

NOTA DINAS

Nomor: B-1169/Un.07/3/D/PP.00.9/06/2026

Yth. : Kepala Perpustakaan UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya
Dari : Dekan Fakultas Ushuluddin dan Filsafat
Hal : Surat Keterangan Tugas Akhir non-Skripsi Mahasiswa
Tanggal : 22 Juni 2026

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RECONTEXTUALIZING *ISRĀ'ĪLIYYĀT* IN INDONESIAN DIGITAL TAFSIR: A Critical Study of Felix Siauw's Narratives of Prophets Joseph and Moses

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Abstract

This article examines the recontextualization of *Isrā'īliyyāt* in Felix Siauw's interpretations of the Qur'anic narratives of the Prophets Joseph and Moses. As a popular religious figure among converts in digital media, Felix Siauw's discourse constitutes a strategic arena for examining the negotiation of *Isrā'īliyyāt* within contemporary Indonesian social, cultural, and ideological contexts. This study employs a qualitative approach, integrating netnography and content analysis, to analyze Felix's strategies of contextualization, patterns of audience interaction with the narratives presented, and the hermeneutical constructions underlying his interpretations. The findings indicate that *Isrā'īliyyāt* are recontextualized by



linking prophetic stories to contemporary socio-political issues and popular cultural references, including global conflicts, critiques of state food governance, transnational Muslim concerns, and popular media narratives. Audience responses demonstrate a spectrum of religious literacy, ranging from passive acceptance to critical engagement through practices of verification, critique, and correction. The construction of meaning in Felix's interpretation of *Isrāʾīlyyāt* draws on the principles of *munāsabah*, narrative reconstruction, and cultural analogy. Social, artistic, and educational backgrounds, along with post-HTI Islamist ideological orientations, shape variations in prophetic narratives, positioning Qurʾanic stories as ideal models for contemporary life. Academically, this study contributes to the theoretical and methodological development of *Isrāʾīlyyāt* studies in the digital age by highlighting how these narratives are negotiated, adapted, and interpreted within contemporary Indonesian digital religious discourse.

Keywords: Contextual Interpretation; Digital Tafsir; Felix Siau; *Isrāʾīlyyāt*

Abstrak

Artikel ini mengkaji rekontekstualisasi *Isrāʾīlyyāt* dalam penafsiran Felix Siau atas kisah-kisah al-Qurʾan tentang Nabi Yusuf dan Nabi Musa. Sebagai figur religius muallaf yang populer di media digital, wacana yang dibangun Felix menjadi arena strategis untuk menelaah negosiasi *Isrāʾīlyyāt* dalam konteks sosial, kultural, dan ideologis Indonesia kontemporer. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan mengintegrasikan netnografi dan analisis konten untuk menganalisis strategi kontekstualisasi tafsir Felix, pola interaksi audiens terhadap narasi yang disajikan, serta konstruksi hermeneutis yang melandasi penafsirannya. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *Isrāʾīlyyāt* direkontekstualisasi dengan mengaitkan kisah-kisah kenabian dengan isu-isu sosial-politik kontemporer dan referensi budaya populer, termasuk konflik global, kritik terhadap tata kelola pangan negara, isu Muslim transnasional, serta narasi media populer. Respons audiens memperlihatkan spektrum literasi keagamaan yang beragam, mulai dari penerimaan pasif hingga keterlibatan kritis melalui praktik verifikasi, kritik, dan koreksi. Konstruksi makna dalam penafsiran *Isrāʾīlyyāt* oleh Felix bertumpu pada penerapan prinsip *munāsabah*, rekonstruksi naratif, dan analogi budaya. Latar belakang sosial, kultural, dan pendidikan, serta orientasi ideologis Islamisme pasca-HTI, membentuk variasi narasi kenabian yang memosisikan kisah-kisah al-Qurʾan sebagai model ideal bagi kehidupan kontemporer. Secara akademik, penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pengembangan pemahaman teoretis dan metodologis kajian *Isrāʾīlyyāt* di era digital dengan menegaskan bagaimana narasi-narasi tersebut dinegosiasikan, diadaptasi, dan dimaknai dalam wacana keagamaan digital Indonesia kontemporer.

Kata Kunci: Tafsir Kontekstual; Tafsir Digital; Felix Siau; *Isrāʾīlyyāt*

Introduction

The discourse on *Isrā'īliyyāt* occupies a problematic position in tafsir studies, not only due to its long history of controversy but also because of its flexible nature and ease of reproduction in diverse epistemic contexts. Historically, *Isrā'īliyyāt* narratives have constituted an integral component of tafsir traditions, although scholars differ on the limits of their legitimacy.¹ In the digital age, however, this issue has become increasingly complex, as religious narratives circulate rapidly and largely without authoritative control, particularly through social media, which allows any public figure, whether authoritative or not, to quote, modify, or retell *Isrā'īliyyāt* without adequate verification.² This phenomenon not only expands the circulation of *Isrā'īliyyāt* but also challenges classical assumptions about the authority of interpretation, the validity of sources, and the stability of meaning in the digital space.³

In the Indonesian context, the reproduction of *Isrā'īliyyāt* narratives through digital preaching is closely intertwined with the emergence of social media preachers who utilize visual aesthetics and popular rhetoric to reframe religious discourse.⁴ Felix Siauw

¹ Roberto Tottoli, "Origin and Use of the Term *Isrā'īliyyāt* in Muslim Literature," *Arabica*, 1999, 193–210. Ismail Albayrak, "Reading the Bible in the Light of Muslim Sources: From *Isrā'īliyyāt* to *Islāmiyyāt*," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 23, no. 2 (April 2012): 113–27, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09596410.2012.655062>.

² Ahmad Muttaqin, "Women's Identity in the Digital Islam Age: Social Media, New Religious Authority, and Gender Bias," *QIJIS (Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies)* 8, no. 2 (December 2020): 253, <https://doi.org/10.21043/qijis.v8i2.7095>.

³ Ani Nabila Farahdiba et al., "Isrā'īliyyāt Discourse in Virtual Space: A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Gus Baha's Interpretation in Santri Gayeng YouTube Channel," *Mashdar: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis* 5, no. 2 (December 2023): 147–62, <https://doi.org/10.15548/mashdar.v5i2.7185>.

⁴ Ani Nabila Farahdiba, "The New Trend in Digital School of Tafsir: Qur'an Journaling and the Reconfiguration of Religious Authority on @Aisharizqy's Instagram," *Journal of Ushuluddin and Islamic Thought* 2, no. 1 (June 2024): 119–47, <https://doi.org/10.15642/juit.2024.2.1.119-147>. Feby Audina Fadia and Nugraha Andri Afriza, "Tafsir and Gender Normativity in the Digital Age: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Career Women in Instagram Memes,"

emerges as a central figure in this phenomenon. Through a visual approach and persuasive rhetoric, he frames preaching as an expression of digital popular culture that resonates with his audience. In his narrative construction, stories of previous generations are presented attractively as part of a strategy to convey religious messages that are not only normative but also communicative and contextual.⁵ The YouTube channel YNTV serves as the primary platform for disseminating this content, while the YukNgaji network expands the reach of daʿwah through online classes, interactive discussions, and offline forums. His collaboration with the Multiracial Reverted Muslim platform led by Firdaus Wong strengthens the transnational dimension of the digital daʿwah he has built, while also demonstrating a new articulation of religious authority in the digital age.⁶

In this context, an analysis of Felix Siauw's use of *Isrāʿīliyyāt* in his interpretation of the Qur'an is significant for several reasons. *First*, as a popular but controversial Chinese Muslim convert preacher, Felix Siauw is widely known for his affiliation with the transnational Islamist movement Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) and his expertise in utilizing social media and visual aesthetics on a massive scale. The combination of his ethnic background, status as a convert, ideological affiliation, and digital communication strategy makes Felix a unique figure in Indonesia's currently crowded Islamic preaching market.⁷ *Second*, a number of studies mention the

Journal of Ushuluddin and Islamic Thought 1, no. 2 (December 2023): 164–96, <https://doi.org/10.15642/juit.2023.1.2.164-196>.

⁵ Hew Wai Weng, *On-Offline Dakwah: Social Media and Islamic Preaching in Malaysia and Indonesia*, Mediatized Religion in Asia (Routledge, 2018). 88-104.

⁶ Wai Weng, 89.

⁷ Hew Wai Weng, "The Art of Dakwah: Social Media, Visual Persuasion and the Islamist Propagation of Felix Siauw," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 46, no. 134 (January 2018): 61–79, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2018.1416757>. Moh. Nor Ichwan, Mustaqim Pabbajah, and Faizal Amin, "Digitization of Religious Tafsir: The Fading of Indonesian Ulama Authority in Post Truth Era," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis* 25, no. 2 (September 2024): 320–45, <https://doi.org/10.14421/qh.v25i2.5545>.

significant role of Chinese preachers, including Felix Siauw, in the spread of Islam in Indonesia through various media, especially social media, which often causes controversy. Their approach to preaching tends to be conservative and less accommodating to the pluralistic reality of Indonesian society, a tendency that Hew (2018) conceptualizes as the Conservative Turn.⁸ *Third*, Felix Siauw tends to employ simple religious interpretations to garner the sympathy of young and educated individuals.⁹ Through these strategies, he has successfully influenced the religious understanding of the Muslim community, especially among young people.¹⁰ Fourth, with a large number of followers and his ability to shape public opinion on various religious and political issues, Felix can be considered an Islamic authority.¹¹

Existing academic studies on Felix Siauw can be broadly categorized into three main strands. First, studies that position Felix as a controversial figure in public discourse, particularly in relation to issues of radicalism and Islamophobia, as discussed in Hastuti's (2024) article analyzing the polemic surrounding the films Nussa and Rarra on social media.¹² Hastuti shows how Felix's association with HTI triggered endless symbolic tensions that led to moral panic, caused by weak public support for the Islamophobia

⁸ Muhammad Iqbal Juliansyahzen, "Ideologization of Hijrah in Social Media: Digital Activism, Religious Commodification, and Conservative Domination," *Millah: Journal of Religious Studies*, February 27, 2023, 155–80, <https://doi.org/10.20885/millah.vol22.iss1.art6>.

⁹ Hasyim, Syafiq. "New Contestation in Interpreting Religious Texts: Fatwa, Tafsir, and Shariah." *The New Santri: Challenges to Traditional Religious Authority in Indonesia*, edited by Norsabril Saat and Ahmad Najib Burhani (2020): 60

¹⁰ Hew Wai Weng, "Conservative Inclusivity and Hierarchical Diversity: Chinese Dakwah and the Paradoxes of Indonesian Religious Pluralism," *Asian Journal of Social Science* 47, no. 3 (August 2019): 387–407, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685314-04703006>.

¹¹ Wai Weng, "The Art Of Dakwah."

¹² Heksa Biopsi Puji Hastuti, Riani Riani, and Hasina Fajrin R., "The Islamophobia Controversy in Nussa Dan Rarra Cartoon Film: An Insight Into Indonesian Netizens' Tweets," *Asian Journal of Communication* 34, no. 3 (May 2024): 333–52, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01292986.2024.2314779>.

narrative. Second, studies that highlight Felix's da'wah strategy in adopting popular culture as a medium for spreading Islamist ideology.¹³ Wai Weng (2024) notes how Felix, as a former HTI preacher, reconstructs his image through digital aesthetics and visual messages to reach young audience. This soft Islamism approach is seen as a response to political changes and state regulations following the banning of HTI. In a previous study, Wai Weng (2018) emphasized that Felix's da'wah activities, both online and offline, complement one another through visual narratives, dogmatic rhetoric, and a personal approach.¹⁴ Third, studies explore aspects of communication, theology, and interpretation in Felix's preaching. Masuro and Kamil examine the theological framework and the interpretive patterns of the integration between the Qur'an and science in Felix Siau's thought.¹⁵ Robby Hidayatul Ilmi examines the paradigm shift in Islamism from a contextual approach to militant scripturalism, as reflected in Felix's pattern of text interpretation. Hidayat discusses the principle of *qaulan balighā* in Felix Siau's YouTube preaching communication.¹⁶ Azami examines the narrative of humanity in Felix's interpretation on digital channels,¹⁷ while Rohmatun analyzes the discourse on gender

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¹³ Hew Wai Weng, "Packaging, Persuasion and Propaganda: Popular Preaching and Islamic Counter-Publics in Indonesia," *Asian Studies Review* 48, no. 1 (January 2024): 70–85, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357823.2022.2052801>.

¹⁴ Wai Weng, "The Art Of Dakwah."

¹⁵ Uliyatul Masruro and Ahmad Zaidanil Kamil, "Relevansi Al-Qur'an Dan Sains: Analisis Tafsir Audiovisual Ayat-Ayat Semesta Oleh Felix Siau Dan Risco Aditama Di Akun YouTube @YukNgajiTV," *Jurnal Semiotika-Q: Kajian Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 5, no. 2 (2024): 626–48.

¹⁶ Nurul Hidayat and Irma Yusriani Simamora, "Application of Qaulan Baligha Communication Principles by Ustadz Felix Siau on the YouTube Channel," *Wasilatuna: Jurnal Komunikasi Dan Penyiaran Islam* 7, no. 02 (July 2024): 140–54, <https://doi.org/10.38073/wasilatuna.v7i02.1640>.

¹⁷ Azami Hadiana Trendi, "Keistimewaan Manusia (Analisis Pesan Dakwah Felix Siau Dalam Video Youtube Kajian Islam Rahmatan Lil Alamin)," *Kontemplasi: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 8, no. 1 (2020): 1–21.

equality on Felix Siauw's Twitter account, thereby further enriching this scholarly discussion.¹⁸

Unlike previous studies, this research focuses on three main issues: (1) how Felix Siauw contextualizes *Isrā'iliyyāt* narratives in his interpretation, particularly the stories of Prophets Joseph and Moses; (2) how netizens respond to this contextualization, especially regarding the validity of historical accounts, interpretive authority, and the legitimacy of meaning constructed in the digital public sphere; and (3) how Felix Siauw's interpretive methods and the construction of meaning in the stories of the Prophets Joseph and Moses are built, developed, and negotiated within the cultural framework and social reality of Indonesian society. Thus, the purpose of this research is not only to analyze the representation strategies employed but also to examine how intertextuality, digital mediation practices, and certain ideological frameworks contribute to the stabilization of the meanings constructed by Felix.

This study argues that Felix Siauw's use of *Isrā'iliyyāt* narratives, as a convert with a non-Muslim background and his access to literature outside the classical Islamic tradition, provides a significant analytical lens for examining how non-canonical narrative sources are adopted and reproduced in the discourse of Qur'anic interpretation. This phenomenon not only reflects a shift in the epistemic landscape of interpretation but also indicates a decentralization of religious authority, in which non-traditional actors such as Felix contributes to constructing the legitimacy of interpretation through digital platforms.¹⁹

¹⁸ Rohmatun Dira, "Analisis Wacana Kritis Kesetaraan Gender Dalam Islam Pada Akun Twitter Ustadz Felix Siauw (@ Felixsiauw)," *Bachelor's Thesis, Fakultas Ilmu Dakwah Dan Ilmu Komunikasi Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta*, 2021, 58.

¹⁹ Nopriani Hasibun, Eka Mulyo Yunus, and Thohar Ahmad Hsb, "Digital Tafsir and The Construction of Religious Authority: A Critical Analysis of Gus Nur's Quranic Interpretation," *JUIT: Journal of Ushuluddin and Islamic Thought* 3, no. 1 (2025): 76.

To address these research objectives, this study employs a qualitative approach integrating content analysis²⁰ and netnography.²¹ Content analysis is applied to examine the *Isrāʿīlyyāt* narratives presented by Felix Siau on his YouTube channel. The netnographic approach is used to analyze patterns of interaction, responses, and meaning negotiation among netizens in social media spaces.

Result and Discussion

Felix Siau: The Identity of Chinese Converts and Religious Authority in the Era of Digital Daʿwah

Felix Siau was born with the name Siau Chen Kwok. He was born in Palembang, South Sumatra, on January 31, 1984.²² Felix comes from an ethnic Chinese Indonesian family and was raised within a Catholic household. During the reign of President Soeharto, his family was affected by the population registration policy issued on January 27, 1980, which required citizens to select one of the five official state-recognized religions in accordance with the New Order ideological principles. Ancestral religions, such as Confucianism, were no longer legally recognized and therefore could not be listed on national identity cards. In this context, Felix's parents chose Catholicism as their formal religious identity, even though in daily practices the family continued to perform Chinese religious rituals. As part of its assimilation policy, the New Order regime also abolished the three main pillars of Chinese cultural identity, namely Chinese-language media, Chinese ethnic organizations, and Chinese secondary schools.

²⁰ Ilyas Daud, "Qurānic Exegesis As Social Criticism: The Case of Tafsiṛ al-Azhār," *ULUL ALBAB Jurnal Studi Islam* 21, no. 1 (June 2020): 24, <https://doi.org/10.18860/ua.v21i1.7828>.

²¹ Eriyanto and Nur Asri, *Metode Netnografi: Pendekatan Kualitatif Dalam Memahami Budaya Pengguna Media Sosial* (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2021). 2.

²² Abd Hannan, "Cyberspace Dan Populisme Islam Di Kalangan Netizen: Studi Kasus Pada Akun Media Sosial Felix Siau," *Jurnal Sosiologi Reflektif* 15, no. 2 (April 24, 2021): 228.

During his time as an ethnic Chinese in Palembang, Felix frequently experienced racial discrimination and was once physically attacked by a group of Muslim men. During the riots of May 1998, ethnic Chinese Indonesians were among the primary targets of violence. These experiences left Felix feeling discriminated and traumatized. In 2002, while studying at the Bogor Agricultural Institute (IPB), Felix decided to convert to Islam. Following his conversion, Felix began to study Islam intensively and joined the Islamic movement Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) as an activist in 2006. This organization has been the subject of sustained public controversy as its ideological positions are regarded as incompatible with the ideology of nationalism and the foundational concept of the Indonesian state. Nevertheless, this new religious identity provided Felix with a sense of belonging that he had long sought during his youth. He felt freed from the burden of his identity as a Chinese Christian minority.²³

In the context of digital da'wah, Felix Siauw is one of the HTI figures who has a major influence, especially among the millennial generation. One factor that distinguishes him in the public sphere is his openness in acknowledging his ethnic identity. He not only mentions his name, but also explicitly states his Chinese clan name. The narrative he advances regarding his conversion to Islam (*muallaf*) carries significant symbolic power in relation to his role as an *ustadz* (religious teacher). This not only confers moral legitimacy upon him but also constructs an image of religious commitment that appears more intense and reflective than that attributed to many other Muslims. Beyond his involvement with HTI, Felix is also known as a prolific writer, public preacher, and

²³ Rheinhard R.R. Sirait, "Felix Siauw, Storyteller, Preacher and Profiteer: Fashioning a New Brand of Islam in Indonesia," *Fashion, Women and Power: The Politics of Dress*, no. Query date: 2025-05-10 06:07:41 (2021): 153–71, https://doi.org/10.1386/9781789384611_8.155.

active figure on social media platforms.²⁴ Although he is frequently the subject of public scrutiny due to controversies surrounding HTI, often perceived as posing challenges to Indonesian democracy,²⁵ his religious career continues to flourish, and he is widely regarded as one of the most influential Muslim converts in Indonesia. Indeed, he is widely recognized as one of the most successful preachers in Indonesia's digital religious space.²⁶

Over time, his identity as a Chinese Indonesian convert to Islam proved insufficient to secure sustained long-term success. Although he initially attracted public sympathy, the credibility of his Islam continued to be questioned by some circles. Rather than adopting the title of *ustadz*, Felix preferred to identify himself as an "Islamic motivator." With this label, he gained a broader scope of interpretation and was not strictly bound to delivering Islamic classical texts as his preaching material.²⁷ In recent years, public attention has returned to Felix through a number of writings that articulate Islamic perspectives within the ideological framework of HTI. His published works include *Beyond The Inspiration* (2010), *Muhammad Al-Fatih 1453* (2013), *The to Master Your Habits* (2013), *Yuk Berhijab* (2013), *Udah Putusin Aja* (2013), *Khilafah* (2014), *The Chronicles of Ghazi: Rise of the Ottomans* (2014), and *Khilafah Remake* (2015). Among these works, *Khilafah* is one of the most controversial and has sparked debate in the public sphere.

In consolidating his position within the Indonesian da'wah market, Felix Siauw utilizes digital platforms as his primary medium for da'wah. Since 2010, he has been active on Twitter, at a time when

²⁴ Abd Hannan, "Cyberspace Dan Populisme Islam Di Kalangan Netizen: Studi Kasus Pada Akun Media Sosial Felix Siauw," *Jurnal Sosiologi Reflektif* 15, no. 2 (April 2021): 230, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jsr.v15i2.2116>.

²⁵ Rheinhard Sirait, "Felix Siauw, Storyteller, Preacher and Profiteer: Fashioning a New Brand of Islam in Indonesia," in *Fashion, Women and Power: The Politics of Dress*, ed. Denise N. Rall (Intellect Books, 2022), 153–71, https://doi.org/10.1386/9781789384611_8.

²⁶ Sirait.156.

²⁷ Sirait. 59.

Jakarta was widely dubbed the “Twitter capital of the world”, and managed to attract more than 250,000 followers within his first year on the platform. In 2015, he was listed as the *ustaz* with the fourth-largest number of social media followers in Indonesia. Felix’s strategy for building popularity has proven effective, as reflected in his significant number of followers across multiple platforms: 1.6 million on Instagram, 1.83 million on YouTube, and 3.3 million on Twitter as of April 2025. This extensive follower base provides him with a great opportunity to disseminate his da’wah message to various segments of society.

His preaching initiative is known as “YukNgaji.” YukNgaji was established by Felix through his collaboration with Hussain Assadi. Hussain Assadi is a graduate of the Bogor Agricultural Institute (IPB) and a senior colleague of Felix who works as a professional graphic designer. During a meeting in Istanbul, Turkey, Felix and Hussain engaged in an in-depth discussion about strategies for utilizing digital space for religious da’wah. The discussion focused on optimizing the potential of virtual audiences as an effective and sustainable medium for da’wah, which led to the establishment of a preaching community in 2015, later known as YukNgaji. “Yuk” translates as “let’s go,” and “Ngaji” is derived from the word “kaji,” meaning “to collectively explore new references in the journey of faith.”²⁸ The name was created as an initiative designed to serve as a platform for learning and spiritual transformation for the younger generation in the digital age.

The YukNgaji community was established in response to the need for an adaptive space for da’wah, especially for the younger generation who are increasingly exposed to forms of popular culture perceived as counterproductive to Islamic values. As part of a transformative da’wah strategy, the community adopts the motto “Obedience brings happiness, sin brings misery,” which reflects its

²⁸ Komunitas YukNgaji. Wikipedia. Wikipedia Foundation. 29 April 2024. <https://id.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yukngaji>

moral commitment to the internalization of Islamic values in everyday life. To maintain the relevance and continuity of its da'wah message, YukNgaji has developed an annual da'wah agenda with various themes. In its first year, the central theme was "The Power of YukNgaji," followed by "The Miracle of YukNgaji," and "Share Your Happiness" in the third year.²⁹ Alongside its virtual da'wah activities, the YukNgaji YouTube channel regularly hosts a special Ramadan program entitled 'Reconnect With Qur'an'. This program focuses on strengthening the understanding of Qur'anic values through the presentation of communicative and contextual content.

In addition to functioning as a da'wah community composed of multiple teams, YukNgaji has also been developed into a digital channel on the YouTube platform, known as YNTV. As of Desember 2025, the YNTV YouTube channel has 643,000 subscribers, with a total of 1,388 videos uploaded and an accumulated number of views reaching 143,769,263. These figures indicate the extensive reach and strong audience appeal of the da'wah content disseminated through this digital medium.

In interpreting Qur'anic verses related to the Jewish people, Felix Siauw employs a dialogical presentation method in the form of two-way discussion with one of the YukNgaji community teams. The discussion about the Jewish people is presented across five separate episodes, each addressing a different thematic focus. The five video titles are The Origins of the Children of Israel in episode 7, The Disaster of Jewish Intelligence in episode 8, Jews: Liars Throughout the Ages in episode 12, The Basis for Fighting the Jews in episode 13, and The Worst People in the Universe in episode 15. However, for the purposes of this article, the analysis is limited to a single video entitled "The Calamity of Jewish Intelligence" in episode 8.

²⁹ Komunitas YukNgaji. Wikipedia. Wikipedia Foundation. 29 April 2024. <https://id.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yukngaji>.

Contextualization of *Isrā'iliyyāt* on Social Media: Intertextuality and Analogy Felix Siauw's Interpretation

Contextualizing the Mother of Prophet Joseph through the Character of Leia in the Star Wars

Felix Siauw began his explanation by emphasizing that the Children of Israel were a community that often strayed from divine guidance, despite having been blessed with holy scriptures and a lineage of prophets. He referred to Qur'an 61:7 to illustrate this characterization. From this point, Felix shifted to the early historical context of Abraham's family, who lived during the Hyksos period, including the narrative about the existence of the Prophets Isaac and Ishmael in Egypt. He presented two versions of Hagar's identity (the mother of Prophet Ishmael) namely, one describing her as an Egyptian female slave and another portraying her as the daughter of a king.

Figure 1. Felix's interpretation using image visualization



After discussing the context of Prophet Abraham, Felix moved on to the genealogy of Prophet Ishaq and his two sons, Prophet Jacob and Prophet Ish. From the lineage of Prophet Ish, twelve sons were born who later became the progenitors of the Israelites. At this point, Felix emphasized that audiences should not

become preoccupied with political and territorial boundaries, which in modern history have been conceptualized within the concept of nationalism.

The narrative then shifts to the story of Prophet Joseph, which Felix recounted following the Qur'anic storyline: being cast into a well by his brothers, sold into slavery in Egypt, imprisoned, and eventually rising to a high-ranking position within the kingdom. Elements of *Isrā'īlyyāt* reappear when Felix explains Joseph's genealogical background by advancing the claim that Jacob was born in Palestine and subsequently migrated to Babylon.

The element of contextualization in Felix's explanation becomes evident when he associates Lia with the fictional character Princess Leia from the Star Wars films. This analogy is not merely a rhetorical element, but constitutes a discursive strategy that consciously utilizes popular cultural symbols to bridge the gap between the Qur'anic text and the imaginative horizon of contemporary audiences.

Contextualizing the Story of the Prophet Joseph and Critiquing Bulog's Food Management

According to Qur'an 12:46, while still in prison, the Prophet Joseph interpreted the dreams of two fellow prisoners. He foretold that one of them would be released and appointed to an official position, while the other would face execution. This interpretation eventually led to Joseph being introduced to the king of Egypt. The king later experienced a dream in which he saw seven fat cows and seven lean cows, as well as seven full ears of grain and seven withered ones. Prophet Joseph explained that the dream symbolized seven years of abundant harvests followed by seven years of famine, and he proposed a strategy to manage the impending crisis. This meant that Joseph initiated a policy of storing grain and managing livestock resources during seven years of abundance in preparation

for the subsequent seven-year famine. If calculated, he could store animal and plant protein for 14 years.³⁰

Felix's contextualization is evident when he recounts the famine that struck Babylon, during which the eleven brothers of the Prophet Joseph were forced to seek food in Egypt. In reading of this event, Felix highlights the Prophet Joseph's logistical strategy, which focused not only on agricultural production but also on the establishment of a measured and long-term storage system. This strategy is interpreted as a model of food management that is planned, disciplined, and transparent.³¹ From this point onward, Felix draws a parallel with the national context in Indonesia, particularly in relation to food management by Bulog. According to him, the problems of insufficient stocks, damaged warehouses, and inefficient distribution indicate the absence of the principles of food management exemplified by Prophet Joseph, namely, long-term planning, strict supervision, and accountable stockpiling.³²

Felix praised Prophet Joseph's ability not only to meet Egypt's domestic needs but also to ensure that the broader regions, including Babylon, were supplied through the logistics system he managed. As a consequence, the Prophet Joseph's brothers traveled to Egypt due to food shortages and eventually moved from Palestine to Mesopotamia, Egypt. In concluding his narrative, Felix emphasizes that not all of Prophet Joseph's brothers acted wickedly. Benjamin, one of the brothers, was portrayed as remaining aligned with moral integrity and as distinct from his other brothers.³³

³⁰ YNTV, *Kecerdasan Membawa Yahudi Kepada Kemusyrikan-Reconnect With Quran Eps 8*, directed by YNTV, n.d. YouTube: 10.13 https://youtu.be/B8pp2Pl6R_M?si=uAl62SzkKcsj5loD

³¹ YNTV, *Kecerdasan Membawa Yahudi Kepada Kemusyrikan-Reconnect With Quran Eps 8*, YouTube: 08.56 https://youtu.be/B8pp2Pl6R_M?si=uAl62SzkKcsj5loD

³² Buya Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar Jilid 5*, Pustaka Nasional PTE LTD (Singapura, 2001). 3659

³³ YNTV, *Kecerdasan Membawa Yahudi Kepada Kemusyrikan-Reconnect With Quran Eps 8*. YouTube: 11.19

Contextualizing the Intelligence of the Children of Israel with the People of Gaza and China

The next instance of contextualization appears in Felix Siauw's explanation of the story of the Children of Israel during the leadership of Prophet Moses, which begins with a reference to Qur'an 2:47. Felix reveals that from the beginning, the Children of Israel were portrayed as a community with persistent moral and social problem. In this regard, the Qur'an states that the Children of Israel were glorified and given advantages over other people at that time. According to Felix, the advantage referred to in the verse is intellectual capacity. The Children of Israel were known for their intelligence. This is also reflected in some of the people of Gaza who are descendants of the Children of Israel. Much of the data obtained by Felix also mentions this. Therefore, it is not surprising that they have extraordinary intellectual abilities, such as Umar and Salahuddin, who were able to conquer Baitul Maqdis. Felix also likened them to the Chinese in Indonesia, who are also known for their intelligence and extraordinary abilities. Felix stated emphatically that the Light Version of the Children of Israel was like the Chinese. If the Chinese could master many things in Indonesia, then what more could the Children of Israel do, who have proven to have extraordinary resilience, survival skills, and intelligence.³⁴ That was where the Jews ruled over the Egyptian economy.

Contextualizing the Story of the Murder of Infants during the Time of Pharaoh through Kung Fu Panda

At one time, one of the Egyptian sorcerers predicted that Pharaoh's power would one day be replaced by a male child from among the Israelites. Upon learning this prophecy, Pharaoh responded with a cruel and repressive policy; the systematic killing

https://youtu.be/B8pp2Pl6R_M?si=uAl62SzkKcsj5loD

³⁴ YNTV, *Kecerdasan Membawa Yahudi Kepada Kemusyrikan-Reconnect With Quran Eps 8*. YouTube: 12.23

of every male infant born to the Israelites, while allowing female infants to live. This policy is described in the Qur'an 2:49. Felix further states that this story is extraordinary, and argues that, if visualized in cinematic form, it would possess narrative power comparable to the film *Kung Fu Panda*. He emphasizes that, implicitly, Disney and similar film industries understand religious concepts and often adapt religious stories into their own versions.

In *Kung Fu Panda*, for example, the chosen character who is destined to replace the great power but must first be eliminated bears similarities to the story of the Prophet Moses, who was cast into the river as a infant to escape Pharaoh's killing policy. After being cast into the river, baby Moses was found by Pharaoh's wife. She convinced Pharaoh to let the child live, arguing that his presence brought her inner peace. Little Moses was eventually taken to the palace and raised there. According to Felix, this episode demonstrates the greatness of women. He emphasizes that this greatness certainly derives from God, but the role of women is very significant, even capable of softening the heart of a cruel ruler like Pharaoh.³⁵

Contextualizing the Words of Prophet Moses through the *Ma'iyah* Movement

Felix highlights the event when the Children of Israel were commanded to enter a land inhabited by the *Jabbarīn*, also known as the Philistines, which is now commonly associated with present-day Palestine. However, they refused the command and instead said to Moses, "Go, you and your God, we will wait here." These words reflect a cowardly, condescending, and even contemptuous attitude toward the Prophet Moses. In today's context, this attitude can be likened to saying, "Go ahead and fight first; when you win, we will join you." Felix adds that the Children of Israel were merely spectators, not sharing the same vision as their leader. This lack of

³⁵ YNTV, *Kecerdasan Membawa Yahudi Kepada Kemusyrikan-Reconnect With Quran Eps 8*. YouTube: 16.04

harmony is also evident in their statement, which refers to God as “your God,” not “our God.” This contrasts with Moses’ strong faith, as implied in his words recorded in Qur’an 26:62 when he was being pursued at sea: “*Kalla, inna ma’iya rabbi sayahdin*” “Never! Indeed, my Lord is with me; He will guide me.” From this, Felix concluded that the true attitude of togetherness, or ma’iyah, as practiced by Cak Nun.

Supportive and Critical Discourses on *Isrāʿīlyyāt*: Netizens’ Reactions to Felix Siauw’s Digital Narratives of Prophets Joseph and Moses

Based on a compilation of online comments on Felix Siauw’s explanation of the stories of the Prophets Moses and Joseph, the audience’s response to the *Isrāʿīlyyāt* narrative appears to be polarized, as seen in the following description.

Table 1.

No.	Pro Comments	Con Comments
1	@fira know: I was born Muslim, but I only memorized a few short verses and don’t even know their meaning. I feel ashamed of Ustadz Felix, who is so knowledgeable about the contents of the Qur’an, fluent in hadith and Islamic history, even though he is a convert. Why am I not like Ustadz Felix, who is so amazing? Masya Allah, I feel ashamed.	@mukhranssyah4169: CORRECTION: European Jews (Ashkenazi) are DESCENDANTS OF THE KHAZAR PEOPLE (not Israel). With the help of Britain after World War I, they migrated to Palestine and established the state of Israel.
2	@PembersihHati-gu6hp: Masha’Allah, it’s been a long time since I heard stories about the prophets... Ustadz Felix knows so many details... I’m curious, I can’t skip it.	@batkarbulukumba: 33.40 There are many historical errors or inaccuracies throughout the last two videos, but at this point it seems difficult for us to tolerate. In a famous hadith, the Prophet said, “Convey even one verse.” But I practice the second sentence of the hadith: “And tell stories from the Children of Israel, and

that is fine.” This hadith was revealed in Medina, while the hadith prohibiting the narration of *Isra’iliyyat* was during the Meccan phase. FYI,

..... I have been interested in the study of *Isra’iliyyat* since childhood, and there are many inaccuracies throughout these two videos regarding *Isra’iliyyat* stories, but I appreciate the method of da’wah. So I hope this criticism may serve as constructive feedback for the future, encouraging more references to *Isra’iliyyat* from an Islamic perspective. Ibn Ishaq’s Sirah Nabawiyah also refers extensively to *Isra’iliyyat*. There is Dr. Menachem Ali in Indonesia, there is Koh Dondi Tan, or occasionally inviting Indonesian Jews is also cool, there is Yitzhaq ben Avraham. It is interesting to study *Isra’iliyyat*. Hopefully, it will continue to be improved so that the dialogue refers to more accurate sources.

- 3 @najibabdulqowi2192: It is divinely decreed. The unification of the people under a singular leader, guided by Islamic law, is proposed as a means to actualize the principle of mercy for all of creation.
- @adlinafauziah530: It is imperative to acknowledge the fundamental principle that all matters must be referred to the guidance set forth in the Qur’an. It is evident that the most significant miracle bestowed upon the Prophet for his ummah until the conclusion of time is the Qur’an, which serves as direct guidance from Allah. However, I would like to inquire about the following explanation: It is asserted that only those of sound intellect are capable of committing shirk. A considerable proportion of Indonesians adhere to a belief system that incorporates supernatural phenomena and practices, often referred to as "the unseen." These beliefs are not merely superstitious but rather play a significant role in the lives of many Indonesians, particularly in ensuring the safety and prosperity of their families and communities. This belief system is often interwoven with aspects of Islam and incorporates elements of local beliefs, creating a unique blend of religious and cultural practices. The question of their

- intelligence remains unanswered. The plausibility of this outcome is dubious. If they are adept at disseminating it, it is possible that they are also skilled in deceit. However, the question remains: what is the status of those who adhere to these principles? Sigh
4. @ficarrachmaa20: Ustadz Felix pursued a career in education as a national history teacher. It is anticipated that, God willing, Indonesia will achieve its objective of becoming a golden nation by the year 2045.
- @saran6633: With regard to the issues concerning Ishmael and Israel, it would be prudent to engage in a collective deliberation. It is imperative to ascertain the precise temporal context in which Ishmael's father embarked on his journey to Mecca, along with the specific age at which this event transpired. It is imperative to ascertain the duration of the journey to Mecca. A crucial element in the narrative is the temporal framework surrounding the return of Ishmael's father to his former spouse. The date of his death and the location of his burial are subjects of interest. The Jews contend that their narrative is the most accurate and well-documented, a claim that is supported by historical evidence. The subjects' indifference to the perception of others regarding the accuracy of their own work is evident. A central question in this study is whether there is a significant presence of elephant fossils in Mecca. This inquiry stems from the hypothesis that the region may have been the site of an elephant war prior to the birth of Muhammad.
5. @isnamjayn: I really like "Reconnect with the Qur'an." It provides a lot of Islamic history and in-depth analysis of the Qur'an! Awesome, Ustadz!
- @Insp1raQoe: In scene 4:34, Prophet Joseph was not sold by his brothers. He was thrown into a well by his brothers, and then found by slave traders.
6. @me_irah.1111: MashaAllah, how exciting. Even though it was discussed briefly, it was able to describe its historical path, which until now perhaps some people
- @ahmadnurmansyah4249: Sorry, in the Qur'an, Prophet Joseph was not sold by his brothers, but rather a female merchant who was drawing water from the well where Prophet Joseph had been thrown. It was then that Prophet Joseph was hanging from the rope of the bucket!

- or I myself knew only in bits and pieces.
7. @suyantosuyanto3242: Maa Shaa Allah, amazing... Ustadz Felix, we are proud of you and we are also jealous and ashamed of you... May Allah SWT always protect you from all dangers...
@evayuditia8517: Hagar or Hajjar was the daughter of the king of Egypt who was given to Abraham as a gift. She was then married to Abraham and gave birth to Ishmael. Hagar was neither a slave nor a servant. Instead, she became the companion of Sarah, the first wife of the Prophet Abraham. Haggar had a very beautiful face and her body emitted a fragrant aroma. Abraham called Haggar “*ketoret/ ketura*,” a term of endearment. Ketura means incense or perfume. This information comes from Isaac Ben Abraham, a practitioner of Judaism. Haggar had a beautiful face and her body emitted a fragrant aroma. Those who say Hajjar was a slave are spreading slander.
 8. @danangjadoel4326 : Share more stories from the *Isra'iliyyat*, because they are not taught in schools or mosques around here. But the main thing is still to study the Qur'an.
@Kasehitoo: 4:04 Sorry, teacher, you probably mean the prophet Jacob who had 12 children, right? Not the prophet Ishmael?
 9. @putriamaliasitumorang522: All this meat
@ricosandra8987: The storytelling is good, but be careful, there are many mistakes in the story.
 10. @maryamsitiazizah2299: It wouldn't be Ustadz Felix if it wasn't all about meat.
@harisvictory2712: Felix, you talk fluently about the followers of Moses, the Jews... Where did you get that story, Lix? From the Bible, right... It's not in your book, is it?
 11. @naufalaj338: Praise be to God, truly enlightened by the history of Islam
@bismillahbismillah1526: Wasn't Prophet Joseph imprisoned when he was still a slave? He was imprisoned. Then he was released from prison. How long did it take him to become a minister? It was said that he was imprisoned when he was a palace official.
 12. @setiawanchogah: Ustadz Felix's explanation was logical and interesting©. The other one kept trying to be sarcastic. Maybe he was trying to be
@boymanboy2789: Felix Siau, include your reasoning so that Christians don't misunderstand. If you can't include your reasoning, it means you are plagiarizing the Christian Bible.

- humorous, but it was uncomfortable to listen to.
13. @bubuncantik2761: As far as I remember from the movie of Joseph: The reason why Prophet Jacob married his wife's assistants. It started with Prophet Jacob's first love, when he fell in love with Laban's daughter named Rohil/Rachel. However, according to their customs, a younger sibling cannot marry before their older sibling does. So he was forced to marry his older sister named Lea/Lia. After they were married, they still did not have children. Finally, the wives suggested marrying their respective assistants to act as a catalyst (to have children). Sure enough, after the assistants were married, all the wives (four of them) had children. That's how it went.
- @idrusr8068: The noble biography of the Prophet is mixed with Israeli stories... Felix never studied religion, yet suddenly he is talking about it.
14. @zuzanti6458: That's right, Prophet Joseph only had two siblings from the same father. He had a half-brother named Felix because we had been reading the story of Prophet Joseph, since we were little.
- @ninaeffendi7599: If Jews are intelligent... why haven't they been able to defeat Hamas to this day? In my opinion, you are too hasty in saying that Jews are the most intelligent among other people. If they are indeed intelligent, what is the contribution of Jews to human civilization? On the contrary, it is Muslims who are highly intelligent. In addition to leading the world for 13 centuries with their advanced civilization, the contributions of Muslims are numerous and can still be felt today. Even the Palestinian people are the most intelligent of all peoples. No one is illiterate; most are scholars, and many even hold master's or doctoral degrees.... They are experts in various fields. Let us not be swayed by myths about Jews that make

- Muslims feel inferior and afraid to stand up to Jews and their allies.
15. @InfinityUnivers3: I watched these two episodes 30 times, took notes, searched for the source data, and it really exists. I thought it was just a fairy tale.
- @susantikajulaikha: Felix is making things up! Contradicting the stories in the Bible!! Islam is just copying... stealing stories from the Torah! of course Felix doesn't understand history!!! It wasn't the Arabs (Islam) who experienced it... but the Israelites. It's sad that there are no prophets from Arabia, yet they claim the prophets of the Israelites are Islamic prophets!!! So sad.
-

Based on an analysis of comments on Felix Siau's YouTube content, YNTV, entitled "Intelligence Leads Jews to Polytheism," uploaded on March 20, 2024, a polarization of audience attitudes toward the use of *Isra'iliyyāt* stories in preaching become apparent. Supportive audiences believe that the *Isra'iliyyāt* presented by Felix can enrich their understanding of prophetic history and offer perspectives that are not always accessible through formal education or conventional lectures. This appreciation is evident in comments expressing admiration for Felix's breadth of references, historical details, and storytelling abilities which are perceived as capable of "bringing to life" Qur'anic narratives and encouraging the audience to explore further sources independently, as reflected in the pro-comments presented in the previous table. In this context, *Isra'iliyyāt* is understood not as a source of faith, but as illustrative material that is informative and reflective.

On the other hand, the opposing group raised methodological and theological criticisms. They highlighted the potential for historical inaccuracies, the mixing of authentic history with problematic narratives, and the lack of epistemological boundaries between the Qur'an, hadith, and *Isra'iliyyāt*. Moreover, several comments explicitly used harsh and tendentious language as presented in the con-comments cited above.

This analysis shows a diverse audience that reflects the varying levels of religious literacy. Some audiences have no prior

understanding of *Isrāʾīlyyāt*, therefore they accept the narrative receptively and affectively; other possess a basic level of knowledge acquired through reading, studying tafsir, or attending lectures, and tend to be critical by verifying and correcting the content. These differences in background explain why the same content can elicit both appreciation and resistance: for some, *Isrāʾīlyyāt* serves as a narrative bridge; while for others, it requires a strict methodological framework to avoid exceeding the authoritative limits of Islamic sources.

Based on a critical reading of the *Isrāʾīlyyāt* stories presented by Felix, this study finds that some stories align with the established interpretative tradition, some generally correspond to it but introduce additional narrative elements that lack comprehensiveness, and others are not legitimized within the classical exegetical tradition. For example, *isrāʾīlyyāt* related to Felix's explanation of the four wives of the Prophet Jacob (Lia, Rahil, Bilhah, and Zilpah) which is supported by various authoritative interpretations.³⁶ A similar alignment is evident in Felix's explanation of Pharaoh's policy of ordering the killing of the male infants among the Children of Israel, a narrative that is well attested in the tafsir of Ibn Kathir³⁷ and Al-Tabari.³⁸

As for the *Isrāʾīlyyāt* that are consistent, but with the addition of narratives from various general literature, for example, the claim that Prophet Jacob moved from Palestine to Babylon. This statement is not found in authoritative interpretations, such as Tafsir Hamka³⁹ and Tafsir M. Quraish Shihab,⁴⁰ which mention that Prophet Jacob lived and worked in the Canaan without any

³⁶ Muhammad Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbab Jilid 6*, Lentera Hati (Jakarta, 2002). 395

³⁷ Ismail bin Umar bin Katsir, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-Adzim* (Beirut: Dar Ibnu Hazm, 2000). 129.

³⁸ Abi Ja'far Muhammad, *Tafsir Al-Thabari Jami' al-Bayan an Ta'wil Ay al-Qur'an* (Dar Hajar, 2001). 652.

³⁹ Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar Jilid 5*. 3685.

⁴⁰ Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbab Jilid 6*. 488.

reference to a migration to Babylon. Furthermore, Felix's interpretation that Prophet Abraham lived during the reign of the Hyksos⁴¹; foreign rulers from West Asia who once ruled Egypt. This claim instead originates from modern historiography, particularly the popularization of Egyptian archaeology in the 19th century, which was subsequently disseminated through popular history channels. In addition, the use of Jewish literature⁴² as supplementary material, such as the claim that the mother of the Prophet Ishmael was a slave,⁴³ drawn from sources like the Jewish Encyclopedia, and other versions that the mother of the Prophet Ishmael came from the nobility, shows that Qur'anic verses are often used as supporting legitimacy, while references to classical interpretations are not always presented accurately.

Some of Felix's interpretations are also less selective and lack comprehensiveness. This is evident in his interpretation of the king's dream during the time of Prophet Joseph, which is in line with the interpretations of Ibn Kathīr⁴⁴ and al-Ṭabarī, but is presented without sufficient contextual elaboration. Felix only mentions that the king dreamed of seeing seven fat cows and seven skinny cows and seven grains of wheat, without explaining the relationship between the cows, specifically, that the skinny cows ate the fat cows, as explicitly stated in the Qur'anic text and elaborated in classical interpretations. In the tafsir of Ibn Kathir and Al-Ṭabarī, drawing on a report transmitted from Muhammad bin Abdil A'la; Prophet Joseph interpreted the king's dream about seven fat cows being eaten by seven skinny cows and seven green ears of wheat and

⁴¹ YNTV, *Kecerdasan Membawa Yahudi Kepada Kemusyrikan-Reconnect With Quran Eps 8*, YouTube: 02.15.

⁴² Singer Isodore, *The Jewish Encyclopedia: A Descriptive Record of the History, Religion, Literature, and Customs of the Jewish People from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (New York London: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1901). 89.

⁴³ Elizer Meir Saidel, *Who Was Hagar?*, Jewish Press.com, 2025. <https://jewishpress.com/judaism/parsha/not-on-bread-alone/who-was-hagar/2025/11/07/>

⁴⁴ Ismail bin Umar bin Katsir, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-Adzim*. 985.

seven dry ears of wheat as a situation in which there would be a period of abundance and a period of famine.⁴⁵

The most problematic and inconsistent use of *Isrāʾīlyyāt* in Felix's explanations is the identity of the father of the Children of Israel. Elementary errors such as referring to the father of the twelve brothers of the Prophet Joseph as the Prophet Ish, when in fact it was the Prophet Jacob, are not trivial mistakes, because they have a direct impact on the understanding of the genealogy of the Children of Israel, which has theological and historical consequences. When *Isrāʾīlyyāt* is presented in a popular storytelling format without clarification of its scientific status, the audience especially the layman, risks positioning the narrative as equivalent to the Qur'anic account. Therefore, this criticism emphasizes that the main issue is not whether *Isrāʾīlyyāt* can be used, but rather the precision, accuracy, and methodological rigor in their use, so as not to undermine the integrity of the Qur'anic interpretation and prophetic history.

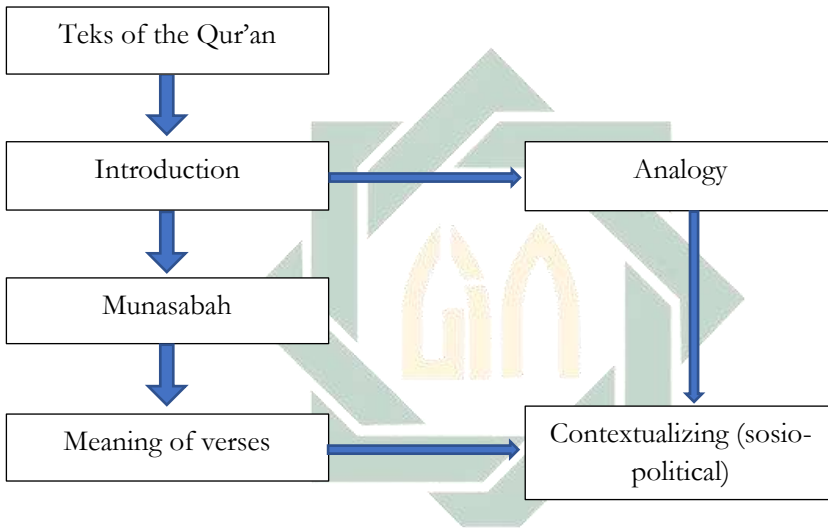
Constructing and Negotiating Meaning: Felix Siauw's Interpretive Methods within Indonesia's Socio-Cultural Context

A structural analysis of Felix Siauw's contextualization of the story of Prophet Joseph in his interpretation shows several stages. First, he begins by presenting the verses of the Qur'an related to the story of Prophet Joseph along with their Indonesian translations. Second, Felix presents a general introduction that discusses the origins and thematic heritage of the verses, referring to various literary works. At this stage, his explanations are often accompanied by analogies. Third, he applies *munāsabah* analysis to trace the connections between verses that discuss the story of Prophet Joseph. Fourth, Felix reconstructs the sequence of Prophet Joseph's story based on verses from the Qur'an, with explanations

⁴⁵ Muhammad, *Tafsir Al-Thabari Jami' al-Bayan an Ta'wil Ay al-Qur'an*. 188.

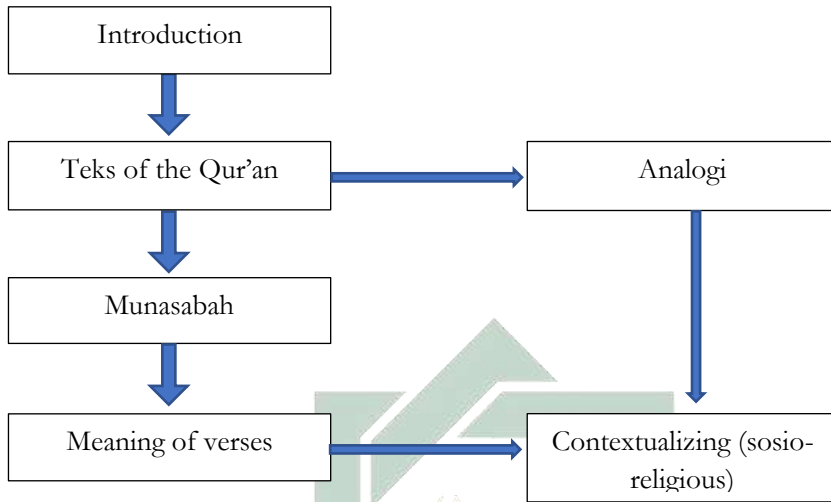
sourced from tafsir and, in some parts, from Jewish literature. Based on this construction, he then contextualizes the story of Prophet Joseph with contemporary issues related to social and political criticism in Indonesia.

Table 2. The Contextual Connection Prophet Joseph of Felix Siauw Interpretation



In explaining the story of Prophet Moses, Felix Siauw begins by presenting an introduction to the story. Second, he presents verses from the Qur'an along with their translations, from which various analogies are developed. Third, Felix applies *munāsabah* analysis by linking verses from the Qur'an with hadith and various supporting literature. Fourth, he reconstructs the narrative sequence of the story of Prophet Moses. Based on this construction, the story of Prophet Moses is then contextualized with contemporary socio-religious phenomena in Indonesia.

Table 3. The Contextual Connection Prophet Moses of Felix Siauw Interpretation



Felix Siauḡ’s rationalist, modernist, and progressive approach to interpretation, combined with his role as a representative of Islamic populism,⁴⁶ underscores his significant involvement in the socio-political sphere. His dynamic relationship with the Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) network has shaped his ideological orientation and critical stance, as Felix is known for supporting the concept of a caliphate. After the dissolution of HTI, Felix Siauḡ reconstructs his da’wah strategy by no longer explicitly displaying his organizational identity, but rather articulating the ideology of the caliphate through popular, cultural, and persuasive da’wah packaging.⁴⁷ In various contexts, Felix consistently uses a religious perspective as a normative basis for criticizing the status quo and socio-political policies that he considers do not reflect the principle of justice for the groups he represents, including his critical

⁴⁶ Hannan, “CYBERSPACE DAN POPULISME ISLAM DI KALANGAN NETIZEN,” April 2021.

⁴⁷ Hew Wai Weng, “Packaging, Persuasion and Propaganda: Popular Preaching and Islamic Counter-Publics in Indonesia,” *Asian Studies Review* 48, no. 1 (2022): 70–85.

stance towards the dissolution of HTI organization.⁴⁸ Meanwhile, in identity negotiations, Islam has become a dominant element that tends to obscure Chinese ethnic identity, even though Chinese identity continues to be strategically mobilized as a representational symbol to strengthen legitimacy and reach a wider Muslim audience in Indonesia.⁴⁹

As a former activist of HTI, Felix's interpretation reflects ideological Islamism, in which stories from the Qur'an are constructed as a medium for criticizing non-caliphate state systems. This is evident, among other things, in the comparison between the leadership of the Prophet Joseph, who effectively managed the food crisis, and the performance of Bulog in Indonesia, which serves as a symbol of the failure of modern government systems outside the framework of the caliphate. Felix also emphasizes that audiences should not be confined by political and territorial boundaries, which, in modern history, have been formulated as the concept of nationalism. This call has strong ideological resonance when read through the social context of Felix, a former member of HTI. This movement theologically and politically rejects the legitimacy of the nation-state and views nationalism as a secular construct that limits the vision of a universal caliphate.⁵⁰ By projecting the relevant regional map, he implicitly invites the audience to interpret the history of the prophets especially the genealogy of the Children of Israel within a cross-territorial political horizon, in line with an ideology that places the ummah as a single global entity without national boundaries.

⁴⁸ Abd Hannan, "Cyberspace Dan Populisme Islam Di Kalangan Netizen: Studi Kasus Pada Akun Media Sosial Felix Siauw," *Jurnal Sosiologi Reflektif* 15, no. 2 (2021): 228-266.

⁴⁹ Jesslyn Giovanni Mulyanto, "A Contested Identity: Contemporary Representation of Indonesian Chinese-Muslims on Instagram," *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu Politik* 26, no. 1 (2022): 98-177, <https://doi.org/10.22146/jsp.71859>.

⁵⁰ Syaiful Arif, "Pandangan Dan Perjuangan Ideologis Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) Dalam Sistem Kenegaraan Di Indonesia," *Aspirasi: Jurnal Masalah-Masalah Sosial* 7, no. 1 (2016): 93-104.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the contextualization of *Isrā'īlyyāt* in Felix Siau's interpretation is carried out through popular narrative strategies that combine intertextuality, popular cultural analogies, and social critique. *Isrā'īlyyāt* functions as a rhetorical device to bridge the Qur'anic text with contemporary realities; however, its use is often insufficiently selective and not consistently accompanied by rigorous methodological explanation. Consequently, while some narratives remain aligned with established authoritative interpretations, others tend to be oversimplified or lack adequate scholarly legitimacy.

The response of the digital audience to this practice is polarized. Some appreciate the storytelling style, which is considered capable of bringing the stories of the Qur'an to life and increasing religious interest. In contrast, others criticize the weak validity of sources, historical accuracy, and clarity of interpretive authority. This polarization reflects varying levels of religious literacy and confirms that the presentation of *Isrā'īlyyāt* on social media has profound epistemological implications.

Felix Siau's interpretation is constructed through a hermeneutic approach that moves from text to social context by utilizing *munāsabah*, narrative reconstruction, and analogy. This construction of meaning is influenced by the ideological orientation of post-HTI Islamism, whereby prophetic stories are often mobilized to critique modern socio-political systems and the concept of the nation-state. These findings confirm the shift in interpretive authority in the digital age and the importance of methodological discipline, so that the use of *Isrā'īlyyāt* does not blur the boundary between narrative illustrations and authoritative religious sources. Further research may be directed towards comparative studies of digital preachers across ideologies and analysis of audience reception on various social media platforms.

Supplementary Materials

Author Contributions

This article was collaboratively written by four authors, each responsible for specific tasks: developing the research idea, conducting qualitative and descriptive-analytical analysis, recontextualizing *Isrā'īlyyāt* by Felix Siauw in Indonesian Digital Tafsir, and finalizing the manuscript. All authors approved the final version for publication.

Data Availability Statementing

The datasets generated and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest that could influence the outcomes or interpretations of this research.

Funding Statement

The researchers did not receive financial support for the research.

AI Statement

The article is the author's original work. The authors have thoroughly reviewed the accuracy and relevance of the statements in relation to the study's topic and data, and no AI-generated content has been included in the manuscript.

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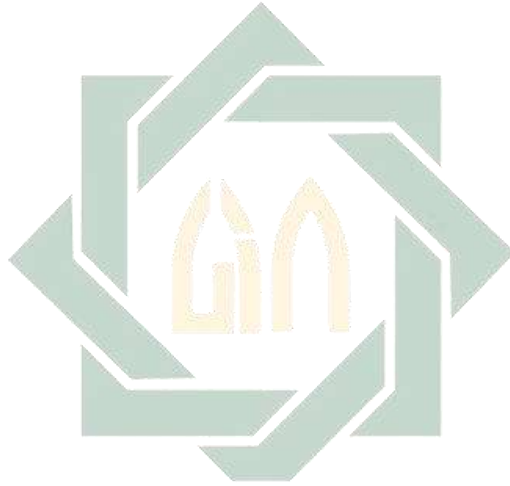
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