب أنى يكون لي غلام وكانت امرأتي عاقرا وقد بلغت من الكبر عتيا

He wrote an *isra'iliyyat* information:

وقال السدي في ذلك: ما حدثني موسى بن هارون، قال: ثنا عمرو، قال: ثنا أسباط، عن السدي، قال: نادى جبرائيل زكريا (إنا نبشرك بغلام اسمه يحيى لم نجعل له من قبل سميا

²⁹ Husain al-Zahabi, *al-Isra'iliyyat fi al-Tafsir* ..., p. 95.

³⁰ Husain al-Zahabi, *al-Tafsir wa al-Mufasssinun*, p. 149.

³¹ Some praises even come from orientalist, Ignas Goldziher, *Mazahib al-Tafsir al-Islami* terj. M. Alaika Salamullah dkk (Yogyakarta: eLSAQ, 2006), p. 112.

³² Abdullah al-Tarki, "Muqaddimah al-Tahqiq" in Ibn Jarir al-Thabari, *Jami' al-Bayan 'an Ta'wili Ayi al-Qur'an* (Kairo: Hijr, 2001), chapter 1, p. 50

³³ Husain al-Zahabi, *al-Isra'iliyyat fi al-Tafsir* ..., hlm. 97.

(فلما سمع النداء، جاءه الشيطان فقال: يا زكريا إن الصوت الذي سمعت ليس من الله، إنما هو من الشيطان يسخر بك، ولو كان من الله أوحاه إليك كما يوحي إليك غيره من الأمر³⁴

Surely he told about the doubt of Prophet Zachariah to distinct the revelation from God and the false information from devil. Definitely, it was in contradiction with the concept of prophetic; it was impossible for the Prophet to doubt in distinction between these two things.³⁵

However, in some place, he kept criticizing *isrā'iliyyât* traditions such in QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 259:

أو كالذي مر على قرية وهي خاوية على عروشها قال أنى يحيي هذه الله بعد موتها فأماته الله مئة عام ثم بعثه قال كم لبثت قال لبثت يوما أو بعض يوم قال بل لبثت مئة عام فانظر إلى طعامك وشرابك لم يتسنه وانظر إلى حمارك ولنجعلك آية للناس وانظر إلى العظام كيف ننشزها ثم نكسوها لحما فلما تبين له قال أعلم أن الله على كل شيء قدير

He wrote many traditions of *isrā'iliyyât* in relation to the detail name of the person who passed the village. Among many traditions, there were two names appeared, Uzair and Irmia. Nevertheless, after writing it all, He said that this verse talks about one person who questioned the truth of the ability of the God to re-give a dead person a life, even he knew that God created something from non-material things. However, there was no clear explanation about the person; he could be Uzair or Irmia. Nevertheless, who he was is not necessary, because the orientation of verses is not that, but rather to answer and argue with the person who refuses the power of Almighty God.³⁶

The other interesting *isrā'iliyyat* in his book is about Yusuf in QS. Yusuf [12]: 24:

³⁴ Ibn Jarir al-Thabari, *Jami' al-Bayan 'an Ta'wili Ayi al-Qur'an Tabqiq: al-Tariki* (Kairo: Dar Hijr, 2001), Juz 15, p. 464.

³⁵ Husain al-Zahabi, *al-Isrā'iliyyat fī al-Tafsīr ...*, hlm. 102.

³⁶ Ibn Jarir al-Thabari, *Jami' al-Bayan 'an Ta'wili Ayi ...*, juz 4, p. 581.

ولقد همت به وهم بها لولا أن رأى برهان ربه كذلك لنصرف عنه السوء والفحشاء
إنه من عبادنا المخلصين

Thabari endeavored to explain this verse in a very long space; 20 pages in *tabqiq: al-Tarki* edition with more than 70's *riwayahs*.³⁷ All of traditions tell about the immoral act which is improper—and impossible, according to the belief of Islam for the Prophet. The first *traditions* he wrote:

ذكر أنّ امرأة العزيز لما هَمَّت بيوسف وأرادت مُراودته ، جعلت تذكر له محاسن
نفسه ، وتشوّقه إلى نفسها، كما: حدثنا ابن وكيع ، قال: حدثنا عمرو بن محمد ، قال: حدثنا
أسباط ، عن السدي: (ولقد همت به وهم بها) قال: قالت له: يا يوسف، ما أحسن شعرك قال:
هو أوّل ما ينتثر من جسدي . قالت: يا يوسف، ما أحسن وجهك ! قال: هو للتراب يأكله .
فلم تزل حتى أطمعته ، فهَمَّت به وهم بها، فدخل البيت ، وغلّقت الأبواب ، وذهب ليحلّ
سراويله ، فإذا هو بصورة يعقوب قائماً في البيت، قد عضَّ على إصبعه، يقول: "يا يوسف
لا توقعها

This tradition shows the way of King Aziz's wife to flatter Yusuf by saying how beautiful your hair is, and your face is. The action continued and Zulaikha, the wife of King Aziz, was successful and they gathered then in a part of her house. The *riwayah* even tells that they both were in the great temptation of libido and attempted to do sex intercourse. While the action was yet to happen, there was a shadow of his father, Jacob—according to the other *riwayahs* it is the Angels, or the shadow of verses forbidding adultery—hit him and made him realize on what would happen.

Ironically, Thabari also wrote the *isra'iliyyat* about what is the meaning of *hamma* referred to Yusuf. Previously, *hamma* in general means announcing or telling the desire to have a sex. Then, is this also the meaning Qur'an intends with the word, or what does *hamma* mean in relation to Yusuf? "In this case," Thabari said, "I will explore much information from many scholars." What is the information then? No wonder, they all nearly humiliate Yusuf as a prophet and Muslims as the believers in prophet as well. They said Yusuf and Zulaikha prepared to take the position; they

³⁷ Ibn Jarir al-Thabari, *Jami' al-Bayan 'an Ta'wili Ayyi ...*, juz 13, p. 80-101.

were facing each other, and Yusuf begun to put his trousers off. What a dishonor story of Prophet!³⁸

Besides the *isra'iliyyat*, Thabari also explained the debate among scholars opinion on this case. He started the debate by the question: “how could Yusuf have such act?” He explains many opinions then. Some said that it was on purpose to show the forgiveness of God and to increase the devotion of Prophet when they remind their falsehood. Some said it was to show the grace of God by revoking punishment on him. Thabari do not give any commentary on both, unlike the opinion which he claimed as the reason-based-opinion³⁹; *hamma biha yusufu* means Yusuf had the intention to hit Zulaikha for what she did. Others says the phrase of *law la an yara* has *jawab al-syart* at the fore, then the verse tells that Yusuf would have had the intention to Zulaikha if he had not obtained the guidance of his Lord; then in fact he had not. Thabari challenges this argument of which is unacceptable structurally in language aspect, that Arabians never put *jawab al-syart* for *law la* at the fore.⁴⁰

So, what does Thabari think of these *riwayahs*? The researcher found a little confusion of Thabari in noting this case. Previously, he challenged the argumentation of which actually Yusuf did not feel compulsion to do sex with Zulaikha due to the guidance of his Lord based on structurally signals of language aspect; *jawab al-syart* of *law la* is at the fore, however then he also in agreement with this. In his conclusion, he says that God tells us that Yusuf and the wife of King Aziz would have had the intention to do sex each other if Yusuf had not obtained the guidance of God. This argumentation seems similar with the argument he challenged before.

The confusion of Thabari is excusable on some reasons of which his exegesis took pattern. The pattern of *ma'sur* which he used made him concentrate in *riwayah*; he wrote any of them he had found, no matter how the quality is. This shows that, he did not do some internal critique (*naqd al-isnadi*) which is familiarly known in *ushul al-*

³⁸ The humiliation phrase used by these riwayat such: *yajlisu majlisa al-khatin, yajlisu baina rijlaiba, balla syabahu, balla sarawila, etc.*

³⁹ Thabari has the view that interpreting Qur'an by reason is improper while he emphasizes his traditions-based-exegesis method. Abdullah al-Tarki, “Muqaddimah al-Tahqiq...”, p. 50

⁴⁰ Ibn Jarir al-Thabari, *Jami' al-Bayan 'an Ta'wili Ayi ...*, juz 13, p. 80-101.

hadis discourse. As he was an expert linguist, he directed the critique in language aspect beside the others.⁴¹

As explained before, *isra'iliyyat* emerged in exegesis through chains-ignored process. However, the chains-ignorance of Thabari was different. In spite of not writing them, he kept attaching them with the traditions of *isra'iliyyat*; however he did not do any criticism toward the transmitters except in little number. Based on the opinion of al-Zahabi, Thabari ignores examining the narrator (*riwayat*) because he believe that he will have no responsible for it if he get some information from any one with its chains of which the one he took information examined it before.⁴²

Isrâ'iliyyât in The Exegesis of Maqatil Ibn Sulaiman.

Based on the research done by Husain al-Zahabi, this exegesis book wrote down exegetical traditions (*riwayat al-tafsir*) without any examinations, without showing the chains of transmitters. No wonder then if his exegesis contains numbers of *isra'iliyyat* on such way, except in small numbers. Ironically, the chains of narrator he wrote is precisely the chain which is claimed badly by many scholars of hadeeths, such *al-Kalbi 'an Ibn Shalih 'an Ibn Abbas*. Ibn Hajar claimed this as the lie chains (*silsilat al-kizb*).

Not surprisingly then if there are many *isrâ'iliyyât* which contain deviant-irrational information, like his commentary on QS. Qaf [50]: 1. He wrote that *Qaf* is a rope made of yellow jewel. It fenced the universe. The green sight of sky comes from it. There is no other creature above it in beauty. The mountains grew from it. In its side, the mountain is situated behind. The base of mountains comes from “*qaf*”. When Allah wants to make some earthquake, He revealed to the Angel which guard it to actuate one base of the mountains. Earthquake comes from it. And under the “*qaf*”, once a year, become a place for the sun to set....

⁴¹ Thabari's Methode on interpreting basically is traditions-based-exegesis (*tafsir bi al-ma'sur*). In additions to that, he also applies the language analyses, attaching some *syawhid al-sya'riy, anjab al-qira'ah, etc*. See Abdullah al-Tarki, “Muqaddimah al-Tahqiq...”, p. 50

⁴² Husain al-Zahabi, *Tafsir wa al-Mufassirun*, hlm. 152.

See also his commentary on QS. Al-Muthaffifin [83]: 1, specifically on the term of *wayl*, he said that *wayl* is a valley in the Hell. This length is as the 70-years-long-journey. There are 90.000 hills inside. Every hill has 70.000 sides. Every side has 70.000 caves. Every cave has 70.000 castles. Every castle has 70.000 iron *tabut*. Every *tabut* has 70.000 trees. Every tree has 70.000 branches made of fire. Every branch has 70.000 fruits. Every fruit is lighted upon a caterpillar 70 cubic length. There were 70.000 centipedes and 70.000 scorpions downside of tree. Its tusk is the date tree. Its bite is like *bigat al-dahm*, each of it has 360 toxics...⁴³

Surely you agree that this is irrational information. In perspective of shape, what the valley took the shape?, how is the gradients one hill has?, and many other questions are needed.

Conclusion

In this point, we can say that many *isra'iliyyat* emerged in exegesis far from the period of companions, but it come into exegesis codifications through the chains-ignored process which then allow many non-referential traditions come into exegesis. Many of these *riwayah* basically challenges some basic concept in Islamic discourse, such as prophetic concept, while the others, tells the irrational story. Based on *Isra'iliyyat*, Ibn Jarir al-Thabari seems distorts the holiness of Prophet Zachariah and Yusuf as well, intentionally or not, while Maqatil tell the irrational one. Those are definitely improper to explain Qur'an.

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⁴³ Husain al-Zahabi, *al-Isra'iliyyat fi al-Tafsir ...*, hlm. 116.

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