

## The Dialogue between Prophet Sulaiman A.S. and The Hoopoe in QS. An-Naml (Analysis of Contextual Meaning)

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### Abstract

The purpose of this research is to know the Dialogue between Prophet Sulaiman and the Hoopoe in QS. An-Naml. This research is qualitative descriptive research. As for the approach used by the researchers, it is a linguistic-semantic approach by analyzing the problems to be studied. The data collection technique is carried out through documentation by means of searching the research data of the library to obtain scientific information collected through the study of literature as a reference to the problem considered appropriate, namely by searching for data related to the title of the researcher. In analyzing data, researchers use qualitative methods. The results suggest that there are 7 sentences that become direct dialogue and 2 sentences which become indirect dialogue. The researchers also found 8 passages, of all these passages there are some sentences whose meaning shape is contextually influenced by the context of the situation and context of language.

**Keywords:** dialogue, contextual meaning, QS.An-Naml

### Abstrak

Tujuan penelitian ini untuk mengetahui dialog antara Nabi Sulaiman dan Burung Hud-hud dalam QS. An-Naml. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif deskriptif, yang mendeskripsikan dan mengkaji tentang dialog antara Nabi Sulaiman dan Burung Hud-hud dalam QS. An-Naml terutama mengenai format dialog dan bentuk makna kontekstual dengan pendekatan linguistik-semantik. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan cara penelusuran data penelitian kepustakaan untuk mendapatkan informasi ilmiah yang dikumpulkan melalui kajian literatur sebagai rujukan terhadap permasalahan yang dianggap sesuai, sedangkan analisis data menggunakan metode kualitatif. Hasil penelitian mengemukakan bahwa format dialog terbagi dalam 2 yakni dialog langsung dan dialog tidak langsung terdapat. Dialog langsung sejumlah 7 ayat, sedangkan dialog tidak langsung sejumlah 2. Dialog tersebut tersebar dalam 8 babak, yang bentuk makna kontekstualnya dipengaruhi oleh konteks situasi dan konteks bahasa.

Kata Kunci: dialog, makna kontekstual, QS.An-Naml

## INTRODUCTION

The Qur'an always uses a dualistic approach in addressing humans. On the one hand, Allah's message are conveyed by the Qur'an argumentatively, logically, and rationally. On the other hand, the message is conveyed using a language style, an expression technique touching the feelings and emotions of the listener/reader. In other words, the Qur'an does not only include scientific elements but also uses a literary approach in conveying messages. It is intended that people be influenced and impressed by the ideas or messages in the Qur'an and learn from it.

As Allah says in Q.S Hud: 120.

وَكُلًّا نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنْ بَاءَ الرَّسُولِ مَا نُبِّئْتُ بِهِ ۖ فُوَادَكَ وَجَاءَكَ فِي هَذِهِ الْحَقُّ وَمَوْعِظَةٌ وَذِكْرَىٰ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

*“Semua kisah rasul-rasul Kami ceritakan kepadamu (Nabi Muhammad), yaitu kisah-kisah yang dengannya Kami teguhkan hatimu. Di dalamnya telah diberikan kepadamu (segala) kebenaran, nasihat, dan peringatan bagi orang-orang mukmin”.*<sup>1</sup> (And We relate to you 'O Prophet' the stories of the messengers to reassure your heart. And there has come to you in this 'sûrah' the truth, a warning 'to the disbelievers', and a reminder to the believers.)

Allah preserved various important stories of the Prophets and previous nations as a lesson for the people of Prophet Muhammad. This is a proof of Allah's fairness to the Prophet Muhammad who brought the Tawheed religion, justified the previous Prophets and completed the Islamic message brought and delivered in relay by the Prophets throughout the history of humankind.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, in the Qur'anic stories, there are many dialogue verses between Allah and His Messenger, between the Messenger and his people, between righteous people and so on. This dialogue has a deep impact on the speaker as well as the listener. One of them is the dialogue of Prophet Sulaiman with the hoopoe.

Dialogue is a conversation between one and another person that serves as the central focus of the various elements of drama structure. It serves to raise issues, explains characters,

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<sup>1</sup>Kementrian Agama RI, *Terjemahan al-Qur'an al-Karim*. (Solo PT. Tiga Serangkai Pustaka Mandiri, 2014)

<sup>2</sup>Jaya Famili, “Nilai-nilai Hikmah dalam Kisah pertemuan Nabi Musa AS dan Nabi Khidir AS (Studi Tafsir Tematik Q.s al-Kahfi 60-82)” (Undergraduate thesis; UIN Raden Fatah: Palembang, 2020) p. 1

moves the plot forward, and reveals facts. In plays, it is the tool for the researcher to integrate the background required to understand the characters. The delivery of a character's personality through dialogue is a tool that can be analyzed, especially regarding the meaning conveyed in the dialogue.

However, the study of meaning is deeply explored in semantics. Semantics sees that understanding the expression's meaning, in this case dialogue, is affected by context. This view then resulted in contextual meaning in semantic studies. Contextual meaning is, first, the meaning of the use of a word in the context of a particular sentence; second, the meaning of the entire sentence in the context of a particular situation.<sup>3</sup> It also means the meaning of a word within a context. In addition, context constitutes an element of the intended meaning in the structure of a text or speech, as it concerns not only words and sentences, but also written and spoken texts and the whole by means of the relationship between words in a context.

One of the problems in the research of contextual meaning is the existence of speech units (sentences) that are interpreted differently by listeners (readers) according to their personal understanding or interpretation. In semantic studies, this is called ambiguity. The cause of this ambiguity is the lack of context, either language context or situational context. This ambiguity was also found by the author in the dialogue between Prophet Sulaiman and the bird Hoopoe in QS. An-Naml. Therefore, this paper aims to find out the form of dialogue and the form of contextual meaning between Prophet Sulaiman and the Hoopoe by using a linguistic-semantic approach.

## METHODOLOGY

This research is library research, obtaining information data by placing facilities in libraries such as books, magazines, documents, records of historical stories.<sup>4</sup> This research is also descriptive qualitative research, i.e. the study is conducted solely based on facts or phenomena that empirically live in the speakers.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, this research describes and examines the dialogue between Prophet Sulaiman and the Hoopoe in QS. An-Naml,

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<sup>3</sup>Hamsa, "al-Hiwar dalam Surah Yusuf (Suatu Analisis Makna Kontekstual)" (Tesis; Universitas Alauddin: Makassar, 2015) h. 88

<sup>4</sup>Abdul, Rahman Sholeh, *Pendidikan Agama dan Pengembangan untuk Bangsa*, (Jakarta: PT. Raja Grafindo Persada, 2005), h. 63

<sup>5</sup>Irfan Sagita, *Interstektual Kisah Nabi Musa Dalam Buku Kisah 25 Nabi Dan Rasul Dengan Kisah Nabi Musa Pada Al-Qur'an*. Skripsi UIN Makassar: 2017, h. 29

especially regarding the dialogue format and contextual meaning. The approach used was a linguistic-semantic approach. The data collection technique was conducted by tracing library research data to obtain scientific information collected through literature review used as a reference to the appropriate problem, namely by looking for data related to the title. Therefore, in analyzing the data, researchers used qualitative methods.

## DISCUSSION

### *Semantics*

Semantics comes from the Greek *sema* (noun) meaning sign or symbol. The verb *iṣ semaino* which means to mark or symbolize. Meanwhile, the word *dilalah*, originating from Arabic, is derived from the word *dalalah* which means 'something that can show him something that points the way', or 'pointing him to a straight path'. In terminological terms, semantics is a system and investigation of meaning and significance in a language or languages in general.<sup>6</sup>

The above definitions are compiled in the definition of semantics (علم الدلالة) proposed by

Ahmad Mukhtar Umar, namely:

بِأَنَّهُ دِرَاسَةُ الْمَعْنَى، أَوْ الْعِلْمُ الَّذِي يَدْرُسُ الْمَعْنَى، أَوْ ذَلِكَ الْفَرْعُ مِنْ عِلْمِ اللُّغَةِ الَّذِي يَتَنَاوَلُ نَظْرِيَةَ الْمَعْنَى

“Semantics refers to the study of meaning, or the science of meaning, or a branch of linguistics that investigates the theory of meaning.”<sup>7</sup>

Based on the definitions above, semantics is a part of linguistic studies that treats meaning as its object of study. In line with its progress, semantics includes several theories about meaning, types of meaning, relations and others.

### *Contextual Meaning*

In semantic theory, meaning is also known as a sign. Ali Al-Khuli defines meaning as something that a person understands, whether it comes from words, expressions, or sentences.<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, the nature of contextualization refers to a tool to interpret words, a way or pattern to define the meaning of words/terms in a text/reading that can be useful as a

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<sup>6</sup>Harimurti Kridalaksana, *Kamus Linguistik*, (Jakarta: PT. Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2001), p. 193

<sup>7</sup>Matsna. *Kajian Semantik Arab Klasik dan Kontemporer*, (Jakarta: Prenadamedia Group, 2016), p. 15

<sup>8</sup>Muhammad Ali Al-Khuli. *A Dictionary of Theoretical Linguistic* (Libanon: Du Liban, 1982), p. 166

clue to interpret the content of the text and also useful as a strategy to define words without separating the word from its context.<sup>9</sup>

Contextual meaning is a single meaning unlike lexical meaning which is multiple and has many possibilities. It is also commonly referred to as social meaning (*al-ma'nā al-ijtimā'ī*) and situational meaning (*al-ma'nā al-maqāmī*). It is drawn from the indicators of language (*al-siyāq al-lugawī*) considering the external conditions and circumstances associated with it (*al-siyāq gair al-lugawī*).<sup>10</sup>

Contextual meaning is firstly, the meaning of the use of a word in the context of a particular sentence; secondly, the meaning of the whole sentence (utterance) in the context of a particular situation.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, it leads to a much more complex meaning than phonological meaning, morphological meaning, syntactic meaning, and lexical meaning. This is due to the language structure holds a set of relations. Every word has a relation or connection of meaning with the word preceding or following it. This is what is called *balagh 'alāqāt al-isnād* mentioned by Abdul Qahir al-Jurjani through his words “ لكل كلمة مع صاحبيتها مقام ” which means “every text has its own context”.<sup>12</sup>

According to Firth, contextual theory is in line with the theory of relativism in the comparative semantic approach between languages. The meaning of a word is related to the cultural and ecological environment of a particular language user. This theory implies that there is a relationship between the culture and ecology of certain language users. Based on this theory, a word or symbol has no meaning if it is detached from the context. However, some argue that every word has a basic or primary meaning regardless of the context of the situation. The new word gains secondary meaning in accordance with the context of the situation. In sum, Firth's meaning relationship can only be determined after each word is in the context of use through several levels of analysis, such as lexical, grammatical, and sociocultural.<sup>13</sup>

Al-Khalil and his student Sibawaih also placed reliance on language context to explain the meaning of sentence structure. They are based on pauses, stress, and intonation.

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<sup>9</sup>Friza Youlinda Parwis. *Analisis Makna Kontestual dari Kolom Kartun Peanuts pada Harian The Jakarta Pos*, Deiksis, p. 133

<sup>10</sup>Dawud, M. M. (2001). *Al-'Arabiyyah wa 'Ilm al-Lughah al- Ḥadīṣ*. Dar Gharib.

<sup>11</sup>Hamsa, *al-Hiwar dalam Surah Yusuf (Suatu Analisis Makna Kontekstual)*, Tesis Makassar: 2015,p. 88

<sup>12</sup>al-Akrat, A. al-T. M. H. (2018). *Fī 'Ilm al-Dalālah al-Lugawīyyah*. Kulliyah al-Lughah al-Arabiyyah bi al-Qahirah – Jami'ah al-Azhar

<sup>13</sup>Matsna, M. *Kajian Semantik Arab Klasik dan Kontemporer* (Jakarta: Prenadamedia Group, 2016) p. 15

Regarding their use of situational context, it is evident from their attention to the speaker's and listener's wishes in deciding the meaning of an utterance, as well as the factors that accompany the utterance.<sup>14</sup>

When words are separated from their context of use, they are like an empty container of meaning, yet they cannot remain in an empty container. The power of language does not depend on the original form of the word but instead on the context in which it is used. The context is what clarifies the functional meaning (*al-ma'nā al-waḥīf*) of every word and determines the precise value of the word. A single word has only one meaning in a moment. Indeed, the meanings of words in the dictionary are many and contain possibilities, but the meaning of a word in the context is only one - and no more. Context (*siyāq*) brings in indicators that aid in choosing one to mean out of all the meanings found in the dictionary. Also, it must relate to a certain condition to determine the meaning through the indicators.<sup>15</sup>

Contextual meaning is characterized as particular and limited meaning referring to a single context. In contrast, lexical meanings have a wide range of meanings and tend to be generalized. It can include more than one context. Hence, meaning cannot be obtained unless the word's context is defined. According to 'Ali, contextual meaning plays an important role in defining the word meaning since it explains the general, determines the uncertain, specialises the general, limits the absolute, makes a variety of word meanings, and shows the certainty of the meaning of an utterance.<sup>16</sup>

The context is classified into four parts as suggested by K.Amer, namely: a) language context, b) emotional context, c) situational context and d) cultural context.<sup>17</sup>

a. language context

The language context refers to the word's placement in a structurally varied language context, such as the word (حسن) which is able to be an adjective of various kinds contextually, i.e. indicating a person or something contemporary such as a day, a feast, a time and also an amount or measure such as water or air.

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<sup>14</sup> Yahya, M. N. (2008). Uṣūl al-Nazariyyah al-Siyāqīyah al-Ḥadīṣah 'inda 'Ulamā' al-'Arabiyyah wa Daur Hāzihi al-Nazariyyah fī al-Tawaṣṣul ilā al-Ma'nā. Majallah Jami'ah Tisyirin li al-Buhuts wa al-Dirasat al-'Ilmiyyah, 30(2), 31-47

<sup>15</sup> Madkur, A. (1987). 'Ilm al-Lughah bain al-Turās wa al-Mu'āṣirah. Dar al-Tsaqafah.

<sup>16</sup> 'Ali, Y. 'Atiq M. (2012). Al-Dalālah al-Siyāqīyah wa Nazāiruhā 'inda al-Uṣūliyyin wa Ahammiyyatuhā fī Fahm Maqṣūd al-Khiṭāb. Majallah al-Dirasat al-Ijtima'īyah, 35(2), 281- 330.

<sup>17</sup> Shafuruddin Tajuddin, "Ilmu Dalālah (Sebuah Pengantar Kajian Semantik Arab), (Jakarta: Penerbit Maninjau, 2008). h. 107

b. emotional context

The emotional context refers to the limited meaning depending on the degree of weakness and strength of the emotion that needs to be exaggerated, honest or reinforced, e.g. the word 'love' has a different emotion from the word 'like', even though both words have the same meaning.

c. situational context

The situational context refers to the limited meaning based on the placement of the word in a particular situation.<sup>18</sup> The example of this context is the word (يرحم). If the word is applied to the situation and condition of someone who has passed away (الله يرحمه) which is prefixed with a noun. It may also be used in situations where a person is sneezing (يرحمك الله) preceded by a verb. Therefore, in the first sentence, it means asking Allah for mercy in the Hereafter, while in the second sentence, it means asking Allah for mercy in the world.

d. cultural context.

This context refers to the limited meaning of a word by the cultural and social scope within which it is used.<sup>19</sup> The example in the cultural context is the English word 'mirror' and the word 'looking glass'. The word 'looking glass' indicates a higher social class compared to the word 'mirror' used in a lower class even though it has the same meaning. Other instances include the word 'زوجته' (wife) indicating a difference in social status compared to 'عقيلته' (wife) used in modern languages and also indicating the status of an honorable woman.

### *Dialogue*

Dialogue, in Arabic referred to as *al-hiwār*, involves a conversation between two or more characters. It is an element of a story in general, and of a Qur'anic story in particular. However, there is not necessarily dialogue in every Qur'anic story. This is because among the Quran's stories there are stories that contain descriptions of actors or events alone.<sup>20</sup>

The dialogue elements are four, including:

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<sup>18</sup> Shafruddin Tajuddin, *Ilmu Dalālah (Sebuah Pengantar Kajian Semantik Arab)*, (Jakarta: Penerbit Maninjau, 2008). p. 108.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* p. 108

<sup>20</sup> Hamsa, "al-Hiwar dalam Surah Yusuf (Suatu Analisis Makna Kontekstual)", Tesis Makassar: 2015, p.

- a. Prologue is an introduction to provide an overview of the actors, conflicts or things happening in the story. Prologue also serves to give the audience an understanding of the content of the story in a drama or story, although the drama or story has not been performed/told.
- b. Dialogue refers to a conversation between two or more people. It is an important part of a story or narrative. In the dialogue there must be emotion, as well as dialogue delivered with clear pronunciation of words and voice volume.
- c. A monologue is a conversation by a performer with him/herself or not addressed to anyone else.
- d. An epilogue is the final word that wraps up a play or story and is useful for summarizing the main content of the play.<sup>21</sup>

### ***QS. An-Naml***

Surah An-Naml is one of the Makiyyah surahs in which all the verses are agreed to have been revealed before the Prophet Muhammad hijra to Madinah. It is the 27th surah of the Mushaf, but in terms of the order of its revelation, it is the 48th surah, revealed after Ash-Shu'ara' and before al-Qashash. In terms of the number of verses, according to the calculations of the scholars of Medina and Mecca, there are 95 verses, but 94 verses by the Bashrah and Kufa scholars. The popular name is an-Naml, which means 'Ants'. Others named it 'Surah al-Hud-hud (Hoopoe Birds)', as these two animals are mentioned in this surah. Besides, it is also known as 'Surah Sulaiman'. This is perhaps because the King of Prophets is elaborately described in detail in this sūrah compared to the rest of the sūrah.<sup>22</sup>

Thahir Ibn Ashur argues that the prominent point in this surah is the Qur'anic description, and its miracle as hinted by the opening of this surah using two letters namely *tha'* and *sin*. Moreover, it describes the greatest kingdom ever bestowed on a Prophet, namely Prophet Sulaiman.<sup>23</sup> In addition, there is also an explanation of Allah's perfect ilm; knowing *zahir*, *batin*, the unseen matters and their proofs unfolded to humans, as well as the

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<sup>21</sup>Ahmad Badrun, *Pengantar Ilmu Sastra*, (Bandung: Usaha Nasional, 1983) h.28

<sup>22</sup>M. Quraish Shihab, "Al-Lubab" (*Makna, Tujuan dan Pelajaran dari Surah-surah al-Qur'an*), Cet 1, Jilid 3 (Ciputat: Lentera Hati, Juli 2012), 3

<sup>23</sup>M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah: Pesan Kesan dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an* (Lentera Hati: Jakarta, 2002), p. 168



knowledge granted to Prophet Daud and Prophet Sulaiman, and the knowledge of bird talk taught to Sulaiman.<sup>24</sup>

***The Dialogue Forms of Prophet Sulaiman and The Hoopoe in QS. An-Naml verses 20-28***

The researcher draws on one verse that serves as the prologue or monologue of the dialogue, Surah An Naml verse 16, to find out the forms of dialogue between Prophet Sulaiman and the Hoopoe in QS. An Naml at 20-28:

وَوَرَّثَ سُلَيْمَانَ دَاوُودَ وَقَالَ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ عَلَّمْنَا مِنْطِقَ الطَّيْرِ وَأَوْثَقْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَإِنَّ هَذَا هُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْمُبِينُ

“Sulaiman telah mewarisi Daud dan dia (Sulaiman) berkata, “Wahai manusia, kami telah diajari (untuk memahami) bahasa burung dan kami dianugerahi segala sesuatu. Sesungguhnya (semua) ini benar-benar karunia yang nyata. (And David was succeeded by Solomon, who said, “O people! We have been taught the language of birds, and been given everything ‘we need’. This is indeed a great privilege.”)”

The verse becomes a monologue or prologue to the dialogue between Prophet Sulaiman and the Hoopoe. Prophet Sulaiman possesses the blessing of being able to communicate with all creatures, including birds. It is indicated by the word *مَنْطِقَ الطَّيْرِ* ‘the language of birds’. Describing the specific dialogue between Prophet Sulaiman and the bird in the following verses, this story serves as an inspirational story for humankind. The following are examples of dialogue forms and descriptions:

Explanation	Verse(s)	Dialogue's Form
In this verse, it is mentioned that Prophet Sulaiman had an <b>indirect dialogue</b> with Hoopoe. He sought the presence of the Hoopoe by asking the other bird troops (intermediaries). This indirect dialogue is indicated by the third-person verb with <i>dhamir mustatir</i>	<p>وَتَتَقَدَّمَ الطَّيْرُ فَقَالَ مَا لِي لَا أَرَى الْهُدْهُدَ ۖ أَمْ كَانَ مِنَ الْغَائِبِينَ</p> <p><i>"Dan dia (Sulaiman) memeriksa burung-burung itu, lalu berkata, 'Mengapa aku tidak melihat burung Hud-hud, atau apakah ia termasuk orang-orang yang absen?"</i></p>	Indirect Dialogue

<sup>24</sup>Sayyid Quthb, *Tafsir fi Zhilalil Qur`an* (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2000), p. 244

<p>“<i>huwa</i>” (he) on <i>fi’l</i> كَانِ addressed by Prophet Sulaiman to the Hoopoe.</p>	<p>(‘One day’ he inspected the birds, and wondered, “Why is it that I cannot see the hoopoe? Or could he be absent?”)</p>	
	<p>Q.S. An Naml verse 20</p>	
<p>In this verse it is mentioned that Hoopoe had a <b>direct dialogue</b> with the Prophet Sulaiman. He tried to explain to Prophet Sulaiman the reason for his delay in his call. He just discovered some important news coming from the Land of Saba', and hence the reason for his lateness. He stressed it by saying “I have found out something you do not know.” This direct dialogue is indicated by the second person verb with <i>dhamir mustatir</i> “<i>anta</i>” (you) in <i>fi’l</i> لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ, and <i>dhamir muttashil</i> “<i>ka</i>” (you) in <i>fi’l</i> جِئْتُكَ addressed by the Hoopoe to Prophet Sulaiman.</p>	<p>فَمَكَتْ عَيْرَ بَعِيدٍ فَقَالَ أَحَطْتُ بِمَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ وَجِئْتُكَ مِنْ سَبَأٍ بِنَبَأٍ يَقِينٍ</p> <p><i>Lalu burung Hud-hud itu tidak berlalu begitu saja, kemudian ia berkata, 'Aku telah mengetahui sesuatu yang tidak kamu ketahui, dan aku datang kepadamu dari Saba' dengan berita yang pasti.'</i></p>	<p>Direct Dialogue</p>
	<p>It was not long before the bird came and said, “I have found out something you do not know. I have just come to you from Sheba with sure news.</p>	
	<p>Q.S. An Naml ayat 22</p>	

**Table 1.** The examples of dialogue forms and descriptions

The table above is a sample of dialogue forms between Prophet Sulaiman and the Hoopoe in Q.S An-Naml. In general, the dialogue is detailed as follows: Indirect dialogue in verses 20 and 21 delivered by Prophet Sulaiman to the Hoopoe. Meanwhile, the form of direct dialogue is spread in verses 22 through 26 (5 verses) delivered by the Hoopoe to the Prophet Sulaiman. Furthermore, verses 27 and 28 (2 verses) are direct dialogues delivered by the Prophet Sulaiman to the Hoopoe.

## *Forms of Contextual Meaning of the Dialogue between Prophet Sulaiman and the Hoopoe Bird in QS An-Naml*

*QS. An-Naml Verse 20*

وَتَفَقَّدَ الطَّيْرَ فَقَالَ مَا لِيَ لَا أَرَى الْهُدُودَ أَمْ كَانَ مِنَ الْغَائِبِينَ

*"Dan dia (Sulaiman) memeriksa burung-burung itu, lalu berkata, "Mengapa aku tidak melihat burung Hud-hud, atau apakah ia termasuk orang-orang yang absen?" (One day he inspected the birds, and wondered, "Why is it that I cannot see the hoopoe? Or could he be absent?)*

In the contextual meaning of the verse, Allah tells the story of the Prophet Sulaiman's miracle and his power over his kingdom and his success in communicating with animals, including the hoopoe.

In the literal meaning, the word مَا لِيَ refers to 'why'. However, in the contextual meaning of the situation, it means 'there is no reason for me'. And the situation in a nutshell is this: in the gathering of all beings with Prophet Solomon at any given moment, it is obligatory. All must be present, no exceptions. Yet, there was one animal that was not present, and this absence should not have happened. This is proven by the word "مَا لِيَ" in the verse which is translated generally as 'why'.

*QS. An-Naml Verse 21*

The verse 21 of Surah An-Naml in the Qur'ān continues the story of Prophet Sulaiman after he realized the absence of the Hoopoe:

لَأَعَذِّبَهُ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا أَوْ لَأَذْبَحَنَّهُ أَوْ لِيَأْتِنِي بِسُلْطَنٍ مُّبِينٍ

*"Aku akan menghukumnya dengan hukuman yang keras, atau pasti aku akan menyembelihnya, kecuali jika dia membawa alasan yang jelas." (I will surely subject him to a severe punishment, or 'even' slaughter him, unless he brings me a compelling excuse.)*

In the linguistic context, Prophet Sulaiman threatened to punish the hoopoe severely, or even slaughter it, unless it could bring a clear reason or evidence justifying its disappearance. In terms of contextual meaning, it highlights that his strict action against the Hoopoe's

disappearance shows that in government, order and regularity are considered important, as evidenced by the *taukid* in the word *لَاذْبَحْنَهُ*.

### QS. An-Naml Verse 22

Verse 22 of Surah An-Naml in the Qur'an tells us about the response of the bird Hud-hud to Prophet Sulaiman's warning:

فَمَكَتْ غَيْرَ بَعِيدٍ فَقَالَ أَحَطْتُ بِمَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ وَجِئْتُكَ مِنْ سَبَإٍ بِنَبَأٍ يَقِينٍ

*"Lalu (Sulaiman) berdiam tidak jauh (dari tempatnya), kemudian ia (burung Hud-hud) berkata, 'Aku telah mengetahui sesuatu yang tidak kamu ketahui, dan aku datang kepadamu dari Saba' dengan berita yang pasti.'" (It was not long before the bird came and said, "I have found out something you do not know. I have just come to you from Sheba with sure news.)*

When examined in detail from the context of the situation, the sentence *يَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ* has two very strong meanings and intentions:

1. As emphasized by the Hoopoe to Prophet Sulaiman that he was carrying important news that he could be sure of, Prophet Sulaiman did not know the news at all, unless he told him. And this is emphasized by the words *"يَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ"*. If this was just a casual news and Prophet Sulaiman might have known about it, the Hoopoe could have just said *"أَحَطْتُ"* without *"يَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ"*.
2. The word *أَحَاطَ* in other verses refers to 'knowing in depth', not just 'knowing', such as in Surah al-Jinn verse 28 which reads:

لِيَعْلَمَ أَنْ قَدْ أَبْلَغُوا رَسُولَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَحَاطَ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ وَأَحْصَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عَدَدًا

In this verse, the word *أَحَاطَ* is translated as 'covering'. And other verses in the Qur'an also have this meaning. It can be concluded, then, that the word *أَحَاطَ* means 'to know' which means 'to encompass, to master, to fully understand', not just to know. So in this verse, the context of the situation is more prominent to characterize the dialogue of the Hoopoe.

*QS. An-Naml Verse 23*

The verse 23 of Surah An-Naml in the Qur'an is as follows:

إِنِّي وَجَدْتُ امْرَأَةً تَمْلِكُهُمْ وَأُوتِيَتْ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَلَهَا عَرْشٌ عَظِيمٌ

*"Sesungguhnya aku telah menjumpai seorang wanita yang memerintah mereka dan kepadanya telah diberikan segala sesuatu dan dia mempunyai singgasana yang besar." (Indeed, I found a woman ruling over them,<sup>1</sup> who has been given everything 'she needs', and who has a magnificent throne.)*

This verse is a follow-up to the story of the Hoopoe who gave news to Prophet Sulaiman about the existence of a queen who had great power in Sheba. The Hoopoe explained that the woman ruled her people with great wealth and power and had a magnificent throne.

From a linguistic context, the words 'kingdom' and 'power' in the Qur'an are usually mentioned using the word عَرْشٌ or مُلْكٌ, such as in Sura An Nisa verse 54, which uses the word مُلْكٌ to describe the power of Prophet Ibrahim.

*QS. An-Naml Verse 24*

This verse presents the Hoopoe's information to Prophet Sulaiman about the situation in Sheba.

وَجَدْنَاهَا وَقَوْمَهَا يَسْجُدُونَ لِلشَّمْسِ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَرَبُّهُمْ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فَصَدَّهُمْ عَنِ السَّبِيلِ فَهُمْ لَا يَهْتَدُونَ ۗ

*"Dan aku temukan bahwa dia beserta kaumnya sujud kepada matahari, bukan kepada Allah, dan setan telah memperindah perbuatan mereka lalu menutup mereka dari jalan (Allah), sehingga mereka tidak mendapat petunjuk." (I found her and her people prostrating to the sun instead of Allah. For Satan has made their deeds appealing to them—hindering them from the 'Right' Way and leaving them unguided—)*

The contextual meaning of this verse is that the Hoopoe explained to Prophet Sulaiman that in Sheba, people worshipped the sun as an object and not Allah. They are lost as Satan has adorned or beautified their deeds and led them away from the right path, evidenced by the phrase يَسْجُدُونَ لِلشَّمْسِ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ. This is manifest disbelief.

However, based on the language context, the word رَبُّ يَزَيِّنُ proves that the queen and her people in this verse are obedient servants. This is emphasized and explained by the sentence

وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ حَبَّبَ which the word زَيَّنَ in Tafsir Al Thabari is interpreted with the word حَبَّبَ which means 'to love', 'to become addicted'. In fact, the queen of Sheba is a devout queen, not a disobedient one. However, guidance had not yet reached her. She was just wrong in the object of worship.

The Hoopoe's statement in this verse made Prophet Sulaiman confident that he could preach to the queen to worship Allah.

#### QS. An-Naml Verse 25

أَلَّا يَسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ الَّذِي يُخْرِجُ الْخَبَاءَ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تُخْفُونَ وَمَا تُعْلِنُونَ

*"Mereka seharusnya menyembah Allah yang mampu mengeluarkan yang tersembunyi di langit dan di bumi, dan Dia mengetahui apa yang kalian sembunyikan dan apa yang kalian nyatakan." Ayat ini mengemukakan pesan tentang pentingnya menyembah Allah semata, yang memiliki kuasa atas segala yang tersembunyi dan yang tampak. (so they do not prostrate to Allah, Who brings forth what is hidden in the heavens and the earth, and knows what you 'all' conceal and what you reveal.)*

The contextual situation is that this verse is still explaining to Prophet Sulaiman about the wrong worship performed by the people in Sheba.

#### QS. An-Naml Verse 26

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ

*"Allah, tidak ada Tuhan (yang berhak disembah) kecuali Dia, Tuhan yang memiliki Arasy yang besar." Ayat ini mengandung pernyataan penting tentang keesaan Allah dan kebesaran-Nya. ('He is' Allah! There is no god 'worthy of worship' except Him, the Lord of the Mighty Throne.")*

In contextual meaning of the situation, Hud-hud intends to conclude his conversation in a good manner with this sentence. According to Tafsir As Sa'di, he used his rhetoric to conclude his talk to Prophet Sulaiman with an impressive closing. He uses the word اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ as his declaration of Allah, the Lord who deserves to be worshipped, and takes it from a fragment of the creed, then completes it with the word رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ by mentioning الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ in relation to his previous speech in verse 23.

In contextual language, the mention of the word *العَرْشُ الْعَظِيمُ* in this verse states that ‘no matter how big the throne or *العَرْشِ* of His creature, Allah is the owner or Rabb (رَبُّ) of Allah *العَرْشِ*’.

Imam Al Baghawi says:

عرش ملكة سبأ وإن كان عظيماً فهو صغير حقير في جنب عرشه

*“Singgasana Ratu Saba’ meskipun besar, namun ia kecil dan hina dibanding singgasana-Nya (Allah)”* (Although the Queen of Sheba’s throne was large, it was small and lowly compared to His (Allah's) throne.)

QS. An-Naml Verse 27

قَالَ سَنَنْظُرُ أَصَدَقْتَ أَمْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ

*“Ia (Nabi Sulaiman) berkata, 'Kami akan melihat apakah kamu mengatakan yang benar atau kamu termasuk orang-orang yang berdusta.’”* (Prophet Sulaiman said, “We will see whether you are telling the truth or lying.)

This verse is the response of Prophet Sulaiman to the Hoopoe’s report on the state of the people in Sheba.

The contextual meaning is the Prophet Sulaiman responding to the report brought by the bird Hoopoe about the state of the people in Sheba. Exegetically, this verse shows that Prophet Sulaiman did not immediately accept the report brought by Hoopoe without verifying it first. This illustrates a wise attitude in responding to information, that it is important to ascertain the truth before acting.

In the contextual meaning of language, Sulaiman's verification is evidenced by the word *سَنَنْظُرُ*. In the verse translation, it is translated as ‘we will “see”’. However, in Arabic, the word *نَظَرَ* has a synonym *رَأَى* which is also mentioned in the previous verse, verse 20 (*لَا أَرَى الْهُدُودَ*).

Prophet Sulaiman used the word *سَنَنْظُرُ*, as it has a deeper meaning than the word *رَأَى* which only means ‘to see’ clearly. Such meaning can be learnt more in other verses, such as Surah Al Maidah verse 75:

أَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ نُبَيِّنُ لَهُمُ الْآيَاتِ تَمَّ أَنْظُرْ أَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ

*“Perhatikanlah bagaimana Kami menjelaskan ayat-ayat (tanda-tanda kekuasaan) kepada mereka (Ahli Kitab), kemudian perhatikanlah bagaimana mereka dipalingkan (oleh keinginan mereka).”* (See how We make the signs clear to them, yet see how they are deluded 'from the truth'!)

The word *فَانظُرْ* is translated as the word ‘pay attention’. This similarity also becomes the researcher's perspective to define this verse 27, that what the Prophet Sulaiman meant was to see by paying attention, verifying, observing, from what the Hoopoe conveyed.

#### *QS. An-Naml Verse 28*

إِذْهَبْ بِكِتَابِي هَذَا فَاَلْقِهَا إِلَيْهِمْ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ فَاَنْظُرْ مَاذَا يَرْجِعُونَ

*“Pergilah dengan surat ini dari-Ku, lalu lemparkanlah surat itu kepada mereka, kemudian berpalinglah dari mereka, dan lihatlah apa yang mereka kembalikan.”* (Go with this letter of mine and deliver it to them, then stand aside and see how they will respond.”)

The contextual meaning of this verse is Allah's command to Prophet Sulaiman regarding the next action against the people in Sheba.

The context is that Allah instructed Prophet Sulaiman to take the message He had given to the people of Saba' and deliver it to them. Afterwards, Prophet Sulaiman was asked to stand away from them and see how they would react to the message.

According to the contextual meaning of language, in this verse there are 4 command words (*fi'l amr*) of Prophet Sulaiman to Hoopoe, namely *إِذْهَبْ*, *فَاَلْقِهَا*, *تَوَلَّ*, and *فَاَنْظُرْ*. This indicates that the Prophet Sulaiman, without a second thought, believed in the Hoopoe that he was able to prove his words. He swiftly prepared a letter to the queen through the hoopoe as evidenced by the sentence *بِكِتَابِي هَذَا*, as he considered that the problem at hand was a matter of monotheism that must be eradicated immediately.

## CONCLUSION

This study found a form of dialog between Prophet Sulaiman and the Hoopoe in Surah An Naml verses 20-28, consisting of indirect dialog and direct dialog. Indirect dialog consists of two verses, i.e. verses 20 and 21. Meanwhile, there are seven direct dialogues, 5 verses are direct dialogues delivered by the Hoopoe to Prophet Sulaiman, i.e. in verses 22 to 26, while



the other 2 verses are direct dialogues delivered by Prophet Sulaiman to the Hoopoe, i.e. verses 27 and 28. In addition to the form of dialog, the findings of this study indicate that some verses contain contextual meanings influenced by the context of the situation and the context of the language spread in 8 rounds of dialog.

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