

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAME

A. Wisdom (Hikmah)

1. Definition of Wisdom

Etymologically, “hikmah” (wisdom) comes from the Arabic word “al-hikmah,” derived from *hakama-yahkumu*, meaning wisdom, prudence, or deep and beneficial knowledge. The word hikmah, in both singular and plural forms, appears 20 times in the Qur'an, indicating the importance of this concept in Islamic teachings.²³ Etymologically, hikmah can also mean *al-'adl* (justice), *al-'ilm* (knowledge), *al-hilm* (gentleness), *al-nubuwwah* (prophethood), and al-Qur'an.²⁴

Terminologically, Islamic scholars provide various definitions of hikmah. Al-Raghib al-Ashfahani in his book “Mufradat Alfazh al-Qur'an” defines hikmah as achieving truth through knowledge and intellect, or knowledge accompanied by implementation, or precise words and right actions.²⁵ Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyyah defines hikmah as putting things in their proper place, whether in words or deeds. In other words, a person with hikmah is someone who can place everything according to its proportion neither excessive nor deficient.²⁶

²³ Muhammad Fu'ad 'Abdul Baqi, *Al-Mu'jam Al-Mufahras Li Alfazh Al-Qur'an Al-Karim* (Cairo: Dar al-Hadits, 2007), 206.

²⁴ Ahmad Warson Munawwir, *Kamus Al-Munawwir, Arab-Indonesia*, 14th ed. (Surabaya: Pustaka Progressif, 1997), 286.

²⁵ Al-Raghib Al-Ashfahani, *Mufradat Alfazh Al-Qur'an* (Damascus: Dar Al-Qalam, 2009), 249.

²⁶ Ibn Qayyim Al-Jauziyyah, *Madarij Al-Salikin*, 2nd ed. (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub Ilmiyah, 1996), 449.

M. Quraish Shihab in the Encyclopedia of the Qur'an explains that hikmah in the Qur'anic context has several meanings: first, as deep and true knowledge about something; second, as the ability to understand the purpose and wisdom behind Allah's commands and prohibitions; third, as appropriate words and actions; fourth, as prophethood and the Qur'an itself.²⁷ In the context of Qur'anic stories, hikmah refers to lessons, moral values, and wisdom that can be drawn from the narrative and applied in real life.

2. Wisdom in the Qur'anic Perspective

The Qur'an uses the word hikmah in various contexts with diverse meanings. In Surah al-Baqarah verse 269, Allah says: "Allah grants wisdom to whom He wills. And whoever is granted wisdom has certainly been given much good." This verse shows that wisdom is a very precious and highly valuable gift from Allah.²⁸

In several verses, hikmah is mentioned together with al-Kitab (the scripture), such as in Surah al-Baqarah verses 129 and 151, indicating that wisdom is closely related to understanding Allah's revelation. Qur'anic commentators differ in their opinions about the meaning of hikmah in these verses. Some scholars argue that hikmah in this context refers to as-Sunnah

²⁷ M. Quraish Shihab, *Ensiklopedia Al-Qur'an: Kajian Kosakata* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2007), 381.

²⁸ M. Quraish Shihab, 382.

(the Prophet's traditions), while others believe that hikmah is a deep understanding of the Qur'an and the ability to practice it correctly.²⁹

Wisdom is also mentioned as something given to prophets and Allah's chosen people. In Surah Luqman, it is stated that Luqman was given hikmah by Allah, and he used that wisdom to give wise advice to his son.³⁰ Similarly, Prophets Dawud and Sulaiman were given hikmah in deciding cases and leading their people.³¹

3. Types of Wisdom

Scholars classify hikmah into several types based on aspects and scope. First, theoretical wisdom (al-hikmah al-nazhariyyah), which is knowledge about the reality of all things, including knowledge about Allah, the universe, and humanity. Second, practical wisdom (al-hikmah al-'amaliyyah), which is the ability to act and behave appropriately in various life situations.³²

Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyyah divides hikmah into two major categories: wisdom related to knowledge and understanding, and wisdom related to actions and behavior. Scientific wisdom includes correct understanding of

²⁹ Ibn Katsir, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-'Azhim*, Vol. I (Riyadh: Dar Thayyibah, 1999), 348.

³⁰ Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, *Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahannya*, 412.

³¹ Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 454

³² Fakhr al-Din Al-Razi, *Mafatih Al-Ghaib*, Vol. VII (Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Turats al-'Arabi, 2019), 121.

reality, while practical wisdom includes the ability to apply that knowledge in daily life.³³

B. Stories in the Qur'an

1. Definition of Story

According to the Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), “kisah” (story) refers to a narrative or account that describes events or the life journey of someone, whether in the form of real or imaginative experiences.³⁴ In Arabic, this term is expressed with the word قصة (*qishshah*), which is derived from the verb يقص - قص (*qashsha-yaqushshu*), which originally means to follow traces or track something. Over time, its meaning has expanded to include the sense of “conveying” or “narrating.”³⁵

Khalfallah defines “story” as a literary work that is the result of the author's imagination regarding events related to a particular character. This character may be fictitious or not actually exist, or a real character but the events experienced in the story did not actually occur. In addition, a story can also be a depiction of real events experienced by the character, but arranged artistically with certain narrative techniques, such as advancing or

³³ Al-Jauziyyah, *Madarij Al-Salikin*, 450.

³⁴ Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*, 2nd ed. (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1998), 443.

³⁵ M. Quraish Shihab, *Kisah-Kisah Dalam Al-Qur'an: Makna Dan Hikmah* (Tangerang Selatan: Lentera Hati, 2024), 1.

delaying the sequence of events, selecting some events to be narrated, and omitting others.³⁶

The Qur'an uses the term qashash to refer to the conveyance of information regarding the conditions of previous peoples, which can be interpreted as narratives or stories. This term qasas does not only mean stories alone, but also contains elements of news or reports that have educational value. The stories presented in the Qur'an have value as highly important and authentic historical documents. There is no doubt whatsoever regarding the truth of the information contained therein, as well as its accordance with historical facts that actually occurred.³⁷

In the study of ulum al-Qur'an (Qur'anic sciences), the term qashash linguistically has a similar meaning to "story." However, terminologically, qashash refers to a form of literary narrative resembling short stories or novels, which functions as a medium of expression to depict aspects of life. Meanwhile, the term story in the Qur'anic context refers to the conveyance of information or news related to the conditions of previous peoples, prophets, and various historical events that have occurred.³⁸

Based on this explanation, story has a historical and documentary dimension that prioritizes the conveyance of historical facts and real events

³⁶ Muhammad Ahmad Khalfallah, *Al-Fann al-Qashaṣī Fī al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* (Beirut: Shina'i li al-Nasyr, 1999), 74-75.

³⁷ Rasyid, "Dimensi Intuitif Logis Dalam Kisah Al-Quran (Studi Analisis Tafsir Fi Zhilal Al-Qur'an Karya Sayyid Quthb)."

³⁸ Didin Saefuddin Buchori, *Pedoman Memahami Kandungan Al-Qur'an* (Bogor: Granada Sarana Pustaka, 2005), 146.

as records of the past, focusing on the accuracy of information that can be used for learning. Meanwhile, qashash emphasizes the narrative and artistic aspects through the use of storytelling techniques, language style, and interesting plot arrangement to convey messages and wisdom. In qasas, the method of delivery and narrative appeal are important for influencing the audience emotionally and spiritually, while still being based on the truth of events.

2. Types of Stories in the Qur'an

Stories in the Qur'an are classified by scholars into several main categories based on their form and content. Broadly speaking, these stories consist of stories that actually occurred historically, stories from the past that function as moral illustrations, and parable or allegory stories laden with meaning. Furthermore, the content of stories in the Qur'an is divided into three types: stories of prophets, stories of figures or communities from the past other than prophets, and stories of events during the time of Prophet Muhammad SAW.³⁹

According to Didin Saefuddin, stories found in the Qur'an, when analyzed based on the subjects of historical actors presented, can essentially be grouped into three main categories.⁴⁰ This classification includes:

a. Stories of the Prophets

³⁹ A. Hanafi, *Segi-Segi Kesusastaan Pada Kisah-Kisah al-Qur'an* (Jakarta: Pustaka Alhusna, 1984), 53.

⁴⁰ Buchori, *Pedoman Memahami Kandungan Al-Qur'an*, 147.

This category includes narratives about the da'wah (preaching) activities of the prophets, the miracles and privileges they received, the struggles and suffering experienced by the prophets and their followers, as well as the punishment that befell those who denied these prophets. Examples include the story of Prophet Yunus, Prophet Musa, and so forth.

b. Stories of Non-Prophet Figures

The Qur'an also contains stories related to figures who were not prophets or whose prophethood status is unclear. These stories include events experienced by certain individuals such as Talut and Jalut, Qarun, Ashabul Kahfi (Companions of the Cave), Maryam (Mary), Ashab al-Sabt (Companions of the Sabbath), Ashab al-Ukhdud (Companions of the Trench), Zulqarnain (Dhul-Qarnayn), Ashab al-Fil (Companions of the Elephant), and others.

c. Stories of Prophet Muhammad SAW

The Qur'an also contains stories about Prophet Muhammad SAW and the events that occurred during his lifetime. These narratives include various important events such as the Battle of Badr, migration to Medina, Isra' and Mi'raj, as well as aspects of the Prophet's domestic life.

Manna' Khalil Al-Qattan classifies stories in the Qur'an based on time periodization into three main categories:

- a. Stories related to the past, namely the period before the birth of Prophet Muhammad SAW. These stories include previous prophets, their da'wah, the miracles given, the response of the people, and the consequences experienced by each group.
- b. Stories that occurred during the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad SAW. This period includes events directly experienced by the Prophet, such as battles (for example, the Battle of Badr, Hunain, and Tabuk), the migration event, as well as the Isra' and Mi'raj events of Prophet Muhammad SAW.
- c. Stories related to the period after Prophet Muhammad SAW. This period is eschatological in nature, depicting end-times or afterlife stories about heaven and hell, the Day of Judgment, resurrection, and the afterlife.⁴¹

Based on these classifications, it can be understood that stories in the Qur'an do not only function as mere historical documentation, but also as a means of learning and instilling faith values for Muslims throughout the ages. These stories contain wisdom and lessons that are relevant for application in life, so their function is not limited to conveying historical information, but also encompasses profound spiritual and moral dimensions.

3. Purpose of Stories in the Qur'an

⁴¹ Mudzakir AS Manna' Khalil Al-Qattan, "Mabahis Fi 'Ulumil Qur'Ān," in *Terjemahan Mabahis Fi 'Ulumil Qur'Ān*, 18th ed. (Bogor: Lentera AntarNusa, 2017), 438.

Allah SWT provides guidance to humanity so that they are always able to take lessons (ibrah) from various stories that occurred in the past, including stories written in the Qur'an, and implement these values in daily life. In the past, Allah not only required His people to be able to read the Qur'an textually, but also invited them to engage in deep reflection on the meanings contained within it, by paying attention to and contemplating the stories presented in the Qur'an when reading it.⁴²

Muhammad Ahmad Khalafallah, who is among the scholars who have conducted extensive studies on Qur'anic stories, divides the purposes of the Qur'an as follows:

1. To explain that all religions brought by the prophets are essentially the same, originating from Allah SWT.
2. Because the origin of religions is the same from Allah, their main purpose is also the same, namely to invite to Tawhid (monotheism) as a platform for believing in the Oneness of Allah.
3. To show evidence that ultimately truth will overcome falsehood, that the prophets were able to defeat the deniers of Allah's teachings.

⁴² Fatkhul Hadi, "Fatkhul Hadi, A Literature Approach of The Story in the Qur'an (Study About Muhammad Ahmad Khalafallah's Interpretation on the Story of Ashab Al-Kahf)," *Journal Intellectual Sufism Research (JISR)* 3, no. 2 (2021), <https://jurnal.jagadalimussirry.com/index.php/ojs/article/view/96/64>.

4. To warn humanity of the existence of an eternal enemy, namely Iblis (Satan), and that the enmity between humans and Iblis will continue until the end of life, so that people remain vigilant against his deceptions.
5. To explain that Allah is the true Ruler who can realize anything, even that which is beyond human reasoning.
6. To form a strong (qawiy) and resilient Islamic ummah personality and to ignite the spirit to fight against every falsehood that exists,
7. To lighten the burden of the prophets and their followers from the pressure and intimidation of groups that deny the message.

We can understand that stories in the Qur'an have important purposes for Prophet Muhammad SAW and humanity, namely as a source of comfort and spiritual strengthening in facing the trials of da'wah, reinforcing faith and conviction in creed, fostering self-confidence and peace of mind, and serving as authentic evidence of the Prophet's apostleship and the truth of revelation. Thus, these stories function not only as historical narratives, but also as sources of inspiration, spiritual strengthening, and legitimacy of prophethood.

C. The Story of Prophet Yunus

1. Biography of Prophet Yunus

Prophet Yunus bin Matta, known by the epithet *Dhu al-Nun* a title given to him because he was swallowed by the great fish (al-Nun)—is

one of the prophets mentioned in the Qur'an six times: four times by name (Yunus) and twice by his titles *Dhu al-Nun* and *Sahib al-Hut* (the one who was in the belly of the fish).⁴³ Although detailed accounts of his life are scarce, it is known that he was sent to the city of Nineveh in northern Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq) to call its inhabitants to repentance and to worship Allah alone. The story of Yunus being swallowed by the great fish stands as a symbol of trial, patience, and perseverance in his prophetic mission, affirming his status as one of Allah's chosen prophets. These titles reflect the profound spiritual and historical significance of this event within Islamic tradition.

Prophet Yunus lived around 820–750 BCE and was sent to Nineveh, a region in northern Iraq inhabited by the Assyrians. He was orphaned before birth, and in the Torah, he is referred to as Jonah son of Amittai. From a young age, he was known for his zeal and ascetic nature, although his patience was somewhat limited. After his uncle's death, he was taken to Bayt al-Maqdis (Jerusalem) and appointed as a prophet at the age of 28. His prophetic mission took place during the reign of King Jeroboam II (787–744 BCE). Nineveh, the prosperous capital of the Assyrian Empire, was inhabited by people who had fallen into moral corruption and idol worship, rejecting the message of monotheism that Prophet Yunus preached.⁴⁴

⁴³ Alwi As Muḥammad 'Alī al-Ṣābūnī, "Al-Nubuwwah Wa Al-Anbiyā'," in *Kenabian & Riwayat Para Nabi*, 1st ed. (Jakarta: Lentera, 2001), 520.

⁴⁴ Hilmi Ali Sya'bani, *Silsilah Qasas Al-Anbiyā': Yūnus 'Alaih Al-Salâm, Vol. 11* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub Ilmiyah, n.d.), 5-7.

In the city of Nineveh, the people had fallen into idolatry and polytheism. Prophet Yunus was sent to uphold monotheism (tawhīd) by calling his people to use their reason, refrain from worshipping idols, and reflect upon the greatness of Allah’s creation. However, when his people persistently rejected his message, Prophet Yunus grew despondent and left them without Allah’s permission an act that led to the famous incident in which he was swallowed by a great fish. This fish is believed to have been a whale, the largest marine mammal, which in Islamic tradition is described as a creature commanded by Allah to hold and protect Prophet Yunus. This event marked a turning point of repentance and acknowledgment of his error, symbolizing both Allah’s supreme power and His boundless mercy.⁴⁵

2. The Da'wah (Preaching/Mission) of Prophet Yunus

Nineveh was a vast and prosperous city—the capital of the Assyrian Empire, founded around 2229 BCE and located in the southern region of modern-day Iraq. Prophet Yunus (Jonah) was sent there to call its inhabitants to abandon idol worship and return to the belief in one God (tawhīd). His mission, however, was met with strong rejection, which ultimately led him to leave his people before the event in which he was swallowed by the great fish. This story emphasizes Prophet Yunus’s role

⁴⁵ Abdurrahman Assegaf Muḥammad Aḥmad Jād al-Mawlā, “, Qaṣaṣ Al-Qur’ān,” in *Kisah-Kisah Al-Qur’an* (Jakarta: Zaman, 2009), 372–373.

as a messenger of Allah, bringing the message of monotheism to a society that was materially prosperous but spiritually misguided.⁴⁶

In his preaching, Prophet Yunus stressed that idol worship offered no benefit, for only Allah (SWT) is worthy of worship as the Creator of the heavens, the earth, and everything within them. Yet, his message received little positive response, as idol worship had become a deeply ingrained tradition, passed down through generations. Moreover, Yunus's ordinary social standing lacking noble lineage, wealth, or political power also contributed to the community's reluctance to accept his call.⁴⁷

Prophet Yunus proclaimed that the religion he brought taught values of goodness and truth, commanding noble conduct and forbidding immoral behavior, rejecting all forms of oppression, and upholding justice and peace. Furthermore, the religion of Allah promotes compassion toward the poor and needy, encourages feeding the hungry, and advocates for the freedom of captives. All these teachings represent the moral and social values that bring righteousness and benefit to society.⁴⁸

Prophet Yunus was a member of the community of Nineveh, whose people initially doubted the idea of following someone who held the same social status as themselves. In his mission, Prophet Yunus

⁴⁶ Syahrudin el-Fikri, *Situs-Situs Dalam al-Qur'an* (Jakarta: Republika, 2010), 62.

⁴⁷ Syamsul Rijal Hamid, *Kisah Kesabaran Nabi & Rasul* (Jakarta: Penebar Salam, 1999), 64.

⁴⁸ Hamid, 65.

delivered his message with gentleness and courtesy, employing respectful dialogue to invite his people to the worship of Allah. He also warned them sternly about the consequences of rejecting his message namely punishment, disaster, and destruction. According to ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, Prophet Yunus was appointed as a messenger at the age of thirty, while Ibn ‘Abbās narrated that his period of preaching lasted for thirty years.⁴⁹

When the people of Nineveh heard his warnings about divine punishment, they showed no fear or remorse. This situation led Prophet Yunus to lose patience and depart from his people in anger. He journeyed until he reached the bank of a river, where he encountered a group preparing to cross the sea. He requested permission to join them on their voyage.⁵⁰ During the sea journey, the weather deteriorated severely strong winds blew fiercely, and huge waves struck the ship repeatedly. To protect everyone on board, the captain decided to lighten the ship’s load by throwing nonessential cargo into the sea. However, this effort failed to calm the storm. As a last resort, the captain proposed drawing lots to determine which passenger would be sacrificed by being cast overboard.⁵¹

During the drawing of lots, the name of Prophet Yunus repeatedly appeared as the chosen one, even though several passengers refused to

⁴⁹ Sahabuddin, *Ensiklopedia Al-Qur’an: Kajian Kosakata, Jilid 3* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2007), 1114.

⁵⁰ Hamid, *Kisah Kesabaran Nabi & Rasul*, 65.

⁵¹ Syahrudin El-Fikri, *Situs-Situs Dalam Al-Qur’an* (Jakarta: Republika, 2010), 64.

accept the result out of respect and reverence for him. After the lot was drawn three times, and the outcome remained the same each time, Prophet Yunus realized that this event was a decree from Allah (SWT). Acknowledging this divine will, he accepted his fate and willingly allowed himself to be cast into the sea. He was then tossed about by the waves until he was swallowed by a great fish, which Allah had commanded to protect him.⁵²

Prophet Yunus spent three days and three nights in the darkness of the fish's belly. During that time, he did not complain but instead maintained great patience, continually supplicating and seeking forgiveness from Allah (SWT). In his solitude and reflection, Prophet Yunus came to realize his mistake his impatience in carrying out his divine mission and leaving his people before receiving Allah's permission.⁵³

Scholars differ regarding the duration of Prophet Yunus's stay inside the fish. Ibn Hatim stated that it lasted forty days, Ja'far al-Şādiq said seven days, while Qatadah mentioned three days. Al-Sha'bi, on the other hand, narrated that Prophet Yunus entered the belly of the fish in the morning and was released by evening. During this period, Prophet Yunus constantly glorified Allah and sought His forgiveness through his heartfelt supplication, which is recorded in the Qur'an (Surah Al-Anbiya

⁵² El-Fikri, 65.

⁵³ Hamid, *Kisah Kesabaran Nabi & Rasul*, 66.

21:87): “*Tidak ada Tuhan selain Engkau, Maha Suci Engkau, sesungguhnya aku termasuk orang-orang yang zalim.*”⁵⁴

By the mercy of Allah, Prophet Yunus remained alive inside the belly of the fish, even though it seemed impossible by human reasoning. He repented, acknowledged his mistake, and devoted his remembrance solely to Allah. His prayer and repentance were accepted, and he was released from the fish. This experience made him one of Allah’s chosen servants and refined his character. After being cast onto the shore in a weakened state, Allah restored his health by causing a gourd plant to grow, providing him with shade and sustenance. Once recovered, he returned to Nineveh and found that his people had embraced faith, with the number of believers reaching one hundred thousand.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Sahabuddin, *Ensiklopedia Al-Qur’an: Kajian Kosakata, Jilid 3*, 1115.

⁵⁵ El-Fikri, *Situs-Situs Dalam Al-Qur’an*, 66.