Article Reviews

Scientific Truth in The Stories of The Qur'an:
A Philosophical Approach to Prove The Truth of Stories

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Abstract

As we know, some people say that most of the story (*Qasas*) in the Qur'an was a legend or heroic story, while others say it was just religious. This study aims to describe, analyze and reveal the contributions of philosophy, especially various theories of truth that can prove that the stories in the Qur'an are true. It can prove that the story in the Qur'an is not just a literary or religious story. This research also wanted to prove that several stories in the Qur'an can be verified scientifically. So this study would add confidence to Muslims and strengthen the miracles of the Qur'an from a scientific perspective. This research was useful for uncovering a theory in the study of philosophy to prove the truth of the Qur'anic verses scientifically. This approach needs to be developed because it can analyze and interpret stories in the Qur'an based on philosophical thought. Also, this research was expected to provide a methodological framework for studying and interpreting the stories in the Qur'an as true stories. This research was descriptive-qualitative with an approach using a philosophical methodology (theory of truth) and conducting studies on proving the truth of existing stories.

Keywords *Scientific Truth, Story (Qasas), Philosophical Approach, Atomic Theory, Al-Baqillani*

INTRODUCTION

Some people said that most of the story (*Qasas*) in the Qur'an was legend or heroic stories and were familiar to the minds of the Arabs. These stories were passed down from generation to generation and were told repeatedly in their night talks (*asmār*) (Khalafullah, 2002). Al-Qur'an retold these stories to refresh the memory of Arabs, gave new meanings, and made them a medium to convey certain concepts or teachings. Through stories in the Qur'an, we got abundant learning material about ritual worship, morals, techniques, how to repair the heart, and so on (Khalid, 2007).

Afif Abdul Fatah Thabarah stated that the story in the Qur'an was a religious story with the main goal to be achieved and made the reader or listener influenced, moved to accept and obey God's will. The Qur'an used these stories to explain a principle, invite an idea, call for goodness and truth and forbid evil (Thabarah, 1999).

Meanwhile, Amin al-Khulli believed that the main priority of the interpretation of the Qur'an was the purpose of the Qur'an itself, namely preaching to humankind and guiding them to achieve happiness in the world and the hereafter. Also, Muhammad Ahmad Khalafullah –al-Khulli's students – believed that the stories in the Qur'an were 'literary stories' and that there was no need for proof that these things happened. He issued a statement that revoked the truth of historical facts from all the stories contained in the Qur'an. Khalafullah stated that the story in the Qur'an was even touted as a mythological story, a parable, or a mere imaginative story (Khalafullah, 2002).

This is what attracts the author's attention. It is true that the stories in the Qur'an are only mythological, imaginative stories, as Khalafullah believed, or just religious stories, as Thabarah believed, all of which do not need to be verified. Muslims just need to believe and have faith in these stories.

The authors were challenged to find the truth about the stories in the Qur'an. As we know, the terminology of truth is often found in philosophical studies. Therefore, this paper used a philosophical approach to understanding the meaning of stories in the Qur'an. Furthermore, this philosophy was used in understanding and studying the Islamic religion. Its religious symbols and the values contained in its teachings are not limited by anything. In addition, this philosophical approach was very important to use in Islamic studies because it can help in understanding the Qur'an and Hadith texts.

From the description above, several questions were found and needed to be followed up with research and study work. These questions are related to the following: What does the story (*Qasas*) mean in the Qur'an? What is the meaning of scientific truth? Is it true that the stories in the Qur'an are just myths, imaginative, or religious stories without needing to prove their truth? Can these stories be proven true? Then, what theory can prove the truth of the story?

From the problems that have been identified above, this research was only limited to problems related to proving that the stories in the Qur'an have a theoretical basis that can be accepted by people.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There have been several studies on stories in the Qur'an carried out by the UIN academic community; at least the authors found four theses and one dissertation at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah. All these studies used language perspective in understanding the stories in the Qur'an. Muhammad Ahmad Khalafullah, in his book entitled *al-Fann al-Qasasi fī Al-Qur'ān,* told that the stories in the Qur'an were legend or heroic stories. The authors examined Khalafullah's perspective on the stories of the Qur'an. In his research, he concluded that the stories in the Qur'an have no need to prove whether it is real or not.

Afif Abdul Fatah Thabarah wrote in his book Rūh al-Dīn al-Islāmy that the Qur'an story was just religious. As a religious story, he did not mention that this story was real.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was descriptive-qualitative by applying a philosophical methodology approach (theory of truth) and conducting studies on the scientific of existing stories.

The authors researched the verses of the Qur'an that contain elements of stories, then searched for the theory of scientific truth and examined them with a philosophical approach, and then explained the similarity or coherence between the Qur'anic statement and the evidence.

The primary data used in this research was obtained from the Qur'an, while the secondary data was obtained from the research data and information needed in this study. Some theoretical material was taken from written sources related to the discussion theme, both from primary and secondary literature and partly obtained through books, magazines, research, journals, articles, newspapers, and others.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
A Brief of Story (*Qasas*) in the Al-Qur'an

The word story came from the word Qassa which means *khabar* (news), *amr* (case or affair), *hadith* (talk). Al-Qur'an used past verbs (*fi'il madhi*), namely *qassa* and *qasasna*, in 4 verses, in the present verb form (*fi'il mudhari*) with various cases found in 13 verses, command words (*fi'il amr*) are in 2 verses, and *masdar qasas* as many as six verses (Manzur, n.d.).

In the *Ulumul Qur'an*, *qasas* al-Qur'an was the preaching of the Qur'an about the previous people, previous prophecies (prophecy) and events that have occurred. Al-Qur'an contained a lot of information about past events, the history of nations, the condition of countries and the legacies

or traces of every people (al-Qattan, 2013).

Al-Qattan divided the stories in the Qur'an from the actor's side; he divided them into three parts, namely (al-Qattan, 2013):

1. Stories of the prophets. In this section, it was told how the invitations of the prophets to their people (preaching/da'wah), the miracles that strengthened their preaching, how the attitude of those who were hostile to them, the stages of preaching and its development and the consequences received by those who believed and those who denied.

2. Stories related to events that happened in the past and people whose prophethood is uncertain. For example, the story of a person who left his hometown for fear of death, the story of Thalut and Jalut, the story of the two sons of Adam, the story of the inhabitants of the cave (ashabul kahfi), Zulkarnain, Qarun, people who catch fish on Saturday (ashabul Sabt), Maryam, Ashabul Ukhdud, Ashabul Fiil (elephant troops) and so on.

3. Stories related to events that occurred during the time of the Prophet, such as the Battle of Badr and the Battle of Uhud in QS. Ali 'Imran, Hunain War and Tabuk War in QS.at-Taubah, Ahzab War in QS. al-Ahzab, Hijrah Events, Isra Events and others.

Philosophical Approach in Religious Studies

Rob Fisher stated that a philosophical approach in religious studies could be done by assessing evidence or evaluating the truth of what was claimed by religion (Connoly, 2012). Dalferd (1988) stated that when someone studies religion, it is impossible to avoid using philosophy. A philosophical approach to religion reflects questions in pre-theological religious experience and faith discourse. The link between religion and philosophy focused on rationality. According to him, a philosophical approach to religion was a rational process (Dalfert, 1988).

This was reinforced by Maurice Wiles, by stating that the rational process referred to two respects. First, showing the fact that reason plays a fundamental role in reflecting on religious experiences and beliefs in a religious tradition. Part of the reflection process involved openly examining the language, doctrines, symbols, models, and myths that exist and are used in the tradition. Second, pointing to the fact that in expounding their faith, religious traditions must be able to use reason in producing logical arguments and in making justifiable claims (Connoly, 2012).

In testing the truth of the Qur'an stories, we first put these stories as information that needs to test the truth. In testing a truth, a theory or method was needed as guidance.

In the history of philosophy, there have been four theories about truth. The four theories were a) the correspondence theory of truth, b) the coherence theory of truth, c) the pragmatic theory of truth, and d) the performative theory of truth (Dua, 2001). Besides, there were several other theories, such as the theory of truth based on meaning (semantic theory of truth), the theory of syntactic truth, the non-descriptive theory of truth, and the logical superfluity of truth (Surajiyo, 2009).

The theory of truth as correspondence was developed by Aristoteles. According to this theory, a statement is considered true if what is stated in it relates or has a relationship (correspondence) with reality (Latif, 2014). In studying the theory of truth about stories, first, we must look for a proposition from the information we got from the Qur'an. Suppose we wanted to prove the truth of the story of 'Ad and Thamud and how the city of Iram was destroyed. The information we got in QS. Al-Fajr [89]: 6-9, that the people of 'Ad and Thamud already have the technology to build tall buildings. The archaeological theory that tries to unravel the mysteries of old buildings could be applied to uncover this truth.

The coherence theory of truth was often called the theory of consistency of truth. This theory was an attempt to test the meaning of truth. A decision is correct if the decision is consistent with

the previous decision we received and we know the truth. The correct decision is a decision that is logically related to other relevant decisions (Titus, 1984).

This theory was widely adopted by rationalists such as Leibniz, Spinoza, Descartes, Hegel, and Bradley. Proof of the coherence theory of truth can be through historical facts if it is a historical proposition or using logic if it is a logical statement.

In studying the stories of the Qur'an, we can prove their truth with this theory. First, we have paired the story in the Qur'an with the stories in the Bible, as we all know that the Qur'an did not tell stories in detail about an event (Saeed, 2006). The Qur'an did not say where it happened, what the perpetrators were, how many, or when it happened (Saeed, 2008). Furthermore, we knew this lack of information because the story's purpose in the Qur'an was a religious story with a moral message. This relationship between stories was what we could call the truth of the coherence of the stories of the Qur'an.

The pragmatic theory of truth was developed and espoused by pragmatic philosophers from America, such as Charles S. Pierce and William James. For them, truth was synonymous with usefulness. Therefore, a true idea, concept, statement or hypothesis is useful. This theory was also known as the theory of inherent truth.

The verses about the story that could include in the framework of this theory were the verses about the story of the afterlife or hereafter, which of course, has an impact on people becoming obedient because of the threat of hell. However, we have to be careful because the truth framed by this theory is relative. It has an impact on one person but may not necessarily have an impact on others. If forced finally, the truth in the story will be deemed not to exist.

Philosophers Frank Ramsey, John Austin, and Peter Strawson espoused the performative theory of truth. According to this theory, a statement is considered true if it creates reality (Dua, 2001).

Exaggerated logic theory of truth, this theory was developed by positivists. According to them, the truth is only a confusion of language, resulting in a waste, because basically, what is to be verified has the same logical degree (Surajiyo, 2009).

Scientific Truth Claim on Story in the Qur'an

In this chapter, the authors tried to describe how scientific truth runs in the story of al-Qur'an. The authors examined the story of Prophet Musa with his stick, which could turn into a snake or be splitting the ocean. Among the verses that raise the story of the stick of the Prophet Musa can be referred to from QS. Taha [20]: 17-21, which told about the stick of the Prophet Musa could turn into a snake when thrown. Next, refer to QS. al-Naml [27]: 9-10 told us how scared the Prophet Musa was when his stick turned into a nimble snake. With a different editorial QS. al-Qasas [28]: 31 and QS. al-Syu'ara [26]: 32 also told us how the stick of Prophet Musa could turn into a snake. Then the authors tried to examine QS. as-Syuara' [26]: verses 63-66 to describe how the stick of Prophet Musa could be splitting the ocean. Most Muslims stated that the miracle happened to the stick when it turned into a snake or split the ocean. The authors tried to make this in a different view; it could be explained with scientific truth.

In understanding how the stick of Prophet Musa could turn into a snake, the authors referred to al-Baqillani's thoughts about the Atom. Atom, as the smallest particle of an object, was the smallest particle in the universe. It was Abu Bakr al-Baqillani who developed thoughts about atoms, then continued with Sheikh Bahauddin al-Amiliy (1537-1622), who wrote a book about atoms entitled *al-Jawhar al-Fard* (Thayyarah, 2014).

Abu Bakr al-Baqillani has the full name Abu Bakar Muhammad ibn al-Tayyib ibn Muhammad ibn Ja'far ibn al-Qasim Abu Bakar al-Baqillani al-Basri and better known as Qadhi Abu Bakr al-Baqillani. He was born in Basrah (al-Badawi, 1983) in 950M (338H) (Al-Baqillani, 1974) and died

in 1013M (403H) (Friedman, n.d.).

In al-Baqillani's view, this world consisted of al-jauhar and al-'ard, both of which were something new. Allah is something that is qadim while nature is something new; something new must have been made by someone who made it impossible from something new either, but it must be something that is qadim, namely Allah SWT (Al-Baqillani, 1986). Furthermore, according to al-Baqillani, this world consisted of atoms, a collection of faraway (single objects) that cannot be divided again (*al-juz' allazi la yatajazza*), but objects the singular did not exist in the form if it was added with an accident (*'arad*). The combination of these single objects became a body, atoms and accidents were created, and this creation continued to exist. If God stopped creating, then everything that exists will become extinct. The merging of atoms or this accidental change did not happen by itself but by the will of Allah SWT (Nasution, 1992).

Atoms were created, destroyed, created again, destroyed again, and so on. Its momentary existence was made possible by God's continuous involvement, creating, destroying, creating, and annihilating until God wanted to stop (Purwanto, 2011). According to al-Baqillani, Allah's power allows changes in laws that control the course of nature; this can happen easily for Allah. It just needs to replace what is normally there and put the new 'ard in place of the existing 'ard. Nature is composed of atoms and accidents and experiences continuous creation, destruction, and annihilation. When Allah created the atom of an object, He also created the accidents that made the atom exist. When the atoms disappear, Allah replaces them with atoms and accidents of the same kind, as long as Allah wills (al-Baqillani, 1369 H).

Based on the atomic theory developed by al-Baqillani, al-Ghazali explained that the incident of the Prophet Musa's stick turning into a snake was not impossible. The atoms in the stick only last a moment or two; what happens next is up to God. In general, the atoms that Allah creates are of the same type. In this case, the stick of Prophet Musa will remain a stick until Allah wills otherwise. When God wants to change the stick into a big snake, he simply replaces the atoms with snake atoms. Instead, He simply changed the atoms of the snake into atoms of the stick to replace the atoms of the snake, which one or two would perish. Then change the snake into a stick again (Kartanegara, n.d.).

As described in the explanation about philosophical truth, in 1834, a manuscript written in old Arabic script (hymarite), which mentions the name of the Prophet Hud, was discovered at Hisn al-Ghurab near the city of Aden in Yemen. The text says, "We rule by using Hud law". Then in 1964-1969, archaeological excavations were carried out, and from the analysis in 1980, information was found from one of the plates about the existence of a city called "Shamutu, 'Ad, and Iram. This proved that the information contained in QS. Al-Fajr is proven by the existence of the plates found. Another archaeological evidence is the result of Nicholas Clapp's expedition in the desert of South Arabia in 1992. According to the chronicles, the city of Iram was built by Shaddad bin Ud, a city that is said to be very beautiful named Ubhur. Nevertheless, God buried the city with an avalanche of the desert so that the whole city was buried.

Nicholas found evidence of an ancient road to Iram (Ubhur). He begins an adventure to find the lost city, assisted by two colleagues, Juris Zarin from Southwest Missouri State University, and British explorer Sir Ranulph Fiennes, assisted by legal expert George Hedges.

They used the space shuttle Challenger with the Satellite Imaging Radar (SIR) system, assisted by French satellites, to obtain digital imaging of the location of what is believed to be the city of Iram. What to get? Nicholas and his team found hundreds of kilometers of caravan tracks that lay beneath a 183-meter-deep pile of sand.

After searching and digging, finally, in 1992, they found an octagonal building wall with walls and towers that reached 9 meters high. Presumably, this was what we said that "The inhabitants of Iram have tall buildings" QS. Al-Fajr [89]: 7.

From the verses and facts found, we concluded that the city of Iram existed. This is in accordance with what is mentioned in QS. Fussilat [41]:53 and QS. Al-Fajr [89]: 6-9 (Shihab, 1997).

CONCLUSIONS

The Story in the Qur'an, as we know, contains a story about the Prophet, prophecy, the event that happened in the past, fable, and other kinds of stories. Some stories could be proven the truth by using a philosophical approach. In this paper, the authors examined two stories; first, the story about Prophet Musa with his stick that could turn into a snake or could split the water. The authors used al-Baqillani's theory about Atom to explain how the stick could turn into a snake. Second, the authors explained the Lost City of Iram from the story of 'Ad and Thamud. The authors used research from Nicholas Clapp to explain the archaeological finding that the city of Iram was founded in the desert of South Arabia. This research explained QS. Fussilat [41]: 53 and QS. al-Fajr [89]: 6-9. For further research, many stories in the Qur'an can be proven true with this approach. How are the stories divided? Which ones are really just parables? Which ones can be proven true? How can scientific truth combined with several approaches (archaeological, scientific, and others) reveal the story's truth in the Qur'an?

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