A Comparative Visual Framework of Prophet Adam's Narratives: The Quran, Tafsir Nur al-Ihsan, and the Bible

[1]Nurul Hidayah binti Arom, [2]Jamal Ahmed Bashier Badi, [*3]Nik Md. Saiful Azizi bin Nik Abdullah

[1][2] International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC-IIUM), International Islamic University Malaysia,

[3]Kulliyyah of Education, International Islamic University Malaysia

*Corresponding Author

ABSTRACT

This project introduces an innovative visual pedagogical framework entitled "Prophet Adam Across Religious Texts", which transforms dense qualitative comparisons of the Qur'an, Malay exegesis Tafsir Nur al-Ihsan, and the Bible into interactive infographic modules. The core innovation lies in reimagining a research project conducted under the ISTAC-IIUM Research Grant, "Isra'iliyyat in the Adamic Narrative: A Comparative Analysis of the Bible and Tafsir Nur al-Ihsan". By integrating multilingual sources (the Arabic Qur'an, Malay tafsir, and English Bible) side by side, the framework enhances accessibility, fosters critical comparative thinking, and equips educators with a low-cost, digitally friendly tool for teaching Islamic studies and comparative religion. The project also highlighting how Tafsir Nur al-Ihsan integrates Isra'iliyyat narratives. Key features of the framework include infographics on four central themes: (1) Creation of Prophet Adam and Hawa, (2) God's command and Forbidden Tree, (3) Temptation and Wrongdoing, and (4) Consequences. The design can potentially be adapted for teaching slides or interactive digital formats in both classroom and online platforms, subject to pilot testing and user feedback. The anticipated outcomes include making complex theological discourse more accessible, stimulating critical thinking, fostering comparative insights between Isra'iliyyat, the Qur'an, and the Bible, and enhancing student engagement through visual learning. Ultimately, this project demonstrates how qualitative, library-based research can be innovatively re-envisioned as a practical pedagogical design for diverse educational contexts.

Keywords: Prophet Adam, Qur'an, Tafsir Nur al-Ihsan, Bible, Isra'iliyyat, Intertextuality, Visual Pedagogy.

INTRODUCTION

The Qur'an, the holy scripture of Muslims, and the Bible, the sacred text of Christians, both narrate the creation and life of Prophet Adam, though with distinct theological emphases. In the Qur'an, Adam is portrayed as Allah's khalifah on earth, forgiven after repentance, and guided with divine mercy. In contrast, the Bible presents Adam's disobedience as the root of original sin. The role of Qur'anic explanation and interpretation started from Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him, and continued with the Companions, the Successors, and later scholars, eventually developing into the written tradition of tafsir (Qur'anic exegesis) (al-Dhahabi, 2000). Beyond the Arab world, tafsir writings also flourished in the Malay Archipelago (Ibrahim, 2013; Ahmad, 2022).

One significant example is Tafsir Nur al-Ihsan by Shaykh Muhammad Sa'id bin 'Umar (Ibrahim, Dakir & Abdul Kadir, 2014). His work made valuable contributions in guiding Malay Muslims to understand the divine message of the Qur'an, though it also incorporates additional narrative details including elements of Isra'iliyyat (Yusuff, Haji-Othman, & Manaf, 2018). There are several ways in which Isra'iliyyat infiltrated Malay tafsir works (Mohd Nor, 2024): (1) through popular tafsir books that cited Isra'iliyyat, such as Tafsir al-Tabari and Tafsir Ibn Kathir; (2) through the influence of Islamic traders and scholars who spread Islam among the Malay people; and (3) through the acceptance of Isra'iliyyat by Malay scholars in their teachings and preaching.

Isra'iliyyat narratives refer to stories and traditions of Jewish and Christian origin, with the Bible as their sources, which entered the Qur'anic exegesis, particularly in narrations concerning the prophets of Allah including

Prophet Adam (al-Dhahabi, 2000). Meanwhile, some scholars broaden the meaning of Isra'iliyyat to include any unsourced or fabricated narratives, far from the original facts in Qur'anic and Prophetic teachings, introduced by others or the enemies of Islam (Ibrahim, Dakir & Abdul Kadir, 2014; al-Khalidi, 2015). Muslim scholars generally classify these narratives into three categories: (1) those consistent with the Qur'an and Sunnah (accepted), (2) those that contradict both (rejected), and (3) those about which the Qur'an and Sunnah remain silent (neither accepted nor rejected) (Ibn Taimiyyah, 1980; Abu Shahbah, 1988). Thus, tafsir writings containing Isra'iliyyat should not be dismissed outright, but rather critically examined and clearly explained, particularly stories related to prophets (Rozali & Lubis, 2022; Mohd Zabidi & Wan Abdullah, 2024; Arom, Nik Abdullah, & Samsudin, 2025).

This study is situated between the three theoretical frameworks: (i) Isra'iliyyat studies, which critically evaluate the presence of Judeo-Christian traditions in tafsir); (ii) intertextuality, which involves the comparative reading between the Qur'an, tafsir, and the Bible; and (iii) visual pedagogy, which transforms textual analysis into a visual pedagogical framework. Together, these frameworks provide the conceptual grounding for developing a comparative visual framework of Prophet Adam's narratives.

Problem Statement

While Tafsir Nur al-Ihsan has significantly shaped Malay Muslim understanding of the Qur'an, its inclusion of Isra'iliyyat narratives raises critical questions. These additions often parallel Biblical accounts, which may blur the distinction between Qur'anic perspectives and external traditions. However, no pedagogical tool currently exists to clearly compare and evaluate these narratives for teaching and research purposes. This creates a gap for educators and students in Islamic studies and comparative religion.

Objectives

1. To examine the Adamic narratives across Qur'an, Tafsir Nur al-Ihsan (with Isra'iliyyat elements), and the Bible.
2. To identify similarities, differences, and Isra'iliyyat influences in Tafsir Nur al-Ihsan.
3. To transform textual comparisons into a visual pedagogical framework
4. To provide an accessible teaching and learning tool for Islamic studies and comparative religion.

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION & METHODOLOGY

Product Description: The main output is a comparative visual framework that maps Prophet Adam's narratives across the Qur'an, Tafsir Nur al-Ihsan, and the Bible. It integrates Arabic Qur'anic verses, Malay tafsir interpretation, and Biblical texts in English into infographic framework, serving as an accessible and multilingual pedagogical resource for students and researchers.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, library-based research design using content analysis. Primary sources include the Qur'an, Tafsir Nur al-Ihsan (with relevant verses), and the Bible (Genesis 1-5). Secondary sources such as theses, dissertations, journal articles, and scholarly works provided additional context. Coding categories related to the narratives of Prophet Adam were developed inductively based on recurring motifs, and translations were validated through cross-check with secondary references and intertextual studies. The results were then transformed into a visual framework using Canva.
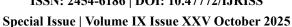
POTENTIAL FINDINGS AND COMMERCIALISATION

Results on Comparison Between Scriptural Narratives

There are both similarities and differences between the three sources: the Qur'an, Tafsir Nur al-Ihsan, and the Bible. Tafsir Nur al-Ihsan stands between the Qur'an and the Bible, as it serves primarily as Qur'anic

interpretations while also including narrative expansions that parallel Biblical stories. The shared motifs across the three are: (1) The creation of Prophet Adam and Hawa, (2) God's command and the Forbidden Tree, (3) Temptation and wrongdoing, and (4) Consequences of disobedience. Despite these parallels, distinct emphases emerge. The Qur'an focuses on Prophet Adam's role as caliph on earth and underscores divine mercy through the words of Adam's repentance. Tafsir Nur al-Ihsan offers additional details concerning the stories of Prophet Adam but blends them with Isra'iliyyat elements. The Bible, on the other hand, introduces the concept of original sin due to Adam's sin of disobedience to God, which later connects to Christian theology regarding Jesus as the redeemer through sacrifice himself.

Potential Findings and Commercialisation

The study is expected to reveal both overlapping motifs and contrasting emphases in Adamic narratives across the three sources. The visual framework will highlight how Isra'iliyyat shaped certain tafsir interpretations, while clarifying theological distinctions between Qur'anic and Biblical accounts. The pedagogical framework can potentially be adapted into teaching modules, workshops, and digital learning tools for higher education institutions, Islamic schools, and interfaith studies programs. However, full commercialisation and large-scale adoption will depend on pilot testing in the next stage, and user feedback among educators and students.

Figure 1 Prophet Adam across Religious Texts: A Visual Pedagogical Framework for Comparative Scriptural Narratives

Table 1 Framework of Comparative Scriptural Narratives: The Qur'an, Tafsir Nur al-Ihsan, and the Bible

Shared motifs	The Qur'an	Tafsir Nur al-Ihsan	The Bible (NRSV)
The Creation of Prophet Adam and Hawa	Prophet Adam from clay (Qur'an 2:30-31; 15:26). Adam was created as the first human, Hawa was created from him, and their descendants were spread forth from both (Qur'an 4:1)	Isra'iliyyat: Adam was rolled before Paradise for 40 years, which caused the angels to be amazed (Umar, 1971, vol. 1, p. 13). Hawa was created from Adam's left rib in Paradise without he felt any pain (Umar, 1971, vol. 1, p. 154).	Adam from dust of the ground (Genesis 2:7). Breath of life given by God into his nostril (Genesis 2:7). Eve was made from Adam's rib when he got a deep sleep (Genesis 2:21-22).
God's command and the Forbidden Tree	Do not eat from one tree (Qur'an 2:35; 7:19). Otherwise, become wrongdoers (Qur'an 7:19).	Isra'iliyyat: Do not eat from wheat or date tree (types of forbidden tree) (Umar, 1971, vol. 1, p. 14).	Do not eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good & Evil. Eating it will cause a death (Genesis 2:16-17).
Temptation and wrongdoing	Satan whispers: promise of immortality or angelic state (Qur'an 7:20). Both deceived and disobey until their nakedness were exposed (Qur'an 7:22; 20:120). They covered nakedness with leaves from Paradise (Qur'an 7:22; 20:121).	Isra'iliyyat: Serpent tempts Hawa first to eat from forbidden tree, and then she gave it to Adam (Umar, 1971, vol. 2, p. 60). Covered their nakedness with fig or banana leaves (3 leaves for Adam and 5 leaves for Eve - linked to burial shrouds) (Umar, 1971, vol. 2, p. 60).	Serpent tempts Eve: immortality and be like a God, knowing good and evil (Genesis 3:4-5). Eve gave the fruit to Adam (Genesis 3:6). Eyes were opened and they realize their nakedness (Genesis 3:7). Sewed fig leaves and made loincloths for covering. (Genesis 3:7).
Consequences of disobedience	Prophet Adam's role as caliph on earth (Qur'an 2:30). Adam, Hawa & Satan were expelled to earth (Qur'an 2:36). Enmity between humans and Satan (Qur'an 2:36). Prophet Adam got the words of repentance and divine mercy (Qur'an 2:37). Promise of divine guidance (Qur'an 2:38).	Isra'iliyyat: Adam: required to relieve himself as a result of eating the forbidden fruit (Umar, 1971, vol. 2, p. 60). Hawa: afflicted with menstruation every month (Umar, 1971, vol. 2, p. 60). Serpent: cursed to crawl on its belly and have its head struck by humans (Umar, 1971, vol. 2, p. 60).	Serpent: cursed, crawl on its belly, eat dust, enmity with woman's offspring (Genesis 3:14-15). Eve: pain in childbirth, submission to husband (Genesis 3:16). Adam: cursed ground, toil, death by returning to dust (Genesis 3:17-19). Expelled from the garden of Eden (Genesis 3:23).

NOVELTY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Novelty: This project produces first visual framework of Adam's narratives across three traditions: the Qur'an, the selected Malay exegesis (Tafsir Nur al-Ihsan), and the Bible. It transforms dense textual comparisons into clear infographic module. Besides, it also integrates Arabic Qur'an, Malay tafsir, and English Bible in one visual

framework by using English as the intermediary language. This innovation provides low-cost, flexible, and digital-friendly pedagogical tool.

Recommendations

Future studies should extend this comparative framework between the Qur'an, selected tafsir works from classical or contemporary exegeses, and other variations of Bible translations to other prophetic narratives (Nuh, Ibrahim, Musa, and Isa). Further research should also examine additional details, particularly the influence of Isra'iliyyat, include a broader corpus of tafsir texts, and conduct piloting with students and educators, collecting qualitative and quantitative feedback on usability of the framework, as well as examining its effectiveness.

Acknowledgements

REFERENCES

1. The Qur'an. (n.d.) Quran.com. https://quran.com/
2. Abu Shahbah, M. (1988). Al-Isrāʾīlīyāt wa al-Mawduʿat fi Kutub al-Tafsir. Maktabah Al-Sunnah.
3. Ahmad, Nadzrah. (2022). Qur'anic Exegetical Activities in the Malay Archipelago: A Historical Overview. Al-Shajarah: ISTAC Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 27(1), 101-121.
4. Al-Dhahabi, M. H. (2000). Al-Tafsir wa al-Mufassirun. Mesir: Maktabah Wahbah.
5. Al-Khalidi, S. A. F. (2015). Isrāʾīlīyyāt Muʿasirah. Damsyiq: Dar al-Qalam.
6. Arom, N. H., Nik Abdullah, N. M. S. A., Samsudin S. (2025). The Influence of Arabic Exegesis on Isra'iliyyat Narratives of Prophet Adam in Malay Tafsir and Its Implications. International Journal of Modern Education, 7(25), 472-482.
7. Ibn Taimiyyah, T. (1980). Muqaddimah Fi Usul al-Tafsir. Beirut: Dar Maktabah al-Hayah.
8. Ibrahim, M., Dakir, J. & Abdul Kadir, M. N. (2014). Pengenalan Tokoh-Tokoh dan Kitab Tafsir Melayu Ulama Nusantara. Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.
9. Ibrahim, N. (2013). The Evolution of Quranic Interpretation Writings in Malaysia from the 17th to 21st Century. International Journal of Education and Research, 1(7), 1-10.
10. Mohd Nor, M. T. (2024, October 25). Pengaruh Israiliyyat di Alam Melayu. Sinar Harian. https://www.sinarharian.com.my/article/692983/sinar-islam/islam-sejagat/pengaruh-israiliyyat-di-alam-melayu
11. Mohd Zabidi, A. Z. & Wan Abdullah, W. N. (2024). Kajian Tentang Kewujudan Isra'iliyyat di Alam Melayu Sebelum Kemunnculan Tafsir al-Quran. UMRAN–International Journal of Islamic and Civilizational Studies, 11(2), 59–73.
12. Rozali, M. & Lubis, N. S. (2022). Israiliyat: Histori Eksistensi dan Tokoh. AL-KAFFAH, 10(2), 145-163.
13. Sulaiman, I. (1998). Israi'liyyat dalam Pengajian Tafsir dan Sunnah. Jurnal Usuluddin, 8, 1-12.
14. The Holy Bible. New Revised Standard Version. (1989). National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. https://www.bible.com/
15. Umar, M. S. (1971). Tafsir Nur al-Ihsan. Pulau Pinang: Maktabah wa Matba'ah Dar al-Ma'arif.
16. Yusuff, M. S. S., Haji-Othman, Y., & Manaf, M. R. A. (2018). The Source of Al-Israiliyyat Stories in Tafsir Nur al-Ihsan: An Intertextuality Study. International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 8(4), 861–870.