

METHODOLOGICAL GAP IN *TAFSĪR MAḤĀSIN AT-TA'WĪL* Examining Al-Qāsimiy's Consistency Regarding *Isrā'iliyyāt* in Surah Al-Kahf and Its Implications for the Development of Tafsir Studies

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Abstract

This study examines the consistency and methodological implications of *isrā'iliyyāt* in Tafsir *Maḥāsin at-Ta'wīl* by al-Qāsimiy within a contemporary context, focusing on the aspect of methodological consistency that remains relatively understudied. The problem addressed is the extent to which al-Qāsimiy is consistent in applying the rules for using *isrā'iliyyāt* in his tafsir practice, as well as its methodological implications for the development of tafsir studies. This research employs a qualitative approach using descriptive-analytical and critical analysis methods through library research, focusing specifically on the narrative verses in surah Al-Kahf. The results indicate a methodological gap between tafsir theory and practice. Conceptually, al-Qāsimiy applies highly strict precautionary principles. In practice, he is dominantly consistent in holding to these rules by providing criticism of the quoted *isrā'iliyyāt* narratives. However, an inconsistency gap is also found when he adopts a lenient stance (*mutasāhil*) by accepting *isrā'iliyyāt* stories without any critical remarks. These findings bring two significant implications for contemporary tafsir studies. First, the sharpness of al-Qāsimiy's analysis successfully maintains the credibility of his work as a primary reference in Qur'anic studies. Second, this inconsistency gap encourages academics to avoid blind imitation (*taklid*) of any tafsir work. This encourages a critical reading approach to test the consistency between methodological formulations and their tafsir results at a practical level.

Keywords: *Isrā'iliyyāt*, Jamāl ad-Dīn al-Qāsimiy, *Maḥāsin at-Ta'wīl*, Tafsir Methodology.

Kesenjangan Metodologis dalam Tafsir Maḥāsin Al-Ta'wīl: Mengkaji Konsistensi Al-Qāsimī Terkait Isrā'īlyāt dalam Surah Al-Kahf dan Implikasinya terhadap Perkembangan Studi Tafsir

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji konsistensi dan implikasi metodologi isrā'īlyāt dalam tafsir Maḥāsin at-Ta'wīl karya al-Qāsimiy dalam konteks kontemporer, dengan menitikberatkan pada aspek konsistensi metodologis yang masih relatif jarang dikaji. Permasalahan yang diangkat adalah sejauh mana al-Qāsimiy konsisten dalam menerapkan kaidah penggunaan isrā'īlyāt dalam praktik penafsirannya, serta bagaimana implikasi metodologisnya terhadap perkembangan kajian tafsir. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode deskriptif-analitis dan analisis kritis melalui studi kepustakaan, dengan fokus amatan pada ayat-ayat kisah dalam surah Al-Kahf. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya kesenjangan metodologis antara teori dan praktik penafsiran. Secara konseptual, al-Qāsimiy menerapkan prinsip kehati-hatian yang sangat ketat. Dalam praktiknya, ia dominan konsisten memegang kaidah tersebut dengan memberikan kritik terhadap kisah isrā'īlyāt yang dikutip. Namun, ditemukan pula celah inkonsistensi saat ia bersikap longgar (mutasāhil) dengan menerima kisah isrā'īlyāt tanpa disertai kritik. Temuan ini membawa dua implikasi penting bagi studi tafsir masa kini. Pertama, ketajaman analisis al-Qāsimiy berhasil menjaga kredibilitas karyanya sebagai salah satu rujukan utama dalam studi Al-Qur'an. Kedua, celah inkonsistensi tersebut mendorong akademisi agar tidak taklid pada suatu karya tafsir. Hal ini mendorong lahirnya pembacaan kritis menguji konsistensi antara rumusan metodologis dan hasil penafsirannya pada tataran praktis.

Kata kunci: *Isrā'īlyāt, Jamāl ad-Dīn al-Qāsimiy, Maḥāsin at-Ta'wīl, Metodologi Tafsir.*

Introduction

The dynamics of Al-Qur'an tafsir studies in the early Islamic period reveal a sharp shift in the utilization of tafsir sources. The companions initially strictly limited and avoided the use of *isrā'iliyyāt* narrations. This pattern gradually changed during the era of the *tābi'īn* and *tābi' at-tābi'īn* when these narrations began to be accommodated as references. The large number of *ahl al-kitāb* who embraced Islam and the urge to detail the globally outlined stories of Al-Qur'an became the main factors for the widespread acceptance of these narrations (Haqim & Sanah 2025, 179). The most fundamental threat of *isrā'iliyyāt* infiltration in tafsir originates from the lack of clarity in its sanad or narrations. This lack of clarity highly endangers the purity of the creed and worship of Muslims. Baseless *isrā'iliyyāt* stories brought into tafsir can damage the understanding of Muslims regarding Allah and His messengers. The spread of that story also gives the impression that Islamic teachings are rife with deviations. As a result, a misconception has arisen that Islam is merely a fictional religion and that its sharia law is not applicable. This chain of misunderstandings is extremely harmful because it can prevent people from embracing Islam, distance Muslims from the guidance of the Qur'an, and cast doubt on the scholarly authority of the pious scholars of the *Salaf* (Musyarrofah 2023, 36).

The term *isrā'iliyyāt* refers to all forms of information compiled by scholars that originate from the Banī Isrā'īl tradition, whether sourced from Jewish or Christian communities (Aṭ-Ṭayyār 2014, 143). These stories were initially utilized by scholars to clarify the meanings of Al-Qur'an verses and hadiths. This step subsequently drew criticism because many of the accounts were found not to be based on authentic sources, and were even considered as fabricated stories from groups who hated Islam and intentionally sought to ruin the creed of Muslims (Aẓ-Ẓahabī n.d., 13-14). Responding to this matter, mufasirs demonstrated diverse attitudes ranging from total rejection to conditional acceptance. Ṭāhir Maḥmūd bin Muḥammad Ya'qūb in *Asbāb al-Khaṭa' fī at-Tafsīr* notes the formulation of Ibnu Kaṣīr who divides *isrā'iliyyāt* into three classifications. First, narrations that align with Al-Qur'an and hadith so that they can be accepted. Second, narrations that contradict sharia so that they must be rejected. Third, *maskūt 'anhu* narrations or narrations whose status is not mentioned by sharia. In this third category, scholars will reject the narration if it contradicts sound reason. Conversely, if there is no strong indication of falsehood, the step taken is *tawaqquf* (Ya'qūb 2004, 162-163). Responding to the dynamics of thought along with the classifications of early scholars regarding *isrā'iliyyāt*, the perspective of al-Qāsimiy through the book *Maḥāsin at-Ta'wīl* becomes a highly relevant subject of study. Through this tafsir work, al-Qāsimiy specifically compiled the formulation of tafsir rules regarding the stories of the prophets along with the limitations for using *isrā'iliyyāt* (Al-Qāsimiy 2003, I/30).

Studies regarding *Tafsīr Maḥāsin at-Ta'wīl* have explored its various methodological dimensions. These various studies still leave gaps in the specific areas of each study. Amirotnun Nafisah and Musyaffa Ahmad Rahim examine the biography and tafsir method in general (Nafisah & Rahim, 2023). Both overlook its specific

application in filtering *isrā'iliyyāt* narrations. Nadia Novianti and Bashori highlight linguistic, historical, and rationality aspects. They have not examined its practice in assessing *isrā'iliyyāt* narratives (Novianti & Bashori, 2024). Rofiudin and Citra Eka Wulandari explore the *tarjih* rules of the mufasir. This study purely focuses on legal debates among scholars, leaving the space for filtering *isrā'iliyyāt* completely untouched (Rofiudin & Wulandari, 2025). Khoirun Nisa' and Aat Hidayat propose a more historically nuanced interpretation by linking the characteristics of al-Qāsimiy's exegesis to the context of the struggle against orientalism and colonialism. They categorize this work as an *'ilmi* tafsir firmly grounded in the authoritative *bi al-ma'sūr* tradition. Unfortunately, this research does not analyze how *isrā'iliyyāt* narrations with weak status or simply left unaddressed (*maskūt 'anhu*) could freely enter the tafsir framework that is claimed to be highly strict (Nisa' & Hidayat, 2015). Direct intersection with the issue of *isrā'iliyyāt* only appears in the writing of Rofi'udin, Masruchin, and M. Dani Habibi. These three researchers analyze his framework of thought and claim that al-Qāsimiy includes *isrā'iliyyāt* narrations solely to actively expose the errors of Jewish and Christian traditions (Rofi'udin et al., 2025). Such a general conclusion is actually inaccurate when confronted with textual reality. In practice, al-Qāsimiy does not always adopt an oppositional stance. Many narrations are left to pass by without critical comments, and are purely utilized as supplementary narratives in his tafsir.

Studies regarding *isrā'iliyyāt* narrations and the entry of foreign elements (*ad-dakhil*) into tafsir books have also received widespread attention from researchers. Theoretically, Muhammad Ulinnuha reconstructs the testing method of *ad-dakhil* by offering three benchmarks for accepting narrations based on the Propeth's stance: accepted, rejected, and *tawaqquf* (Ulinnuha, 2015). Fadhel Latuapo applies this standard to track the presence of *isrā'iliyyāt* in the works of classical to modern mufasirs by establishing pure tafsir (*al-aṣīl*) as its primary parameter (Latuapo, 2024). A similar study is conducted by Laela Alfiyah when analyzing Tafsir *Naẓarāt fī Kitābillāh* by Hasan al-Banna. She details that a *Banī Isrā'il* narration can only be categorized as *dakhil naqlīy* if it contradicts Al-Qur'an and *ṣaḥīḥ* hadiths, and its status remains recognized as pure tafsir (*al-aṣīl*) if its content aligns with Al-Qur'an and *ṣaḥīḥ* hadiths (Alfiyah, 2023). These three initial studies are excellent in mapping the basic theory, yet their nature remains limited to sorting the status of narrations in general. Other literature reviews focus more on the methodological approach taken by exegetes when dealing with historical narratives of earlier generations of believers. A. Umar Syam Manggabarani notes the acceptance of Ibnu Kaṣīr toward *isrā'iliyyāt* which is based on two absolute conditions, namely the quality of the sanad and conformity with Islamic sharia (Manggabarani, 2023). Eka Oktaria Subing proves that Ibnu 'Āsyūr in reality still includes weak narrations alongside maintaining *ṣaḥīḥ* narrations in *Tafsīr at-Taḥrīr wa at-Tanwīr* (Subing, 2024). This mapping of mufasir attitudes leaves a gap because the focus of the discussion has not yet touched upon al-Qāsimiy's tafsir work.

Research that specifically highlights *isrā'iliyyāt* in *Tafsīr Maḥāsin at-Ta'wīl* by al-Qāsimiy has actually been pioneered by Muhsin. He proves the large number of citations from Jewish and Christian traditions within the tafsir to refute the claim of

Mani Abdul Halim, who previously considered the work entirely free from *isrā'iliyyāt* narrations (Al-Haddar, 2019). Rega Hadi Yusron provides a critical note regarding the *'ilmi* tafsir style of al-Qāsimiy which demands rationality, yet in reality still contains *isrā'iliyyāt* narrations that do not align with sound reason, thereby leaving them without comment (Yusron, 2018). Idris, Harfin, and Subaidi examine nine narrations in the work of al-Qāsimiy using textual criticism analysis (*an-naqd al-matn*) and conclude that this tafsir is not yet free from *ad-dakhīl* elements (Idris, Harfin, & Subaidi, 2021). This literature evaluation of al-Qāsimiy's work reveals a highly fundamental gap because all of them purely use external benchmarks merely to assess the validity of textual narrations. This literature void strictly becomes the novelty of this research. The main problem is not placed on the validity of narration texts, but rather on an analysis grounded in the internal framework of thought of the mufasir himself. This research specifically aims to test the consistency of al-Qāsimiy in applying the *isrā'iliyyāt* rules that he has formulated into his tafsir practice.

Based on this gap, the initial exploration in this study raised a preliminary hypothesis regarding inconsistencies in al-Qāsimiy's theory and the principles he advocated. This discrepancy is clearly visible in his tafsir practice regarding narrative verses. At times he adopts a highly strict attitude and in other cases, he appears *mutasāhil* (lenient). His strict attitude is clearly visible when interpreting surah Qāf (50): 1. When citing the view of Ibnu Kaṣīr regarding Mount Qāf, he sharply criticizes it as a product of *Banī Isrā'īl khurafāt* (Al-Qāsimiy 2003, IX/5). Methodological leniency actually begins to appear in the tafsir of surah Al-Anbiyā' (21): 83-84 regarding the trials that befell Prophet Ayyūb. Al-Qāsimiy fully realizes that the narration possesses a weak sanad, is untrustworthy, and is rejected among hadith scholars. He still cites that *isrā'iliyyāt* narrative without providing critical comments solely to highlight the *'ibrah* aspect that can be drawn from the story (Al-Qāsimiy 2003, VII/213-214). The peak of al-Qāsimiy's *mutasāhil* attitude appears in the tafsir of surah Al-Mā'idah (5): 115. In this verse, the *isrā'iliyyāt* story is cited purely as a tafsir supplement to explain the difference of opinion regarding whether the feast from heaven in the verse was truly sent down or not (Al-Qāsimiy 2003, IV/297-298). This series of discrepancies in the three surahs raises a major question: how does al-Qāsimiy address *isrā'iliyyāt* narratives in surah Al-Kahf? This surah contains stories of past peoples and is highly susceptible to the inclusion of *isrā'iliyyāt* narrations, such as the stories of *Aṣḥāb Al-Kahf*, Prophet Mūsā and Khidīr, Żulqarnain, and Ya'jūj Ma'jūj. Will al-Qāsimiy once again apply strict selection as in surah Qāf, or actually adopt a lenient attitude by using them as tafsir supplements? This methodological gap becomes a strong foundation to analyze the extent to which al-Qāsimiy applies his rules fully. Its specific testing will focus on the narrative verses within surah Al-Kahf.

Based on the research gap outlined previously, this study is focused on achieving three main objectives. First, gathering and mapping the *isrā'iliyyāt* narrations found in the tafsir of narrative verses in surah Al-Kahf within *Tafsīr Maḥāsīn at-Ta'wīl*. Second, examining how al-Qāsimiy addresses those narrations in practice, in order to clearly see when he adopts a strict (critical) attitude and when he adopts a lenient attitude in citing

a story. Third, testing the consistency between the theory proposed by al-Qāsimiy regarding the citation of *isrāʾīliyyāt* stories and his tafsir practice. Through these three formulations, the research is expected to objectively prove the consistency level of al-Qāsimiy in applying his own rules. The gap analysis between the theory and practice of a mufasir is expected to become a new reference in evaluating tafsir works.

Method

This research employs a qualitative approach based on critical textual analysis. The primary data source in this research is *Tafsīr Maḥāsin at-Taʾwīl* by al-Qāsimiy. The selection of this book is grounded in strong academic reasons. Before interpreting the verses, al-Qāsimiy had formulated the basic rules for citing *isrāʾīliyyāt* narrations. Consistency testing in this research does not merely look at the classification of the purpose of citing narrations, whether as a supplement (*istisyhād*) or as a means of taking lessons (*iʿtibār*). The analysis is directed in depth to evaluate the methodological attitude of the mufasir. As outlined in the introduction section, there is a strong indication regarding the inconsistency of al-Qāsimiy's attitude. At times he appears very strict in criticizing weak narrations. In other cases, he adopts a lenient attitude (*mutasāhil*) and leaves them without criticism. This discrepancy between his basic rules and his tafsir practice is what makes *Maḥāsin at-Taʾwīl* highly relevant to study.

The research focus is limited to the narrative verses within surah Al-Kahf. The selection of this surah is based on the dominance of *qasas al-Qurʾān* content, ranging from the story of *Aṣḥāb Al-Kahf*, the interaction of Prophet Musa and Khidīr, to Żulqarnain as well as Yaʾjūj and Maʾjūj. The dominance of these stories makes surah Al-Kahf highly vulnerable to the entry of *isrāʾīliyyāt* narrations, while simultaneously serving as the most valid object of proof to test the consistency of al-Qāsimiy. The analysis is specifically directed at the verses proven to contain *isrāʾīliyyāt* narrations, namely Surah Al-Kahf (18): 27 regarding the story of *Aṣḥāb Al-Kahf*, surah Al-Kahf (18): 82 concerning the identity of Mūsā who met Khidīr, and surah Al-Kahf (18): 96 regarding the story of Żulqarnain and Yaʾjūj Maʾjūj. The stages of data analysis are conducted through three systematic steps. First, Descriptive-Analysis to map the variety of *isrāʾīliyyāt* narrations along with the responses of al-Qāsimiy in the three examined verses. Second, Comparative-Analysis to measure the conformity between his tafsir practice and the basic rules he had established. Third, Critical-Evaluative Analysis to objectively assess the points of inconsistency of the mufasir along with the shift in his attitude from strict to lenient. This series of methods is not designed merely to passively describe texts, but rather to actively track the roots of al-Qāsimiy's inconsistency in selecting *isrāʾīliyyāt* stories.

Profile and Characteristics of *Tafsīr Maḥāsin at-Taʾwīl*

Muhammad Jamāl ad-Dīn Abū al-Faraj bin Muhammad bin Saʿīd bin Qāsim bin Ṣāliḥ bin Ismāʿīl bin Abī Bakar, better known as al-Qāsimiy, was born in 1283 H/1866 M in Damascus. Al-Qāsimiy grew up in a family with a strong scholarly tradition that highly upheld the values of piety. The full support and guidance of his father played an

important role in shaping his character as well as the foundation of his education from an early age. This scholarly foundation was indeed built since his childhood. He began to memorize Al-Qur'an, study the basics of knowledge, and hone his writing skills. He improved his Al-Qur'an recitation under the guidance of a *qirā'āt* expert named Syekh Aḥmad al-Ḥalwānīy. His intellectual journey continued by studying under Syekh Salīm al-'Aṭṭār to attend the recitation sessions of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārīy*. Al-Qāsimiy deeply studied various reference books from various branches of knowledge. Some of the works he studied included *al-Muwatta'*, *asy-Syifā'*, *Maṣābiḥ as-Sunnah*, *al-Jāmi' aṣ-Ṣaghīr*, and *Ṭarīqah Muḥammadiyyah*. He also sought knowledge from Syekh Bakrī al-'Aṭṭār, Syekh Muḥammad al-Khānīy, along with his own uncle, Syekh ad-Dasūqīy. His intellectual achievements are marked by the academic degrees he received from a number of scholars in Egypt ('Abbās 2016, II/457-458).

The depth of knowledge possessed by al-Qāsimiy was achieved amidst limited educational conditions. At that time, formal educational institutions, universities, and the printing industry had not yet developed. Society relied entirely on small madrasahs, *ḥalaqahs* in mosques, and private tutoring in homes. These limitations in educational infrastructure did not deter al-Qāsimiy. Instead, he became increasingly diligent in deeply studying various branches of knowledge. This dedication is evident from the presence of more than two thousand volumes of books in his personal library. His literary collection was not only limited to linguistic and sharia disciplines, but also encompassed literature on philosophy and law, various books on Islamic sects, comparative religion, and modern science. Al-Qāsimiy's love for knowledge did not stop merely at collecting books. He provided notes, corrections, and commentary on almost the entire collection of his personal library. This scholarly spirit drove him to establish connections with the great scholars of his time. He traveled to Egypt to meet Muhammad Abduh directly. As expressed by Muhammad Abduh, al-Qāsimiy's diligence in pursuing knowledge was extraordinary. This was proven when he traveled to the Hijaz region outside the hajj season specifically to study the book *al-Muḥallā* by Ibn Ḥazm. This step was taken considering that the literature was unavailable in Damascus ('Abbās 2016, II/459).

Al-Qāsimiy began teaching at the age of fourteen. He continued the role of his father as a public teacher at Masjid as-Sinānīyah in the year 1317 H. In the early years of his teaching, the assembly was also attended by a number of scholars from the Syam region ('Abbās 2016, II/458). He received an assignment from the government to travel to various villages and regions in Suriah to deliver public lectures. He carried out this task for approximately four years from 1308-1312 H. Al-Qāsimiy then traveled to Mesir and visited Madinah. Upon returning from his journey, accusations arose from certain parties who disliked him. He was accused of founding a new religious sect called *Mazhab al-Jamālīy*. This accusation led the government to arrest and interrogate him in the year 1313 H. Al-Qāsimiy successfully refuted all accusations directed against him. He was declared free and also received an apology from the mayor of Damascus. After this event, al-Qāsimiy focused his activities at home. He composed various scientific works and provided private and public lessons in the fields of tafsir, various Islamic sharia

sciences, and literature (Az-Zirikli 2002, II/135). He consistently maintained his role as an imam and public teacher at Masjid as-Sināniyah until his death in 1332 H/1914 M (‘Abbās 2016, II/458).

The emergence of *Tafsīr Maḥāsin at-Ta’wīl* cannot be separated from al-Qāsimiy’s view regarding the status of the science of tafsir, which occupies the highest position because it relies on Al-Qur’an. The process of compiling this book was preceded by a study of various works of previous scholars. He examined the content and methodology of each work’s tafsir to weigh its strengths and weaknesses. The results of this deep study prompted him to compose a tafsir work. He then formulated the rules along with the objectives of his tafsir completely into *Tafsīr Maḥāsin at-Ta’wīl*. According to al-Qāsimiy, this book gathers the best formulations that combine the views of classical and contemporary scholars. He supplemented it with personal analysis and made textual evidence (*dalīl*) the primary foundation. The tafsir within it is reinforced by strong arguments, relevant *ṣāḥīḥ* and *ḥasan* hadiths aligned with the context of the verse, as well as a *balāghah* approach to clarify the meaning (Al-Qāsimiy 2003, I/3-4). Theoretically, the establishment of such a strict principle should close any loophole for the entry of *isrā’īliyyāt* narrations that lack a sanad, contain *khurafāt*, or hold a weak status into his tafsir. This fundamental principle leaves room for inconsistencies in his tafsir. This methodological gap becomes apparent when al-Qāsimiy interprets surah Al-Mā’idah (5): 115 in the context of the discourse on food being sent down from the sky. Through his explanation, he presents the details of the various types of food in high detail. In fact, these narrations are actually evaluated as having *gharīb* and *munkar* status by al-Qāsimiy himself (Al-Qāsimiy 2003, IV/298). The *mutasāhil* attitude in that verse demonstrates a gap in al-Qāsimiy’s method. To further prove the dynamics of this changing attitude, the subsequent discussion will directly uncover al-Qāsimiy’s tafsir practice in surah Al-Kahf.

Al-Qāsimiy is known as a productive scholar who firmly rejects taklid and encourages the freedom of *ijtihād*. This anti-taklid stance is clearly recorded in the introduction of his monumental work, *Tafsīr Maḥāsin at-Ta’wīl*, where al-Qāsimiy calls upon Muslims to abandon blind taklid (Al-Qāsimiy 2003, I/5). Methodologically, this idea necessitates a critical reading of the heritage of previous scholars. However, because *Tafsīr Maḥāsin at-Ta’wīl* applies the *taḥlīlī* method that combines *bi al-ma’sūr* and *bi al-ra’yi* tafsir styles, Zāfir al-Qāsimiy states that both approaches represent al-Qāsimiy’s strategy in responding to the sociological conditions of his time. This approach was intentionally chosen so that his reformist ideas could be accepted without triggering conflicts in society (‘Abbās 2016, II/463). Based on the investigation, the author finds a shift in this anti-taklid stance as a result of al-Qāsimiy directly responding to the challenges of his era. Society at that time was still closed to ideas of reform, so al-Qāsimiy took the initiative to adopt a middle ground in the form of a compilation or *jam’u* tafsir that combines *bi al-ma’sūr* and *bi al-ra’yi tafsir*. This step to minimize potential societal rejection would later make al-Qāsimiy highly cautious and restrain himself from openly debating the heritage of previous scholars. In practice, this

accommodative attitude gives rise to a *mutasāhil* (lenient) character along with *maskūt 'anhu* when he confronts weak narrations. As a result, the anti-taklid principle he established in the introduction is often overlooked.

The author's investigation of al-Qāsimiy's tafsir results proves a methodological gap in the form of inconsistency. In several instances of tafsir, al-Qāsimiy still quotes *isrā'iliyyāt* narrations and then leaves them unaddressed without testing their validity, or *maskūt 'anhu*. This act of quoting without selection clearly contradicts the anti-taklid principle proposed by al-Qāsimiy. The clash between the anti-taklid stance and the act of quoting *isrā'iliyyāt* stories without selection opens a gap for deep evaluation. The author will test the methodological consistency of the mufasir completely through the tafsir of narrative verses in surah Al-Kahf in the next subsection. Regardless of these methodological weaknesses, *Tafsīr Maḥāsīn at-Ta'wīl* remains a reference in Qur'anic studies. Al-Qāsimī's scholarly capacity is also recorded through his productivity in composing other famous works such as *Qawā'id at-Taḥdīs*, *Iṣlāḥ al-Masājīd min al-Bida' wa al-'Awā'id*, *Tārīkh al-Jahmiyyah wa al-Mu'tazilah*, and *Mau'izah al-Mu'minīn min Ihyā' 'Ulūm ad-Dīn* (Ar-Rūmī, 1419 H., 158).

The Rules and Functions of Quoting *Isrā'iliyyāt* from Al-Qāsimiy's Perspective

A critical attitude toward *isrā'iliyyāt* narrations cannot be separated from the way a mufasir understands the text of Al-Qur'an along with the historical background of the revelation of the verses. In this context, al-Qāsimiy quotes the view of ad-Dihlawī in *uṣūl at-tafsīr*, specifically in the chapter of *Ma'rifat Asbāb an-Nuzūl*, which explains two requirements for a mufasir. First, a complete understanding of verses containing past stories can only be achieved if the mufasir masters the background of the revelation of the verses of Al-Qur'an. Second, there are verses understood with a general meaning, yet their meaning becomes specific due to the occurrence of certain events. It is these events or similar matters that require the understanding of the verses of Al-Qur'an to be shifted from their *ẓāhir* meaning. Implicitly, these two requirements affirm that the mastery of *asbāb an-nuzūl* becomes the main prerequisite for a mufasir in interpreting the Al-Qur'an (Al-Qāsimiy 2003, I/31).

In the effort to explore the history of the stories of previous prophets, al-Qāsimiy asserts that hadith narrations regarding this matter are very limited. The majority of the details in the tafsir of the prophets' stories in various tafsir books originate from the tradition of the *ahl al-kitāb*, considering that Al-Qur'an basically only outlines various events briefly. This factor is what prompted the salaf scholars to accept *isrā'iliyyāt* as a complement to the tafsir of an event. The transmission of these narrations developed through oral tradition as well as direct interaction with the *Banī Isrā'īl* who embraced Islam. Al-Qāsimiy assesses that classical mufasirs cannot be blamed for the inclusion of these narrations. The acceptance of these *isrā'iliyyāt* narrations was purely based on the favorable assumption of the salaf scholars regarding the honesty of the narrators in conveying information. They firmly believed that the narrators consistently quoted *ṣaḥīḥ* narrations. This attitude is also strengthened by the hadith narrated by Imām

Aḥmad, al-Bukhārī, and at-Tirmizī from ‘Amr bin al-‘Āṣ regarding the saying of Rasulullah Saw. as quoted by al-Qāsimiy (Al-Qāsimiy 2003, I/31).

بَلِّغُوا عَنِّي وَلَوْ آيَةً. وَحَدِّثُوا عَنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَلَا حَرَجَ

“Convey from me even a single verse, and narrate from Banī Isrā’īl, and there is no sin in narrating them.”

Al-Qāsimiy also cites the narration of Abū Dāwūd with a *ṣaḥīḥ* chain of transmission (*sanad*) from Abū Hurairah.

حَدِّثُوا عَنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَلَا حَرَجَ

“Narrate about Banī Isrā’īl, and there is no sin in narrating it.”

This narration of Abū Dāwūd substantially affirms that scholars provide leniency in narrating the stories of *isrā’iliyyāt*. This leniency serves as a means of extracting lessons (*i’tibār*) from the decrees of Allah upon previous nations. Regarding the quotation of past stories, al-Qāsimiy also quotes the view of Imam Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal. Imam Aḥmad emphasizes the necessity of being strict when quoting narrations related to Islamic law. This strict attitude then becomes lenient when narrating the virtues of deeds (*faḍā’il*), and even more so when narrating stories (*qaṣaṣ*). The practice of leniency in narration fundamentally does not negate the existence of weak or even fabricated narrations within the stories of *isrā’iliyyāt*, as has been proven through the critical studies of the *muta’akhirīn* scholars (Al-Qāsimiy 2003, I/32).

Al-Qāsimiy also quotes the view of Abdullāh bin ‘Amr concerning the existence of *isrā’iliyyāt*. Abdullāh bin ‘Amr asserts that the quotation of these narrations purely functions as *istisyhād*, not to be firmly believed (*i’tiqād*). The quotation of *isrā’iliyyāt* stories is divided into three categories. First, narrations that are considered *ṣaḥīḥ* if their truth is already known directly. Second, narrations that are already known to be in contradiction with Islamic law. Third, narrations that are left unaddressed or *maskūt ‘anhu*, so Muslims are neither allowed to believe nor deny them directly. Quoting these narrations remains permissible considering the lack of connection between the narrations and religious matters. Referring to these three categories, quoting the first category of *isrā’iliyyāt* is considered more prioritized given that these narrations have been proven true and *ṣaḥīḥ*. In addition to the first category, quoting the third category of narrations in the form of *maskūt ‘anhu* is also permissible with several considerations (Al-Qāsimiy 2003, I/34).

Al-Qāsimiy then provides a specific note on how to respond to *maskūt ‘anhu* narrations. He views that the most primary step is to reject these narrations. This rejection is highly reasonable considering the emergence of debates across various tafsir works. In reality, these stories are not found in various famous hadith books and do not possess authoritative references. The quotation of these narrations is not based on the certainty of their safety from distortion (*taḥrīf*). According to al-Qāsimiy, the practice of quoting *isrā’iliyyāt* in tafsir serves two purposes. The first purpose is purely to expand

historical accounts while serving as a complement to the tafsir (*istisyhād*). The second purpose focuses on being a means of extracting lessons (*i'tibār*). As for making these narrations a foundational proof or *hujjah*, this is absolutely impermissible (Al-Qāsimiy 2003, I/35).

Addressing the rejection or permissible acceptance of *isrā'iliyyāt* with these several considerations, al-Qāsimiy strengthens his arguments by referring to the views of Syāfi'iyah scholars. This school of thought prohibits leaders and all of their followers from reading various past scriptures. This prohibition on reading past scriptures relies on the opinion of Imām Abū al-Qāsim ar-Rāfi'iy, who views that the books of Taurat and Injil cannot be utilized for their benefits because alterations have occurred within them. Other Syāfi'iyah scholars also agree in assessing that *isrā'iliyyāt* is indeed better to be rejected. Another view asserts that the rejection of *isrā'iliyyāt* narrations is purely specifically aimed at narrations in which alterations are present (Al-Qāsimiy 2003, I/36). Ultimately, the diverse views of these scholars reinforce al-Qāsimiy's opinion regarding the rules and functions of quoting *isrā'iliyyāt*. At the conceptual level, he necessitates the principle of caution in quoting these narrations. Quoting the stories of *isrā'iliyyāt* is permissible as long as they are not used as a foundation for *hujjah*. Their utilization is strictly limited to being a complement to the tafsir or *istisyhād*, as well as a means of extracting lessons or *i'tibār*.

Critical Analysis of *Isrā'iliyyāt* Stories in Surah al-Kahf

Evidence regarding the extent of al-Qāsimiy's consistency in quoting *isrā'iliyyāt* narrations can be directly traced through his tafsir practice in surah Al-Kahf. Al-Qāsimiy's methodological gap is recorded very clearly within this surah. In several instances of tafsir, he appears strict in criticizing *isrā'iliyyāt* narrations when interpreting surah Al-Kahf (18): 27 which highlights the story of *Aṣḥāb Al-Kahf*; surah Al-Kahf (18): 82 which explains the identity of Mūsā who met Khidīr, and the second part of the tafsir of surah Al-Kahf (18): 96 which mentions the story of Ya'jūj Ma'jūj. It should be emphasized that surah Al-Kahf (18): 96 contains two focuses of tafsir simultaneously. The first part examines the story of Żulqarnain, followed by the second part which explains the *isrā'iliyyāt* story related to Ya'jūj Ma'jūj. Interestingly, this sharp critical reasoning changes when al-Qāsimiy interprets surah Al-Kahf (18): 96 narration concerning the story of Żulqarnain. In interpreting this verse, al-Qāsimiy seems *mutasāhil* (lenient) by allowing the *maskūt 'anhu isrā'iliyyāt* story to enter the tafsir without any critical stance. A review of several instances of tafsir in surah Al-Kahf clearly proves the existence of inconsistency in al-Qāsimiy's tafsir practice. Regardless of these changing dynamics in attitude, drawing a conclusion on the tafsir of the collection of narrative verses in surah Al-Kahf confirms al-Qāsimiy's tendency to be stricter and more consistent with his rules. To explore the extent to which this consistency and inconsistency are specifically applied by al-Qāsimiy, the following is an account of al-Qāsimiy's tafsir on the collection of narrative verses in surah Al-Kahf.

First, al-Qāsimiy's tafsir of surah Al-Kahf (18): 27. Al-Qāsimiy outlines the details of the story of *Aṣḥāb Al-Kahf* in the tafsir of that verse. This detailed account of the story

of *Aşhāb Al-Kahf* aims to refute the claims of atheists who argue that historical traces of the story of *Aşhāb Al-Kahf* do not actually exist. To prove this, al-Qāsimiy quotes the reference *al-Kanz al-Şamīn fī Akhbār al-Qiddīsīn*, which is a Christian historical literature that explains the identity of *Aşhāb Al-Kahf* and their condition when they were inside the cave in detail. This literature mentions that *Aşhāb Al-Kahf* were seven martyrs who were biological siblings. They were named Maximianus, Malchus, Martinianus, Dionysius, Yohanes, Sarabion, and Konstantinus. These young men are narrated to have experienced oppression from the Greek ruler as a consequence of their belief in Allah, their decision to embrace Christianity, as well as their courage to reject idol worship at that time (Al-Qāsimiy 2003, VII/27).

Referring to the book *al-Kanz aş-Şamīn*, al-Qāsimiy states the absence of definite information regarding the process by which *Aşhāb Al-Kahf* achieved the status of martyrs. Historical records only confirm that they became martyrs during the reign of Emperor Decius on the outskirts of the city of Efesus. The bodies of these young men were later found in a cave near the settlements of the city's inhabitants (Al-Qāsimiy 2003, VII/27). Regardless of the minimal track record of this event, al-Qāsimiy also quotes the explanation of the book's author regarding the differences of opinion about the condition of *Aşhāb Al-Kahf* inside the cave. A group of church scholars believes that these young people died inside the cave. This death occurred because God closed the entrance of the cave where they hid with large rocks to save them from the pursuit of the persecutors. Another opinion mentions that the tragedy of the killing of the *Aşhāb Al-Kahf* youths took place in the city of Efesus before their bodies were moved into the cave. There is also a conjecture that these young men intentionally hid inside the cave to avoid threats of cruel torture against Christians, which ultimately led to death. In a different perspective, as is the widespread understanding among the public, these young men did not die inside the cave. They are believed to have merely fallen into a deep sleep for two hundred years and then awakened in the year 447 M. The final opinion comes from a number of historians who attempt to interpret this story of long sleep through a rational approach. This group views the discovery of intact bodies without signs of decay inside the cave as purely due to a miracle, regardless of whether their status was alive or dead. Seeing that their bodies remained intact when moved, people thought these young men had just awakened from a deep sleep (Al-Qāsimiy 2003, VII/28).

Responding to the story of *Aşhāb Al-Kahf*, al-Qāsimiy also provides comments. Referring to the book *al-Kanz aş-Şamīn* that al-Qāsimiy previously quoted, the narration above actually exposes many discrepancies within the contents of the Christian holy scriptures, as mentioned in Al-Qur'an. To strengthen his arguments, al-Qāsimiy quotes the reference *Tārikh al-Kanīseh*, which contains the fact that the minimal historical heritage regarding the words and deeds of martyrs in Christian history was caused by the burning of the majority of religious literature within a ten-year span, from the years 283-303 M. Entering the eighth century, the Romans and Latin communities began to reassemble the life accounts of the early martyrs. However, the most experienced experts, even those within the circle of the Roman Church, admitted that the majority

of those accounts were merely stories fabricated for linguistic beauty. The list of saints called *aqwāl asy-syuhadā'*, compiled by unknowledgeable or incompetent individuals, or which has since been infiltrated by falsehoods, cannot be trusted. This condition triggered the emergence of a neutral stance in response to the loss of trust in their explanations regarding the differing views on the condition of *Aṣḥāb Al-Kahf* inside the cave. To answer this problem, Al-Qur'an is present to provide the answer and completely eradicate the root of empty debates among Christians of the past (Al-Qāsimiy 2003, VII/28).

At the end of his tafsir of surah Al-Kahf (18): 27, al-Qāsimiy adds a warning for his readers by referring to the tafsir of Ibnu Kaṣīr of surah Al-Kahf (18): 50. Addressing this, al-Qāsimiy puts forward the reasons for including the above *isrā'īliyyāt* quotation, presenting an argument phrased as follows: Many stories regarding this matter have been narrated originating from the *salaf*, and they generally stem from *isrā'īliyyāt* narrations quoted only to be examined. Among those *isrā'īliyyāt* stories, their falsehood has been confirmed because they contradict the truth of Islamic law. Al-Qur'an is sufficient as a source without any need to refer to past stories, because these past stories are hardly free from alterations, additions, and omissions. Past generations did not possess hadith scholars capable of protecting the Prophet's narrations from fabrication and falsehood. Muslims have priests, scholars, and hadith experts who compile, examine, and classify hadiths based on their quality levels. They also recognize untrustworthy narrators. All of these efforts were made to protect the purity of the teachings of Prophet Muhammad saw. so that incorrect narrations would not be attributed to him (Al-Qāsimiy 2003, VII/29).

Al-Qāsimiy's tafsir of surah Al-Kahf (18): 27 demonstrates consistency regarding his cautious attitude in quoting *isrā'īliyyāt* stories, considering that they are vulnerable to distortions (*taḥrīf*). When al-Qāsimiy attempts to refute the arguments of atheists concerning the claim of the absence of history regarding *Aṣḥāb Al-Kahf*, he intentionally quotes Christian historical literature. This literature details the identity of the seven *Aṣḥāb Al-Kahf* youths and the various differences of opinion about their condition inside the cave (Al-Qāsimiy 2003, VII/27-28). Based on his rules, al-Qāsimiy asserts that the most primary step in dealing with *maskūt 'anhu isrā'īliyyāt* narrations is to reject them. Although in the tafsir of this verse al-Qāsimiy does not directly reject the *isrā'īliyyāt* story, he does not merely leave the story unaddressed. He uses the narration as a tafsir supplement or *istisyhād* to expose the discrepancies in the contents of the Christian holy scriptures. Furthermore, al-Qāsimiy also harshly criticizes the ecclesiastical historical heritage that is full of fabrication and infiltrated by falsehoods (Al-Qāsimiy 2003, VII/28). Al-Qāsimiy even puts forward the reasons for quoting that *isrā'īliyyāt* story. Referring to the view of Ibnu Kaṣīr, he asserts that generally those *isrā'īliyyāt* stories have been confirmed as falsehoods because they contradict Islamic law. These *isrā'īliyyāt* stories are also not free from alterations, additions, and omissions, so Al-Qur'an is considered sufficient in its explanation without having to quote various past stories (Al-Qāsimiy 2003, VII/29). This critical attitude proves al-Qāsimiy's consistency in applying his rules. Al-Qāsimiy also demonstrates his consistent stance

regarding the function of *isrā'iliyyāt* stories by positioning *maskūt* 'anhu narrations purely as a tafsir supplement (*istisyhād*), not as a legal foundation (*hujjah*).

Second, al-Qāsimiy's tafsir of surah Al-Kahf (18): 82. Through his tafsir, al-Qāsimiy discusses the identity of Mūsā mentioned in the story of his encounter with Khidīr. Al-Qāsimiy explains the view of the majority of scholars who believe that the figure of Mūsā in this verse is none other than Mūsā bin 'Imrān, the recipient of the Taurat. In contrast to this, the opinion of Nauf al-Bakkālīy, a *tābi'in* who is considered trustworthy, states that this Mūsā was not Mūsā bin 'Imrān. In this matter, al-Qāsimiy quotes directly from *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārīy*. To reinforce his argument stating that the Mūsā intended in this verse is Mūsā bin 'Imrān, al-Qāsimiy quotes a narration of Ibnu Ishāq from Sa'īd bin Jubair recorded in *Sunan an-Nasā'īy*. This narration mentions that Sa'īd bin Jubair was once beside Ibn 'Abbās along with a group of ahl al-kitāb. One of them said, "O Ibnu 'Abbās, Nauf, based on the information from Ka'b al-Aḥbār, states that the Mūsā who sought knowledge from Nabi Khidīr was Mūsā bin Mansā." Ibnu 'Abbās then asked Sa'īd, "Did you hear that directly from him?" Sa'īd replied, "Yes." Hearing that answer, Ibnu 'Abbās declared that Nauf had lied. Al-Qāsimiy complements his argument by quoting a narration from al-Bukhārīy which contains a harsher denunciation: "The enemy of Allah has lied." Concluding all the quoted narrations, al-Qāsimiy views that this expression represents a very firm rejection from Ibnu 'Abbās so that people would not easily believe that narration (Al-Qāsimiy 2003, VII/57-58).

Al-Qāsimiy also quotes the opinion of ar-Rāzīy, who explains that Nabi Yūsuf had two sons, namely Efrat and Mansā. From the lineage of Efrat, Nūn was born, who later became the father of Yūsya'. As for Mansā, he is narrated to have received the prophetic message before Nabi Mūsā bin 'Imrān. According to ar-Rāzīy, the majority of the People of the Taurat believe that the Mūsā who met Khidīr was Mūsā bin Mansā, and this perspective is a widely held opinion among the Jews. To assert that the Mūsā intended in that verse is Mūsā bin 'Imrān, al-Qāsimiy again quotes ar-Rāzīy, who cites the opinion of al-Qaffāl. According to him, the absolute mention of the name "Mūsā" in Al-Qur'an refers to Nabi Mūsā bin 'Imrān. If another figure were intended, Al-Qur'an would certainly provide specific details so as not to cause any doubt (Al-Qāsimiy 2003, VII/58).

The consistency of al-Qāsimiy's critical stance is tested once again when he identifies the figure of Mūsā in interpreting surah Al-Kahf (18): 82. Al-Qāsimiy also quotes the narration of Nauf al-Bakkālīy stating that the figure of Mūsā in this verse is Mūsā bin Mansā. Al-Qāsimiy does not merely leave this narration unaddressed, but he directly rejects it. He refutes Nauf al-Bakkālīy's statement by quoting a narration from an-Nasā'īy containing the words of Ibnu 'Abbās. These words of Ibnu 'Abbās explain that Nauf had lied about his statement regarding the assumption that the figure of Mūsā in this verse is Mūsā bin Mansā (Al-Qāsimiy 2003, VII/57-58). To strengthen this argument, al-Qāsimiy also quotes the logic of ar-Rāzīy that Mūsā in this verse absolutely refers to Mūsā bin 'Imrān, the recipient of the Taurat (Al-Qāsimiy 2003, VII/58). This firm stance aligns with al-Qāsimiy's rule of completely rejecting *isrā'iliyyāt* that contradicts Islamic teachings. Al-Qāsimiy demonstrates his consistent stance once again regarding the function of quoting *isrā'iliyyāt* stories by limiting the use of these stories purely as a

means of extracting lessons (*i'tibār*), such as the importance of continuously seeking knowledge, remaining humble toward teachers, and maintaining etiquette in speech (Al-Qāsimiy 2003, VII/53).

Third, al-Qāsimiy's tafsir of surah Al-Kahf (18): 96 relates to the story of Żulqarnain. In his tafsir, al-Qāsimiy explains that historians generally agree that the name of Żulqarnain is Iskandar bin Philips (Al-Qāsimiy 2003, VII/69-70). In his tafsir, al-Qāsimiy explains the differences of opinion regarding the reason for using the title "*Żu al-Qarnain*." One narration states that the title was given because he had reached the two ends of the earth, namely the eastern and western regions. Another opinion mentions that he had two horns or two braids of hair. There are also those who explain that this title of *Żu al-Qarnain* was obtained due to his success in ruling over two great empires, namely the Roman and Persian Empires. Complementing the differences of opinion surrounding the reason for granting the title of *Żu al-Qarnain*, al-Qāsimiy also quotes the opinion of al-Zamakhsharī, who explains that the title was obtained because of his bravery. A brave person is often analogized to a ram due to its nature of butting its opponent (Al-Qāsimiy 2003, VII/71).

Al-Qāsimiy then adds his personal opinion that this title of *Żu al-Qarnain* is a metaphor for anything that possesses strength, courage, and power. The metaphor using the word "*qarn*" to symbolize strength and power was actually already known among the Jews. Al-Qāsimiy also quotes information from the Taurat, specifically in the chapter "*Nubuwwat Danīl*," which mentions a ram that has two horns and a male goat coming from the west with a strange horn between its eyes. In their interpretation, the horn symbolizes strength and power, while the male goat represents the Greek kingdom. Meanwhile, the strange horn on the male goat is understood as a symbol of the first king of that kingdom, namely Alexander Agung. The information about his arrival from the west is understood as a sign of Iskandar's departure from the region of Makedonia, located to the west of Persia, specifically when he successfully defeated the army of Darius. Through this explanation, al-Qāsimiy wishes to demonstrate that the title "*Żu al-Qarnain*" was not only known in the Arab tradition, but had also been recognized in the Jewish tradition. In fact, according to him, it is highly probable that the term originated from symbols that developed within their tradition and was subsequently widely known among Arab societies (Al-Qāsimiy 2003, VII/71).

Al-Qāsimiy's strict attitude in the two previous cases actually reveals a methodological gap when he interprets surah Al-Kahf (18): 96. Al-Qāsimiy outlines various opinions regarding the reason for granting the title of *Żu al-Qarnain*. This gap is proven through al-Qāsimiy's quotation of the Taurat literature in the chapter of *Nubuwwat Danīl* (Al-Qāsimiy 2003, VII/71). Al-Qāsimiy takes a lenient or *mutasāhil* approach in this case, in contrast to the sharpness of his criticism in handling the tafsir of the two previous verses. The acceptance of this *isrā'iliyyāt* story without accompanying criticism is a form of inconsistency because al-Qāsimiy has violated the cautious stance of his own formulated rule, which asserts that the most primary step in dealing with *isrā'iliyyāt* stories is to reject them. Al-Qāsimiy should have still provided critical commentary regarding the quotation of that narration, just as he did in the tafsir

of the two previous verses. In reality, the tafsir of this verse is purely left without even the slightest note from the mufasir.

Fourth, al-Qāsimiy's tafsir of surah Al-Kahf (18): 96 concerning the story of Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj. Al-Qāsimiy quotes the opinion of Abu al-Baqā', who explains that Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj are two foreign names (*a'jamiy*) that do not undergo morphological changes due to their foreign nature and because both are specific names. According to him, these two names can be read with a hamzah or without a hamzah. There is also an opinion stating that both originate from the Arabic language. Al-Qāsimiy also quotes the opinion of ar-Rāzī, who explains that scholars have differing opinions regarding the origin of Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj. Some state that both originate from the Turkic nation, while another opinion states that Ya'jūj originates from Turkey and Ma'jūj originates from the regions of Jīl and Dailam. Several narrations even describe them as a people with small and short bodies. Some historians mention that behind one of the mountains in the Caucasus Mountains, known to the Arabs as Mount Qāf, precisely in the Dagestan region, there are two tribes named Aqūq and Ma'qūq. According to that narration, the Arabs later referred to these two tribes as Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj. Both groups were known to various nations and are also mentioned in the scriptures of the Jews and Christians. From these two tribes, various nations were born who inhabit the northern and eastern regions, such as the areas of Russia and Asia (Al-Qāsimiy 2003, VII/77).

Responding to this story about Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj, al-Qāsimiy provides a warning that those who do not require the validity and credibility of narrators tend to expand the discussion related to the story of Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj. According to al-Qāsimiy, all circulating narrations regarding Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj originate from *isrā'iliyyāt* stories, weak narrations, or even fabricated narrations. Furthermore, al-Qāsimiy also adds the opinion of Ibnu Jarīr, from Wahb bin Munabbih, a long story regarding the journey of Żulqarnain, the construction of a wall or dividing barrier between two mountains, as well as various events related to it. This narration contains many strange stories, such as descriptions of the physical form, traits, body size, and even the ears of Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj (Al-Qāsimiy 2003, VII/77). Al-Qāsimiy directly also quotes the narration of Ibn Abī Ḥātim, who narrated a number of similar hadiths from his father, but the hadith is *gharīb* and its chains of transmission (*sanad*) are considered not *ṣāḥiḥ*. Al-Qāsimiy rejects this kind of narration by following the stance of al-Bukhārī, who establishes strict standards for the authenticity of narrations and rejects stories that cannot be justified, because weak and unauthentic (not *ṣāḥiḥ*) narrations will cause detrimental impacts on the Muslim community. Al-Qāsimiy also quotes a statement in the introduction to *Ṣāḥiḥ Muslim* that narrators of weak hadiths are deceivers, sinners, and misleading (Al-Qāsimiy 2003, VII/78).

Al-Qāsimiy again demonstrates his consistency in interpreting the continuation of surah Al-Kahf (18): 96 regarding the story of Ya'jūj Ma'jūj. His critical attitude is proven again when quoting narrations related to the story. Al-Qāsimiy comments that all circulating narrations regarding Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj originate from *isrā'iliyyāt* stories, weak narrations, or even fabricated narrations (Al-Qāsimiy 2003, VII/77). To refute those *isrā'iliyyāt* narrations, al-Qāsimiy also applies strict standards, one of which is

from al-Bukhārī regarding the authenticity of narrations and the rejection of stories that cannot be justified, because weak and unauthentic (not *ṣaḥīḥ*) narrations will cause detrimental impacts on Muslims (Al-Qāsimiy 2003, VII/78). This step reaffirms al-Qāsimiy's consistency in applying his formulated rules.

The application of rules regarding the quotation of *isrā'iliyyāt* stories by al-Qāsimiy when interpreting surah Al-Kahf reveals a methodological gap between his theory and tafsir practice. Theoretically, al-Qāsimiy has built a very strict standard through the principle of caution in narrating *isrā'iliyyāt* stories, including the recommendation to prioritize the rejection of *maskūt 'anhu* narrations. On one hand, he successfully applies this rule consistently in several instances of tafsir, namely surah Al-Kahf (18): 27 concerning *Aṣḥāb Al-Kahf*; surah Al-Kahf (18): 82 concerning the identity of Mūsā who met Khidīr, and surah Al-Kahf (18): 96 which explains the story of Ya'jūj Ma'jūj. The real evidence is apparent from al-Qāsimiy's critical attitude when explaining the weakness of the *Aṣḥāb Al-Kahf* narrations, rejecting the error in Mūsā's identity, and refusing the story of Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj to preserve the purity of Al-Qur'an. On the other hand, al-Qāsimiy's strict adherence to this principle has left a methodological gap. Evidence of inconsistency appears when al-Qāsimiy interprets surah Al-Kahf (18): 96 concerning the story of Żulqarnain. Responding to that verse, he instead allows the *isrā'iliyyāt* story to be merely quoted as a tafsir supplement, without any criticism or rejection whatsoever. This gap proves that al-Qāsimiy occasionally still violates his own rules. His desire to collect various narrations with the aim of enriching historical stories in reality actually compromises the principle of caution in quoting *isrā'iliyyāt* stories. Regardless of this methodological gap, this study generally continues to reaffirm the position of al-Qāsimiy, who tends to consistently and strictly uphold his rules. Evidence of the methodological gap in the tafsir work of al-Qāsimiy, between consistent and inconsistent attitudes when quoting *isrā'iliyyāt* stories, provides a crucial contribution to current tafsir studies. This study demonstrates that any tafsir work, no matter how great, certainly possesses methodological gaps between its rules and their application. Ultimately, this condition demands a critical and objective rereading of the entire literature of tafsir books.

Al-Qāsimiy's Methodological Implications for the Development of Tafsir Studies

Findings regarding the methodological gap in the form of al-Qāsimiy's consistency and inconsistency when dealing with *isrā'iliyyāt* narratives do not simply stop at criticizing his exegetical narratives of the story verses contained in surah al-Kahf, but they also bring deep implications for the development of tafsir studies. These implications can be reviewed through two main perspectives, namely the extent to which this affects the level of credibility of his work of tafsir and how these findings open strategic opportunities for the renewal of tafsir methodology.

In terms of consistency, the methodological discipline demonstrated by al-Qāsimiy's strict attitude across the majority of his verse tafsir has bolstered the credibility of *Tafsīr Maḥāsin at-Ta'wīl* as a primary reference in Al-Qur'an studies. His

courage in exposing the weakness of narrations related to the story of *Aṣḥāb Al-Kahf* in the tafsir of surah Al-Kahf (18): 27, along with his firm rejection of fabricated narrations concerning the story of Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj in the tafsir of surah Al-Kahf (18): 96, proves that this tafsir is built upon a highly robust framework of rationality. This rigorous filtering practice makes a significant contribution to tafsir studies. Such a measure represents al-Qāsimiy's success in encouraging subsequent mufasirs to employ a hadith criticism approach to cleanse tafsir from elements of *khurafāt*, precisely as he applied when rectifying the misconception regarding the identity of Mūsā who encountered Khidr in the tafsir of surah Al-Kahf (18): 82.

Al-Qāsimiy's critical stance when responding to *isrā'iliyyāt* stories, as applied in his tafsir of surah Al-Kahf (18): 27 concerning *Aṣḥāb Al-Kahf*, surah Al-Kahf (18): 82 regarding the identity of Mūsā who met Khidr, and surah Al-Kahf (18): 96 which contains a critique of the story of Ya'jūj Ma'jūj, also brings forth important implications for the development of tafsir studies. This consistency provides a methodological framework ensuring that the tafsir of subsequent mufasirs remains authentic and in harmony with the principles of Islamic sharia. The tafsir of Al-Qur'an should inherently refer to valid sources that can be scientifically justified. As a consequence, its major implication demands that a mufasir possess the courage to reject *isrā'iliyyāt* narrations when they contradict Al-Qur'an, *ṣaḥīḥ* hadiths, or the principles of Islamic sharia, supported by robust argumentation.

The methodological implications of quoting *isrā'iliyyāt* stories also remain relevant for application in contemporary tafsir studies as long as they are applied proportionally, particularly by highlighting the function of *istisyhād* as a supplement to interpretation and *i'tibār* as a means of drawing lessons, without making them primary sources for establishing aqidah or sharia law. More specifically, the function of *i'tibār* applied by al-Qāsimiy when citing *isrā'iliyyāt* stories also serves as a new methodological contribution to the development of tafsir studies. Through this approach, *isrā'iliyyāt* stories are not positioned purely as supplementary to tafsir, but instead appear as a medium for drawing moral and spiritual lessons for the reader, exactly like al-Qāsimiy's practice when interpreting surah al-Kahf (18): 82 which discusses the story of Prophet Mūsā. The application of this *i'tibār* function implies that the existence of *isrā'iliyyāt* in modern tafsir is now directed toward strengthening the educational message of Al-Qur'an rather than simply presenting historical details.

Findings regarding al-Qāsimiy's inconsistency provide academic implications that are no less important. The lenient or *mutasāhil* attitude he applied to the exegesis of surah al-Kahf (18): 96 concerning the story of Żulqarnain does not solely collapse the credibility of his tafsir as a whole. This methodological gap instead represents the difficulty of an Islamic reformist figure to entirely leave behind the compilation style of the past. This fact simultaneously demands readers to no longer practice taklid by only holding onto the rules or theories contained within a book of tafsir. This gap of inconsistency automatically opens a golden opportunity for methodological renewal. The gap between rules and practice in *Tafsīr Maḥāsīn at-Ta'wīl* drives the birth of a more progressive reading paradigm. Present-day academics and mufasirs are required to

always critically test the alignment between the theoretical framework and practical application. This finding simultaneously provides space for contemporary Islamic thinkers to reformulate historical criticism instruments to be far more strict and systematic so that leniency in quoting the narratives of past stories is not repeated. Indirectly, al-Qāsimiy's methodological steps ultimately succeed in shaping the reasoning of mufasirs to become more critical researchers of tafsir.

Conclusion

The application of rules for quoting *isrā'iliyyāt* by al-Qāsimiy in *Tafsīr Maḥāsīn at-Ta'wīl*, particularly in surah Al-Kahf, reveals a methodological gap between his theory and tafsir practice. Conceptually, al-Qāsimiy has formulated a very strict principle of caution and prioritizes the rejection of *maskūt 'anhu* narrations. In practice, he successfully applied this rule consistently through his critical attitude when dismantling the weaknesses of the *Aṣḥāb Al-Kahf* narrations, rectifying the misconception regarding the identity of Nabi Mūsā, and rejecting the story of Ya'jūj Ma'jūj to preserve the purity of Al-Qur'an. This methodological adherence turns out to still leave a gap of inconsistency. Al-Qāsimiy's critical stance shifted to being lenient or *mutasāhil* when he interpreted the story of Zūlqarnain, where he allowed the quoted narration to pass as a tafsir supplement without any criticism or rejection whatsoever. This gap confirms that the desire to collect various opinions to enrich historical narrative details, in reality, actually compromises the principle of caution that the mufasir himself formulated.

The dynamic between this consistency and inconsistency ultimately brings profound implications for the development of tafsir studies. The discipline of al-Qāsimiy's strict attitude succeeded in maintaining the credibility of his tafsir as one of the primary references in Al-Qur'an studies, and highlighted the function of *i'tibār* as a means of extracting educational lessons, rather than merely being a narrative of past history. On the other hand, the methodological gap he left behind actually encourages academics to employ a more progressive reading paradigm. These findings demand that academics no longer practice taklid toward the formulated rules in a tafsir book, but rather must critically and objectively test the alignment between theory and practice. This research certainly has scope limitations by only utilizing surah Al-Kahf as the primary unit of analysis. This limitation simultaneously opens strategic opportunities for subsequent researchers to test al-Qāsimiy's methodological consistency more comprehensively across various other surahs that are laden with *isrā'iliyyāt* content. Comparative studies with other contemporary tafsir books are also recommended to enrich the epistemological treasury and mature the methodology of tafsir criticism in Al-Qur'an studies.

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