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Qur'anic Reception in Kitāb Maulid al-Barzanji: Exegetical, Aesthetic, and Functional Modes of Meaning Transformation

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Abstract: Kitāb Maulid al-Barzanji, composed by Ja'far al-Barzanji in the 12th century AH/18th century CE, holds a central position in Muslim devotional life across the Malay-Indonesian world. While existing scholarship has examined its liturgical and cultural significance, its Qur'anic dimension, particularly the presence, reception, and transformation of Qur'anic verses within its narrative structure, remains underexplored. This study investigates the modes of Qur'anic reception embedded in Maulid al-Barzanji, focusing on the identification of Qur'anic verses thematically aligned with its faṣl narratives and their reinterpretation within hagiographical, cosmological, and panegyric discourses. Employing a qualitative library-based methodology, this research utilizes systematic content analysis through keyword identification, semantic mapping, and cross-referencing with two authoritative exegetical works: Tafsīr Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and Tafsīr al-Munīr by Wahbah al-Zuhaylī. The analytical framework draws on Ahmad Rafiq's theory of Qur'anic reception, categorizing reception into exegetical, aesthetic, and functional modes. The findings reveal strong thematic correspondences between selected Qur'anic verses, including Q.S. al-Anbiyā' [21]:107, Q.S. al-Qalam [68]:4, Q.S. al-Aḥzāb [33]:21, and Q.S. al-Isrā' [17]:1, and narrative episodes concerning the Prophet's birth, moral excellence, exemplary conduct, and spiritual journey. These verses function exegetically as theological legitimations, aesthetically through symbolic and literary elaboration, and functionally as normative references shaping ritual practice and communal identity. The study argues that Maulid al-Barzanji represents a form of living tafsīr (al-tafsīr al-ḥayy), wherein Qur'anic meanings are dynamically rearticulated into devotional narratives. This research thereby contributes to Living Qur'an studies by demonstrating how Qur'anic reception operates through hagiographical literary constructions that reinforce prophetic authority and collective religious experience.

Keywords: Qur'anic Reception; Maulid Barzanji; Transformation of Meaning; Living Tafsīr; Ja'far Al-Barzanji.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengkaji bentuk resepsi Al-Qur'an dalam Maulid al-Barzanji karya Ja'far al-Barzanji dengan menelaah korespondensi tematik antara ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an dan narasi dalam fashl-fashl Barzanji. Kajian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh kecenderungan penelitian sebelumnya yang lebih banyak menempatkan Barzanji sebagai karya sastra religius atau tradisi ritual keagamaan, sehingga dimensi Qur'ani yang membentuk struktur narasi teks belum banyak dikaji secara mendalam. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif

berbasis studi kepustakaan dengan pendekatan content analysis. Analisis dilakukan menggunakan kerangka teori resepsi Al-Qur'an yang dikembangkan oleh Ahmad Rafiq. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa beberapa ayat Al-Qur'an memiliki korespondensi tematik dengan narasi Barzanji, di antaranya Q.S. al-Anbiyā' [21]:107, Q.S. al-Qalam [68]:4, Q.S. al-Ahzāb [33]:21, dan Q.S. al-Isrā' [17]:1. Ayat-ayat tersebut tidak hanya hadir sebagai rujukan tekstual, tetapi mengalami transformasi makna melalui narasi hagiografis, simbol kosmologis, dan pujian profetik yang membangun representasi keteladanan Nabi Muhammad SAW. Dalam perspektif teori resepsi Al-Qur'an, temuan ini menunjukkan tiga bentuk resepsi utama, yaitu resepsi eksegesis, estetis, dan fungsional. Dengan demikian, Maulid al-Barzanji dapat dipahami tidak hanya sebagai karya sastra maulid, tetapi juga sebagai medium artikulasi nilai-nilai Qur'ani yang berfungsi sebagai bentuk living tafsir dalam tradisi keagamaan masyarakat Muslim.

Kata Kunci: Resepsi Al-Qur'an; Maulid Barzanji; Transformasi Makna; Tafsir

INTRODUCTION

The celebration of the Prophet Muḥammad's birthday (Maulid al-Nabī) has become a deeply rooted religious tradition among Muslim communities in Indonesia and across the world, most notably through the recitation of Kitāb Maulid al-Barzanji, composed by Ja'far al-Barzanji ibn Ḥasan ibn 'Abd al-Karīm ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Rasūl, a 12th century AH (18th century CE) Islamic scholar (Ashari, 2018). Kitāb Maulid al-Barzanji (The Book of the Prophet's Birth by Al-Barzanji well known as Maulid al-Barzanji) contains the biographical account of the Prophet Muḥammad, spanning his lineage, childhood, and appointment as a Messenger, accompanied by descriptions of his noble character and his struggles in propagating Islam. Composed in the forms of prose, poetry, and qasīdah (ode) in eloquent literary Arabic, Maulid al-Barzanji functions not only as a ritual text recited during religious celebrations but also as a vehicle for instilling moral exemplarity and deepening devotion to the Prophet. In practice, however, the text is often treated as a collective recitation without substantive engagement with its meaning and moral messages (Qomarullah et.al., 2024).

A number of previous studies have examined Maulid al-Barzanji from diverse scholarly perspectives, which may be broadly categorized into four principal strands. First, some studies approach Barzanji as a form of literary reception and socio-religious practice. For instance, Hasim Ashari's study, *Tradisi "Berzanjen" Masyarakat Banyuwangi: Kajian Resepsi Sastra terhadap Teks al-Barzanji* (The 'Berzanjen' Tradition of the Banyuwangi Society: A Study of Literary Reception of the al-Barzanji Text), explores how the Banyuwangi community receives, interprets, and transforms the Arabic religious text into a localized socio-religious tradition (Ashari, 2018). Second, studies emphasize the moral and educational values embedded in the text. An example is Lailatul Fitria et al.'s *Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Kepribadian Rasulullah Saw Dalam Kitāb Maulid al-Barzanji* (The Educational Values of the Prophet Muḥammad's Personality in Kitāb Maulid al-Barzanji), which highlights the ethical and personality traits of the Prophet Muḥammad as represented in the work (Lailatul Fitria dkk., 2023). Third, a number of works employ symbolic or semiotic approaches to analyse the structure of the text, such as Siti Atqiya et al.'s *Analisis Semiotika Roland Barthes Pada Teks al-Barzanji* (A Roland Barthes' Semiotic Analysis of the al-Barzanji Text), which investigates its sign systems through the lens of Roland Barthes's semiotic theory (Atqiya & Khafifi, 2024). Fourth, some studies situate Barzanji within the broader context of local Islamic traditions and socio-religious practices. For example, Iin Parningsih et al.'s *Al-Barzanji in South Sulawesi, Indonesia: Local Islamic Traditions and the Practice of Religious Moderation* examines its role as a medium of religious moderation

which arguing that its recitation not only sustains spiritual traditions but also serves as a cultural strategy for articulating a compassionate and contextually grounded Islam, as well as preserving elements of classical Islamic intellectual heritage (Parninsih et.al., 2025).

Despite these significant contributions, existing scholarship has largely overlooked the Qur'ānic dimension of Maulid al-Barzanji, particularly the ways in which Qur'ānic verses are received, reinterpreted, and transformed within its narrative structure. While previous studies have focused on literary reception, moral values, semiotic analysis, and socio-religious functions, they have not systematically examined the intertextual relationship between the Barzanji text and the Qur'ān as a foundational source of meaning. Consequently, the mechanisms through which Qur'ānic discourse is integrated into hagiographical narrative, and how this process shapes theological imagination and devotional practice, remain insufficiently explored. This study addresses this gap by analysing the modes of Qur'ānic reception in Maulid al-Barzanji, with particular attention to its exegetical, aesthetic, and functional dimensions (Supriadi et.al., 2022)

Based on this background, the present study addresses three principal research questions: (1) Which Qur'anic verses exhibit thematic correspondence with the narratives in the faṣl sections of Maulid al-Barzanji, as identified through a content analysis approach? (2) What forms of Qur'anic reception are manifested in the Barzanji text, as understood through Ahmad Rafiq's theoretical framework? (3) How do these verses undergo a transformation of meaning within the construction of narrative, symbolism, and prophetic praise that together shape the representation of the Prophet Muḥammad's exemplary character in the Barzanji text?.

METHOD

This study is grounded in Ahmad Rafiq's theory of Qur'anic reception as the analytical framework for examining the relationship between the Qur'anic text and the narrative construction of Kitāb Maulid al-Barzanji. Methodologically, the study employs a qualitative, library-based approach combined with content analysis. This method is directed toward identifying, classifying, and interpreting the forms of reception and meaning-making of Qur'anic verses within the narrative of the Prophet Muḥammad's birth. Following Ahmad Rafiq's conceptualization, Qur'anic reception is classified into three forms: exegetical reception (ta'wīl/interpretation), aesthetic reception (beauty), and functional reception (application) (Rafiq, 2014)

Content analysis serves as the primary technique for processing and interpreting qualitative data drawn from library sources. This analysis was conducted by identifying interpretive Qur'anic themes arising within the birth narrative of the Prophet, both explicitly through verse references and implicitly through lexical choices, sentence structures, and narrative symbols deployed in Maulid al-Barzanji. The analytical process encompasses the stages of categorization, interpretation, and construction of meaning in order to reveal the semantic relationships between the Qur'anic text and the mawlid narrative. Through this technique, the study identifies forms of reception that are explicit (direct verse citation), implicit (paraphrase or allusion), symbolic, and transformational within the texts under investigation. The primary data source is Kitāb Maulid al-Barzanji, while authoritative exegetical works Tafsīr Mafātiḥ al-Ghayb by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and Tafsīr al-Munīr by Wahbah al-Zuhaylī are employed as supporting references to strengthen the analysis. These tafsīr works were selected on the basis of their scholarly authority and their influence within the tradition of Qur'anic interpretation, as they provide a rigorous

theoretical perspective for reading Qur'anic reception in Maulid al-Barzanji. Secondary data in the form of books and scholarly journal articles are used to map the academic discourse and to situate the findings within a broader framework of inquiry.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Shaykh Sayyid Ja'far al-Barzanji: A Historico-Intellectual Overview

Sayyid Ja'far al-Barzanji stands as one of the most distinguished intellectual figures in Islamic history, particularly in the fields of Sufism, Islamic history, and religious literature. Known as a scholar, man of letters, and Sufi master, he lived in the 18th-century CE and hailed from an esteemed family in Barzinj, a region of Kurdistan that was renowned as an intellectual centre of Islam in his era (Bantani, 2024). He is best known for his profound and moving work on the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, *Maulid al-Barzanji*, whose full title is 'Iqd al-Jawhar fī Mawlid al-Nabī al-Azhar (The Jewelled Necklace of the Resplendent Prophet's Birth). In this work, Sayyid Ja'far al-Barzanji composed a religious poem portraying the life and struggles of the Prophet Muḥammad in propagating Islamic teachings. The work has influenced countless Muslims across the Islamic world and continues to be recited and celebrated in various religious gatherings to this day (Abidin et.al., 2023).

Sayyid Ja'far was also a qāḍī (judge) and Islamic legal scholar who resided in Medina (Rusdiah et.al., 2021). He is a descendant of the eminent scholar Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Rasūl ibn 'Abd al-Sayyid al-'Alawī al-Ḥusaynī al-Mūsawī al-Saharzurī al-Barzanji (1040–1103 AH / 1630–1691 CE), who served as the Grand Muftī of the Shāfi'ī school in Medina. This muftī hailed from Shahārzūr, a Kurdish city in Iraq, and travelled extensively before settling in Medina, where he studied under renowned scholars, including Shaykh Atā' allāh ibn Aḥmad al-Azharī, Shaykh 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Ṭantāwī al-Aḥmadī, and Shaykh Aḥmad al-Iṣbīlī. He also received ijāzah (certificates of scholarly transmission) from, among others, Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ṭayyib al-Fāsi, Sayyid Muḥammad al-Ṭabarī, Shaykh Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan al-'Ajamī, Sayyid Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī, and Shaykh 'Abdullāh al-Shubrāwī al-Miṣrī (Syukron Maksum, 2013).

Kitāb Maulid al-Barzanji is structured into nineteen chapters (*rāwī*), each dedicated to narrating a specific episode from the life of the Prophet Muḥammad (Samat et.al., 2015). The narrative presentation is organized systematically, proceeding from general overviews to in-depth elaborations of each episode (Fattah & Ayundasari, 2021). In general, the verses in *Barzanji* consist of recitations intended to praise Allah and the Prophet Muḥammad, placing the work within the genre of *al-madh al-nabawī*, or prophetic panegyric poetry. In the Arabic literary tradition, *madh* denotes poetry in praise of an individual or group for their moral virtues and physical beauty. *Barzanji* has become an enormously popular form of Arabic poetry across the Indonesian archipelago, recognized as a genre of Islamic devotional song performed under various names, including *ṣalawāt*, *marhaban*, *qasidah*, and Sufi-inflected chanting. Martin van Bruinessen has noted that *Barzanji* is the most widely recognized religious text across the entire Indonesian archipelago, its presence a legacy of Kurdish Islamic scholars in Indonesia (Idham Hamid, 2021).

***Maulid al-Barzanji* and Its Dissemination**

The mawlid literary tradition is firmly embedded in the long historical trajectory of Islamic civilization; its formal commemorations are often traced to the Ayyūbid period. The specific text attributed to Shaykh Ja'far al-Barzanji was composed in the 12th century AH

(18th century CE) and subsequently gained wide circulation through networks of Islamic scholars and Muslim merchants (Mukaddam & salamah, 2024). In Indonesia, the text gained popularity through the role of the *Walisōngō* (the nine saints of Java), particularly Shaykh Maulana Malik Ibrahim, who adhered to the Shāfi'i school and is associated with the Hadhrami scholarly tradition. He introduced and adapted the text to local cultural contexts, enabling it to be widely accepted by society, especially in the coastal regions of northern Java and eastern Sumatra, until the tradition of reciting *al-Barzanji* spread throughout the archipelago (Nengseh, 2025).

The recitation of *Kitāb Maulid al-Barzanji* constitutes a central element in various socio-religious rituals such as *aqīqah* (post-birth sacrifice) and *tasmiyah* (naming ceremonies) and is commonly performed in annual commemorations of the Prophet's birthday in many countries, including Indonesia, Malaysia, and several Arab nations (Parninsih et.al., 2025). The recitation is widely regarded as a means of expressing love and reverence for the Prophet Muḥammad and of introducing younger generations to the narratives of his life. In this tradition, Muslims gather to recite and absorb the poetry, cultivating a sense of pride in Islamic values and a strong bond with prophetic history (Istomah & Zuhdy, 2017). *Maulid al-Barzanji* plays an important role in disseminating Islamic historical knowledge through literary and linguistic approaches accessible to diverse audiences. As Islam spread across the world primarily through trade routes, *Maulid al-Barzanji* became part of Islamic *da'wah* (missionary outreach), helping preachers, Muslim merchants, and Sufi scholars convey Islamic teachings in a manner that was both refined and deeply imbued with local cultural beauty. In Indonesia, *Maulid al-Barzanji* is also frequently integrated into the traditions of Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), particularly those of the traditionalist *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* orientation (Baits, 2024).

Through the networks of sayyids, scholars, religious teachers, and Islamic boarding schools, *Maulid al-Barzanji* became widely known, particularly in South and Central Kalimantan. The dissemination of mawlid in Kalimantan is closely linked to the networks of Islamic scholars and Muslim merchants from the Middle East, India, and the Malay Archipelago. The tradition of celebrating the Prophet's birth, already well established in the Islamic world, was brought to this region through trade and missionary routes. In South Kalimantan, the spread of Islam was profoundly shaped by the role of Shaykh Muḥammad Arsyad al-Banjari, a prominent eighteenth-century Banjar scholar who reinforced religious practices among the community, including the recitation of mawlid texts at various religious events.

Thematic Identification of Qur'anic Verses in the *Faṣl* Sections of *Kitāb Maulid al-Barzanji*

The identification of Qur'anic verses was conducted through an intensive reading of the *Maulid al-Barzanji* text to locate narrative units bearing thematic correspondence with Qur'anic concepts. The study traced Qur'anic verses sharing semantic affinity through keyword analysis and *tafsīr* verification. The identified verses were then analysed in terms of their thematic relationship with the *Barzanji* narrative and classified according to Ahmad Rafiq's typology of Qur'anic reception, with particular attention to functional reception (Salsabila et.al., 2023). In this context, functional reception is understood as the manner in which the Qur'an is employed not solely as a source of theological meaning but also as a legitimization of values and symbolic transformation in lived experience. The presence of Qur'anic verses in the *Barzanji* text serves to deepen the significance of events, construct

spiritual authority, and connect the Prophet's historical experience to the universal message of the Qur'an. Moreover, functional reception is evident in the ways these verses are invoked to intensify religious emotion, cultivate love for the Prophet, and shape patterns of behaviour and collective consciousness among the faithful. The Qur'an is thus positioned not merely as a text to be interpreted but as an inspirational source brought to life within cultural practice and religious tradition, ensuring that its values continue to be renewed within the social contexts that surround them.

Faṣḥl Three depicts the pregnancy of Sayyidah Āminah not as a mere biological event but as a cosmic occurrence marking the manifestation of al-Ḥaqqīqah al-Muḥammadiyyah, the reality of the prophetic light of Muḥammad permeating the entire universe (Hakim et.al., 2024). Al-Ḥaqqīqah al-Muḥammadiyyah is understood as the first emanation of Divine Light (Nūr Muḥammad), constituting the source of all creation (Cook et.al., 2023). The narrative of nature's response—the earth turning verdant and idols falling—represents the advent of divine mercy from the very beginning, corresponding with Q.S. al-Anbiyā' [21]:107 concerning the Prophet as *rahmatan lil- 'ālamīn* (mercy for all the worlds). In addition, the account of the naming "Muḥammad" reflects reception of Q.S. aṣ-Ṣaff [61]:6 concerning the Prophet Jesus's annunciation of a messenger named "Aḥmad." Exegetical reception is evident here through implicit interpretation of the verse: al-Rāzī states in *Tafsīr Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb* that the Prophet Jesus foretold the coming of a messenger named Aḥmad, a messenger and *ummī* prophet of Arab descent, one perpetually praised above all others by virtue of his surpassing goodness. The connection between the names "Aḥmad" and "Muḥammad" affirms the Prophet's nobility as a figure who is *maḥmūd* (praiseworthy) (al-Razi, 1981).

Faṣḥl Four reveals a thematic linkage between the narrative of 'Abdullah's death and the prophetic mission of the Prophet Muḥammad (Mirnawati, 2019). This event resonates with Q.S. al-Aḥzāb [33]:56, which affirms the Prophet's position as a figure honoured and exalted by Allah and the angels, establishing a spiritual orientation among the faithful to place the Prophet at the center of veneration (Erwanto & Athaillah, 2023). The narrative also corresponds with Q.S. al-Anbiyā' [21]:107, affirming the Prophet's prophetic function as *rahmatan lil- 'ālamīn*. The Prophet's separation from his father while still in the womb may be understood as part of the divine design intended to affirm the independence of prophethood while preparing him for this universal role. The absence of a paternal figure from birth also underscores the significance of al-taklīf al-ilāhī (divine moral charge) in perfecting the soul of the Prophet Muḥammad (Kerwanto, 2021). This interpretation is consonant with Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's elaboration in *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, which emphasizes that the Prophet's coming represents mercy in both the religious and worldly dimensions of life, particularly in leading humanity from confusion and error toward divine truth (al-Razi, 1981).

Faṣḥl Five exhibits a symbolic relationship between the narrative of the Prophet Muḥammad's birth and Qur'anic revelation. The birth narrative, characterized by cosmic gestures and physical purity, corresponds closely with Q.S. al-Inshirāḥ [94]:4 (and We exalted for you your reputation). Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, in *Tafsīr al-Munīr*, explains that this verse signifies Allah's elevation of the Prophet's name to great heights in this world and the next through his prophethood and apostleship. The narrative further embodies the meaning of the name "Muḥammad" as one who is abundantly praised. This faṣl also corresponds to Q.S. al-Qalam [68]:4, which affirms the greatness of the Prophet's character in generosity, courage, and gentleness (Zuhaili, 1991).

Fashl Ten reveals a strong thematic connection between the narrative of the conflict over the placement of the Black Stone (*Hajar al-Aswad*) during the reconstruction of the Ka'bah after it was damaged by flooding, and the Qur'anic values of wisdom and moral integrity (Jaya, 2011). The episode had nearly precipitated warfare as the tribes competed to be the first to place the stone in the Ka'bah (Syukur & Puspita, 2024). This event reflects the values of wisdom (*al-faṭānah*) (Triansyah & Dzakkiya, 2024) and the moral integrity of the Prophet Muḥammad, already acknowledged before the advent of his prophethood, when he was known among the Quraysh as *al-Amīn* (the trustworthy) (Abdurrahman, 2023). The narrative correlates with Q.S. al-Qalam [68]:4, which affirms the Prophet's moral greatness; his act of resolving the conflict without discord constitutes a concrete manifestation of that noble character. The event also corresponds to Q.S. al-Aḥzāb [33]:21 concerning the concept of *uswah ḥasanah*, the Prophet as the ideal exemplar for humanity in moral, social, and leadership dimensions. The *Barzanji* text thus does not merely present historical fact but constructs a narrative as a form of reception of Qur'anic verses that affirm the Prophet's complete moral integrity even before his formal appointment as a Messenger, as further underscored in Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's interpretation of the Prophet as a universal model across all dimensions of life (al-Razi, 1981).

Fashl Eleven affirms the connection between the narrative of the Prophet Muḥammad's appointment as a Messenger at the age of forty and the Qur'anic conception of spiritual maturity and universal prophetic mission (Bantani, 2024). *Fashl* ini berkorelasi dengan Q.S. al-Anbiyā' [21]:107 yang menegaskan bahwa Nabi diutus sebagai *raḥmatan lil-'ālamīn*, yakni rahmat bagi seluruh alam, sebagaimana tercermin dalam perannya sebagai pembawa kabar gembira dan pemberi peringatan (Budiyanti dkk., 2020). Selain itu, usia empat puluh tahun sebagai momentum kenabian berkorespondensi dengan Q.S. al-Aḥqāf [46]:15 yang menggambarkan fase kematangan manusia dalam kesadaran spiritual, refleksi diri, dan penguatan hubungan dengan Allah (Jufri dkk., 2025). Fakhruddin al-Razi dalam tafsir nya menjelaskan bahwa dalam usia empat puluh tahun akan mencapai batas kekuatan optimal dengan kesempurnaan fisik dan intelektual (al-Razi, 1981).

Fashl Twelve demonstrates a normative linkage between the progression of the Prophet Muḥammad's da'wah and the theological imperatives articulated in Qur'anic revelation. The shift from clandestine (*sirriyyah*) to public (*jahriyyah*) preaching is interpreted as a direct enactment of the command in Q.S. al-Ḥijr [15]:94 (*faṣḍa' bimā tu'mar*), which mandates the open proclamation of the divine message while simultaneously signalling the onset of intensified opposition from the Quraysh. In addition, the gradual institutionalization of ṣalāh within this narrative corresponds to Q.S. al-Muzzammil [73]:1–4, which introduces the obligation of *qiyām al-layl*. This development is further contextualized by the later abrogating verse in the same sūrah (v. 20), which instructs, "Recite what is easy [for you] of it (the Qur'ān) and establish the prayer".

Fashl Thirteen affirms the strong connection between the narrative of the *Isrā' Mi'rāj* and the Qur'anic theological construction concerning Allah's omnipotence and the legitimation of the Prophet Muḥammad's prophethood. The *Isrā'* event directly corresponds to Q.S. al-Isrā' [17]:1, which affirms that Allah transported His servant by night as a manifestation of His signs of greatness, simultaneously confirming the Prophet's status as a chosen and honoured servant. The dimension of the *Mi'rāj*, culminating in the receipt of the command to perform ṣalāh, correlates with Q.S. al-Isrā' [17]:78, which serves as the normative basis for the obligation of the five daily prayers as the primary means of spiritual communion between the servant and God. The narrative of the Prophet's encounters with preceding

prophets in the heavens, ascending to Sidrat al-Muntahā (the Lote tree of the utmost boundary), also represents the continuity of the prophetic mission and the Prophet Muḥammad's position as the Seal of the Prophets. Thus, the Barzanji text receives Qur'anic verses not merely as historical references but as theological legitimation for the miracle of the Isrā' Mi'rāj and as the normative foundation of worship in Islam, particularly ṣalāh as the quintessence of human servitude to Allah.

Faṣḥl Sixteen reveals a meaningful correlation between the description of the Prophet Muḥammad's physical and moral perfection and the theological construction of the Qur'an. The portrayal of the Prophet as perfect in both physical form (*khalq*) and inner character (*khulq*) directly corresponds to Q.S. al-Qalam [68]:4, which affirms the greatness of his moral character; physical beauty in the *Barzanji* text is thus not merely aesthetic but serves as a symbol of moral and spiritual perfection. Furthermore, the narrative of light enveloping the Prophet's body, including the Seal of Prophethood between his shoulder blades, corresponds to Q.S. al-Aḥzāb [33]:46. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, in *Tafsīr al-Munīr*, explains that the Prophet Muḥammad is a *sirājan munīran* (an illuminating lamp) (Zuhaili, 1991). This verse is received in the text as a representation of the Prophet as the source of divine guidance leading humanity from darkness toward the light of faith and knowledge (Abdurrahman, 2023). This *faṣḥl* therefore does not merely present hagiographical description but internalizes Qur'anic verses as theological legitimation for the personal perfection and prophetic function of the Prophet Muḥammad as the bearer of divine light for all humanity.

Faṣḥl Seventeen illustrates that the portrayal of the Prophet Muḥammad's humility (*tawāḍu'*), simplicity, and social compassion represents a direct mode of reception of Q.S. al-Aḥzāb [33]:21, which designates the Prophet as *uswah ḥasanah* (the exemplary model) for humankind. The behaviours attributed to the Prophet in this section, including his modest lifestyle, support for family members, empathy toward the marginalized, and his emphasis on forgiveness and unwavering faith, reflect the embodiment of Qur'anic values in lived practice (Indana Ilma Ansharah, 2021). Accordingly, the verse is interpreted not merely as a normative exhortation but as a form of theological legitimation, affirming that all dimensions of the Prophet's life, whether social, spiritual, or within the context of struggle, constitute an ideal paradigm for emulation. This reading aligns with Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's exposition in *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, which emphasizes that the verse enjoins imitation of the Prophet across all aspects of life, including patience, perseverance, and adherence to divine principles. Consequently, this *faṣḥl* transcends a purely hagiographical account and instead constructs the Prophet as a universal ethical and spiritual exemplar grounded in Qur'anic teachings (al-Razi, 1981).

Aesthetic Reception in the Faṣḥl Sections of *Maulid al-Barzanji*

In the study of Qur'anic reception, the aesthetic dimension reveals how Qur'anic values are expressed not only in conceptual interpretive form but also through literary language, symbolism, and aesthetic beauty that together construct the religious experience of the reader. In the *Maulid al-Barzanji* text, this form of aesthetic reception is found in several *faṣḥl* sections that foreground the portrayal of the Prophet's glory through symbols of birth, physical perfection, and moral grandeur. These narratives reflect resonances of several Qur'anic verses, including Q.S. al-Qalam [68]:4 and Q.S. al-Aḥzāb [33]:46 concerning the Prophet's moral nobility, and Q.S. al-Aḥzāb [33]:21 concerning his exemplarity as *uswah ḥasanah*. Crucially, these verses are not presented in the form of explicit exegesis; rather,

they undergo a transformation of meaning through literary language that foregrounds devotional and religious aesthetic dimensions. The aesthetic reception in the *Maulid al-Barzanji* text can be identified in three *faṣl* sections as follows.

Faṣl Five contains a form of aesthetic reception that integrates symbolism, religious tradition, and resonances of Qur'anic verses to affirm the nobility and moral grandeur of the Prophet Muḥammad from the very moment of his birth. Qur'anic reception operates symbolically here, presenting signs of moral excellence prior to the formal prophetic phase. Verses that were originally normative-moral in character are transformed into symbols of birth and hagiographical aesthetics (Bantani, 2024). This *faṣl* opens with the phrase “Wa Baraza Ṣallallāhu,” describing the Prophet Muḥammad's birth and presenting several theological symbols that reveal the Prophet's glory from the very beginning of his existence. The Prophet's posture at birth, characterized by placing both hands upon the earth (wāḍi'an yadayhi 'alā al-arḍ) and raising his head toward the heavens (rāfi'an ra'sahu ilā al-samā' al-ʿulwiyyah), is interpreted in the sharḥ (commentary) as symbolizing the cosmic relationship between earth and heaven. This gesture is understood as a primordial indication of his spiritual authority over all creation

Faṣl Sixteen exemplifies aesthetic reception in that the verse on noble character is not elaborated through exegetical argumentation but is presented through the aestheticization of the Prophet's figure in the form of physical description and moral beauty. Qur'anic values are thus projected through literary language that engenders reverence and devotion. The text portrays the Prophet Muḥammad as the most perfect of human beings, in both physical form (khalq) and character (khulq). The detailed description of his bodily proportions, countenance, bearing, and fragrance is not merely aesthetic praise but an affirmation that his outward perfection is in harmony with his inner nobility. Physical beauty in the Barzanji text therefore functions as a symbol of moral and spiritual perfection. The luminous depiction of the Prophet's body, particularly the Seal of Prophethood between his shoulder blades, signifies prophetic illumination as both a validation of his mission and a symbol of the divine guidance (hidāyah) he imparted to humanity (Bantani, 2024).

Faṣl Seventeen internalizes the verse on exemplarity in Q.S. al-Aḥzāb [33]:21 through the portrayal of the Prophet's daily practices, such as his simple lifestyle and his attitude of humility (tawāḍu') (Ikhwansyah et.al., 2024). The function of revelation is apparent in the formation of a social ethic that invites emulation. His actions, including repairing his own sandals, mending his clothing, helping members of his household, and declining an abundance of worldly wealth, demonstrate that nobility does not rest upon status or material possessions but upon moral integrity. His closeness to the poor, the destitute, widows, and enslaved persons reflects a commitment to social justice and human empathy, without discrimination based on social standing. His demeanour of accepting apologies, refraining from retaliating against wrongdoing, and not fearing those in power reveals a loftiness of character and firm monotheistic conviction. His anger and his approval were directed solely toward Allah, never toward personal interest, so that all his conduct was grounded in divine values (Bantani, 2024).

Exegetical Reception in the *Faṣl* Sections of *Maulid al-Barzanji*

The text of *Maulid al-Barzanji* also manifests forms of Qur'anic reception that are exegetical in character. In this form of reception, Qur'anic verses are not presented merely as religious symbols or literary aesthetic expressions; rather, they serve as sources of

theological legitimation that interpret various events in the life of the Prophet Muḥammad. Revelatory values that were originally normative are projected into biographical narrative, thereby forming a theological reading of the prophetic journey. Through this process, the *Barzanji* text presents an intertextual relationship between Qur'ānic verses and the Prophet's life story, such that the events narrated are understood not solely as historical accounts but as manifestations of Qur'ānic messages that impart religious meaning to the prophetic journey.

Several sections of the text exhibit exegetical reception through the incorporation of Qur'ānic verses as interpretive frameworks for specific episodes in the Prophet's life. In the account of the Prophet's birth, Q.S. al-Anbiyā' [21]:107 is invoked to affirm his role as *rahmatan li al-‘ālamīn*, embodying universal compassion for all creation. In portraying the Prophet's character and exemplary conduct, semantic parallels with Q.S. al-Hijr [15]:94 and Q.S. al-Muzzammil [73]:1–4, 20 become evident. Likewise, the narrative of the *Isrā' Mi'rāj* draws upon Q.S. al-Isrā' [17]:1 as a form of Qur'ānic legitimation of this transcendental event. These verses are not employed incidentally; rather, they are systematically identified through thematic content analysis, allowing for their classification in accordance with their correspondence to key narrative themes in the *Barzanji* text, including mercy, prophethood, moral virtue, and spiritual experience. Their deployment thus reflects a structured process of meaning selection, whereby Qur'ānic discourse is received and integrated into the narrative framework of *Barzanji* in alignment with its intended theological message. Accordingly, the following analysis of five selected *faṣl* demonstrates how exegetical reception is systematically articulated across distinct narrative units in the *Barzanji* text.

Faṣl Three illustrates that verses such as Q.S. al-Anbiyā' [21]:107 are understood as providing theological legitimation for the Prophet's presence as a universal mercy. This mercy is not confined to the period following his prophetic commission but is perceived as originating from the very emergence of his light in the cosmos (Massofia & Rahmawati, 2023). In his *tafsīr*, Wahbah al-Zuhaylī explains that the Prophet Muḥammad was sent with the guidance, legal framework, and injunctions of the Qur'ān as a mercy for all beings, including jinn and humankind, in both this world and the hereafter. Those who receive and express gratitude for this mercy attain felicity in both realms, whereas those who reject it are counted among the losers (Zuhaili, 1991). Furthermore, the account of Sayyidah Āminah's dream concerning the naming of "Muḥammad" reflects the reception of Q.S. aṣ-Ṣaff [61]:6. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, in *Tafsīr Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, notes that Prophet Jesus foretold the coming of a messenger named Aḥmad, described as an *ummī* prophet of Arab origin who is continually praised due to his exceptional virtue. The association between the names "Aḥmad" and "Muḥammad" thus reinforces the Prophet's exalted status as one who is inherently worthy of praise (*maḥmūd*) (al-Razi, 1981).

Faṣl Four can be classified within the category of exegetical reception, particularly in its articulation of Qur'ānic meanings through the narrative framework of Maulid al-Barzanji. The account of 'Abdullāh's death is thematically interpreted in relation to Q.S. al-Aḥzāb [33]:56 and Q.S. al-Anbiyā' [21]:107, leading to the understanding that the Prophet Muḥammad's nobility and prophetic mission were divinely ordained from the outset of his existence. Rather than merely recounting a historical episode, this narrative functions as an interpretive medium that affirms the Prophet as *rahmatan li al-‘ālamīn* and as one honoured by both Allah and the angels. This reading is consistent with Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's exposition in *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, which underscores that the Prophet's presence embodies mercy in both religious and worldly dimensions (al-Razi, 1981). Exegetical

reception in this *faṣl* is therefore evident in the process of correlating, interpreting, and constructing meaning from Qur'ānic verses through hagiographical narration in order to reinforce the theological conception of Muḥammad's prophetic mission.

Faṣl Ten demonstrates an intertextual mode of exegetical reception through its association of the event of the placement of the *Ḥajar al-Aswad* with the ethical values articulated in Q.S. al-Qalam [68]:4 and Q.S. al-Aḥzāb [33]:21 concerning *khulq 'aẓīm* and *uswah ḥasanah*. These values are not presented in abstract or conceptual terms; rather, they are embodied in the Prophet's concrete action in resolving inter-tribal conflict. (Jaya, 2011). The dispute emerged when each tribe sought the honour of placing the Black Stone in its position. As tensions escalated and approached the brink of armed conflict, the Quraysh agreed to appoint as arbiter the first individual to enter the Ka'bah through the gate of Ṣafā. (Syukur & Puspita, 2024). By providential circumstance, the Prophet Muḥammad was the first to enter, and his widely recognized integrity, reflected in his title *al-Amīn*, led to his acceptance as judge. He then spread a cloth, positioned the Black Stone at its centre, and invited the tribal leaders to collectively lift it by holding its edges. Once it reached the appropriate height, he personally placed the stone in its original location. Through this method, the conflict was resolved with wisdom, and all parties were satisfied (Abdurrahman, 2023). This episode establishes the Prophet as an exemplar of harmonious conflict resolution, embodying the quality of *al-faṭānah*, understood as intellectual acumen and sound judgment (Triansyah & Dzakkiya, 2024).

Faṣl Twelve reflects a dual mode of reception, encompassing both exegetical and ethico-performative dimensions. It is exegetical insofar as Qur'ānic meanings are interpreted and contextualized within the unfolding of historical events, and ethico-performative in that the values of revelation, including patience, perseverance, and compassion, are translated into the practical conduct of the Prophet's da'wah. In this sense, the Qur'ān functions not merely as a source of doctrinal guidance but as a lived framework shaping prophetic action.

Faṣl Thirteen exhibits both exegetical and functional reception. The verse concerning the Isrā', Q.S. al-Isrā' [17]:1, is interpreted as providing theological legitimation for the Prophet Muḥammad's transcendental experience, while simultaneously serving as a foundation for the institutionalization of ritual prayer within communal religious practice. Consequently, the meaning of the verse transitions from a narrative of spiritual ascent to a structured basis for ritual observance.

Transformation of Meaning in the Narrative of *Maulid al-Barzanji*

Recognizing *Kitāb Maulid al-Barzanji* as both a religious literary composition and a medium of Qur'ānic reception, the reinterpretation of Qur'ānic verses within the text reflects a dynamic dialectic between normative textual authority and cultural articulation. Within the framework of Qur'ānic reception studies, Qur'ānic verses are not simply preserved in their doctrinal form; rather, they are re-animated through contextual narrative, symbolism, and aesthetics (Guspida, 2025). This transformative process demonstrates that Qur'ānic meaning undergoes an expansion from the textual dimension toward the performative and narrative dimensions. Verses that were originally normative-theological in character are creatively received and rendered as hagiographical narratives laden with symbolic, ethical, and spiritual meaning. The *Barzanji* text thus represents a form of internalization of revelatory values within a narrative structure that is not merely informative but also persuasive and emotive.

The following analysis elaborates how Qur'anic verses are transformed into narrative across several *faṣl* sections in *Barzanji*, reflecting diverse forms of reception ranging from symbolic aestheticization and historicization of meaning to the actualization of ethical and spiritual values in the life of the Prophet Muḥammad.

Faṣl Three illustrates that the normative meaning of Q.S. al-Anbiyā' [21]:107 extends beyond its doctrinal formulation and is reconfigured into a symbolically rich birth narrative. In aesthetic terms, the values of raḥmah and prophetic annunciation are articulated through cosmological imagery, including motifs of light (nūr), natural phenomena, and a sacralised atmosphere, thereby transforming the Qur'anic verse into a literary-hagiographical expression.

Faṣl Four reflects a narrative-theological reworking of the account of 'Abdullāh's death, which is no longer treated solely as a historical event but is recast as a symbol of divine purification and preparation for the Prophet Muḥammad's mission. Through the motif of genealogical rupture, the narrative emphasizes the autonomy of the prophetic mission from social structures, while simultaneously framing the event as part of a divine process shaping the Prophet's character from the prenatal stage. In this way, exegetical meaning shifts from formal *tafsīr* discourse into a literary-religious narrative that constructs theological and devotional significance.

Faṣl Five demonstrates how a normative Qur'anic verse is transformed into a biographical narrative that affirms the dimension of divine providence in the Prophet's life. The verse is contextualized historically to produce a theological reading of the prophetic trajectory. Consequently, the birth narrative operates not only as a historico-hagiographical account but also as a symbolic articulation of Qur'anic themes concerning the exaltation of the Prophet's name and the perfection of his moral character, as reflected in the *Barzanji* text through both physical and spiritual perfection from birth.

Faṣl Ten presents the Qur'anic verse as an ethical foundation that is translated into the praxis of prophetic leadership and conflict resolution. The values of khulq 'aẓīm and *uswah ḥasanah* are embodied in the Prophet's method of resolving disputes, thereby affirming that his leadership is grounded in the internalization of revelatory principles expressed through justice, consultation (shūrā), and social harmony.

Faṣl Eleven indicates that verses concerning mercy and maturity are reinterpreted as legitimizing the Prophet's spiritual readiness. The *Barzanji* narrative moves beyond recording the historical moment of prophetic appointment and instead reflects a reception of Qur'anic meanings that portray the Prophet as divinely prepared through a formative process encompassing intellectual, spiritual, and moral development, thus rendering him worthy of bearing the trust of final prophethood.

Faṣl Twelve demonstrates a pronounced transformation of normative Qur'anic discourse into the narrative of the Prophet Muḥammad's da'wah. The command in Q.S. al-Ḥijr [15]:94 (*faṣḍa' bimā tu'mar*) is thematically rearticulated as the transition from clandestine to public preaching. This shift is not presented merely as a textual injunction but as a pivotal historical moment marking the expansion of the prophetic mission and the emergence of social resistance from the Quraysh. The transformation in this *faṣl* is thus embodied as a lived spiritual practice articulated through narrative form.

Table 1. Qur'anic Reception in *Kitab Maulid al-Barzanji*

Faṣl	Theme	Corresponding Verse(s)	Form of Reception	Mechanism of Meaning Transformation
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III	Pregnancy of Āminah & <i>al-Ḥaḡīqah al-Muḥammadiyyah</i>	Q.S. al-Anbiyā' [21]:107; Q.S. aṣ-Ṣaff [61]:6	Exegetical	Verses on mercy and prophetic annunciation expanded into a cosmic narrative (light, collapse of idols, universal participation).
IV	Death of Abdullah & Divine Decree of Prophethood	Q.S. al-Anbiyā' [21]:107	Exegetical	The verse on mercy is projected as a legitimization of divine predestination and providential preparation prior to birth.
V	Birth of the Prophet & Symbols of Glory	Q.S. al-Insyirāḥ [94]:4; Q.S. al-Qalam [68]:4	Aesthetic	Verses on the exaltation of name and noble character transformed into symbols of birth and physical purity.
X	Placement of the <i>Ḥajar al-Aswad</i>	Q.S. al-Qalam [68]:4; Q.S. al-Ahzāb [33]:21	Exegetical	The values of <i>khulq 'aẓīm</i> and <i>uswah ḥasanah</i> embodied in the practice of conflict resolution.
XI	The Commencement of the Prophet's Mission at Age Forty	Q.S. al-Anbiyā' [21]:107; Q.S. al-Aḥqāf [46]:15	Exegetical	Verses on mercy and human maturation transformed as a legitimization of the Prophet's spiritual maturity.
XII	The Prophet's Preaching Activity (<i>da'wah</i>)	Q.S. al-Ḥijr [15]:94; Q.S. al-Muzzammil [73]:1-4 dan 20	Exegetical	The command for open proclamation and <i>qiyām al-layl</i> contextualized within the historical narrative of <i>da'wah</i> and community formation.
XIII	<i>Isrā' Mi'rāj</i>	Q.S. al-Isrā' [17]:1, Q.S. an-Najm [53]:14-15; Q.S. Ṭāhā [20]:14	Exegetical	Verses on the nocturnal journey and <i>Sidrat al-Muntahā</i> represented as a spiritual experience and legitimization of ritual prayer.
XVI	Physical Perfection of the Prophet	Q.S. al-Qalam [68]:4; Q.S. al-Ahzāb [33]:46	Aesthetic	Qur'anic values of exemplary conduct and sincerity embodied in everyday social practice
XVII	Perfection of Character	Q.S. al-Ahzāb [33]:21; Q.S. al-Mā'idah [5]:54; Q.S. al-Kahfi [18]:110	Exegetical	Qur'anic values elucidated through a narrative of the perfection of the Prophet's character and moral virtues.

Table 1 above demonstrates that each *faṣl* in *Maulid al-Barzanji* encompasses not only the historical narrative of the Prophet Muḥammad's life but also a process of transforming Qur'ānic meanings into religious narrative form. Qur'ānic verses are not always cited explicitly; rather, they are implicitly received through narrative elaboration enriched with theological, symbolic, and spiritual dimensions. As a result, key events such as the Prophet's birth, the death of 'Abdullāh, and the progression of *da'wah* are interpreted as integral elements of a divinely orchestrated scheme. The transformations observed take multiple forms, including narrative, symbolic, thematic, and devotional, each illustrating the transposition of Qur'ānic meanings into story, symbol, thematic construction, and the cultivation of devotion to the Prophet. Accordingly, the *Maulid al-Barzanji* exemplifies an active and creative mode of Qur'ānic reception, in which revelation is not merely interpreted but reconfigured into a form of living religious literature embedded within the experiential life of the Muslim community.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that *Maulid al-Barzanji* by Ja'far al-Barzanji constitutes a complex mode of Qur'ānic reception within the mawlid literary tradition. An analysis of its principal *faṣl* sections reveals clear thematic correspondences between the *Barzanji* narrative and several Qur'ānic verses, including Q.S. al-Anbiyā' [21]:107, Q.S. al-Qalam [68]:4, Q.S. al-Aḥzāb [33]:21, and Q.S. al-Isrā' [17]:1, which relate to the depiction of the Prophet's birth, moral excellence, exemplary conduct, and spiritual experience. These verses function not merely as textual references but are reconfigured through hagiographical narration, cosmological symbolism, and expressions of prophetic praise that enrich the religious imagination of the faithful. Drawing on Ahmad Rafiq's theory of Qur'ānic reception, this study shows that such reception in the *Barzanji* text operates through three principal modes, namely exegetical, aesthetic, and functional performative. In this regard, *Barzanji* emerges not only as a work of devotional literature but also as a form of living *tafsīr* that articulates Qur'ānic meanings through symbolic and communicative literary expression

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