

## Historical and Theological Study: The Concept of the Seven Heavens and Their Awaited Prophet in the Perspective of the Qur'an and Hadith

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### Abstract

The concept of the seven heavens in the Qur'an and Hadith is an important phenomenon that has attracted the attention of scholars and the general public throughout Islamic history. While the Qur'an mentions the seven heavens as an affirmation of Allah's greatness, explanations regarding the guardian prophets of the heavens are more extensively found in Hadith through the event of Isra and Mi'raj. This research aims to explore the concept of the seven heavens and their guardian prophets in the context of the Qur'an and Hadith using historical and theological approaches. The research method employed is qualitative study with descriptive analysis. The findings indicate that various interpretations of the seven heavens emerge among scholars, including literal and symbolic interpretations, illustrating the limitations of human knowledge. This study also emphasizes the importance of dialogue between the interpretation of the Qur'an and modern knowledge. The contribution of this research is to enrich the theological and cosmological understanding of Muslims regarding the concept of the seven heavens while demonstrating its relevance in contemporary scientific contexts.

**Keywords:** *Historical Studies, Theological, Seven Heavens, Qur'an Hadith*

### Abstrak

Konsep tujuh langit dalam Al-Qur'an dan Hadis adalah fenomena penting yang menarik perhatian kalangan cendekiawan dan masyarakat umum sepanjang sejarah Islam. Meskipun Al-Qur'an menyebutkan tujuh langit sebagai bentuk pengakuan akan kebesaran Allah, penjelasan tentang nabi-nabi penjaga langit lebih banyak ditemukan dalam hadis melalui peristiwa Isra dan Mi'raj. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi konsep tujuh langit dan nabi-nabi penjaganya dalam konteks Al-Qur'an dan Hadis dengan pendekatan historis dan teologis. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah studi kualitatif dengan analisis deskriptif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa berbagai interpretasi tentang tujuh langit muncul dari kalangan ulama, termasuk tafsir literal dan simbolis, yang menggambarkan keterbatasan pengetahuan manusia. Penelitian ini juga menekankan pentingnya dialog antara tafsir Al-Qur'an dan pengetahuan modern. Kontribusi penelitian ini adalah memperkaya pemahaman teologis dan kosmologis umat Islam terhadap konsep tujuh langit, sekaligus menunjukkan relevansinya dalam konteks ilmiah saat ini.

**Kata Kunci:** *Studi Historis, Teologis, Tujuh Langit, Qur'an Hadis*

## INTRODUCTION

The concept of the seven heavens in the Qur'an and Hadith is one of the phenomena that has captured the attention of scholars, academicians, and the general public throughout Islamic history. In the Qur'an, the phrase "seven heavens" (sab'a samawat) frequently appears as an affirmation of Allah's greatness and power in creating the universe. Similarly, the Hadiths provide additional explanations regarding the characteristics of the seven layers of heaven. Additionally, within the context of Islamic tradition, the concept of the seven layers of heaven is usually associated with the event of the Isra and Mi'raj of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), which mentions his encounters with the guardians of heaven at each level. This phenomenon not only generates admiration among the community but also provides a space for profound theological discussions regarding the understanding of the relationship between the structure of the cosmos and the afterlife.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, the development of modern science has contributed to the emergence of new interpretations of the seven heavens (sab'a samawat) from both scientific and philosophical perspectives. Some academicians and scientists have attempted to combine traditional Islamic views with modern knowledge in explaining the concept of the seven heavens.<sup>2</sup> However, these interpretations sometimes clash due to differences in methodology and epistemology between religion and science. As a result, there is a need to re-examine the concept of the seven heavens historically and theologically, particularly by exploring the texts of the Qur'an and Hadith comprehensively, both from classical and contemporary scholarly interpretations of this concept.<sup>3</sup>

Although the concept of the seven heavens has become an integral part of Islamic theological discourse, how the seven heavens and the role of the Prophet as their guardian are understood in the context of the Qur'an and Hadith still remain questions that need further investigation. Differences in interpretations, theological approaches, and historical frameworks often lead to a diversity of views that can influence the understanding of the Muslim community. Furthermore, the challenges of modernity and the ongoing developments in science create a necessity to understand the context of the seven heavens concept in contemporary times.

There have been several previous studies discussing the seven heavens in the Qur'an, their interpretations, and scientific approaches. Among them, the research by Hutapea et al. found that Achmad Baiquni's interpretation of the verse on the seven heavens suggests the existence of unlimited parallel universes, as a manifestation of Allah's greatness, where every heaven and earth has its laws set by Allah, decorating the

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<sup>1</sup> Amsori and Sumiati, "Penciptaan Langit Dalam Pandangan al Qur'an Dan Sains," *Maslahah: Journal Of Islamic Studies* 3, no. 1 (2024): 1–14.

<sup>2</sup> Nurfadillah Syam Ishak, Akmir, "Langit Dan Bumi Perspektif Al-Qur'an Dan Sains (Studi Kmparatif Tafsir Al-Qurthubi, Tafsir Abdurrahman As-Sa'di, Dan Sains Modern)," *Jurnal Ushuluddin Adab Dan Dakwah* 5, no. 1 (2022): 21–40, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5076711>.

<sup>3</sup> Zidni Irfani, "Konsep Sab'a Samawat Dalam Al-Qur'an (Studi Komparasi Penafsiran Saintifik Antara Tafsir Mafatih Al-Ghaib Dan Tafsir Ilmi Kementrian Agama RI)," *Jurnal Hikami* 1, no. 1 (2020): 67–85.

closest heaven to humans with stars, and ensuring that the heavens and earth do not collide until the Day of Judgment.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, research by Syuhada discovered that the concept of heaven in the Qur'an represents spiritual rather than physical places. In contrast, Western perspectives see pillars as structural components, while in the Qur'an, pillars are often considered representations of strength and stability of faith. In Islam, the symbolism of a heaven without pillars serves as a symbol of unity and impartiality.<sup>5</sup>

Another study conducted by Rohmah found that both interpretations indicate that the heavens have supports that are not visible to the eye. The support referred to in the Ministry of Religious Affairs' interpretation is gravitational force, whereas according to Buya Hamka, it refers to the attraction and balance of distance and weight between stars.<sup>6</sup> From these various studies, the novelty of this research lies in the combination of historical and theological approaches to examine the concept of the seven heavens and their awaited Prophet in the Qur'an and Hadith, which has not been the main focus of previous research. Unlike the studies by Hutapea et al., Wira Syuhada, and Luthfiatur Rohmah that emphasize scientific interpretations and symbolism, this research explores the textual, contextual, and its relevance to the faith of Muslims in a more holistic manner.

Therefore, considering the background of the phenomenon and previous research, the aim of this study is to explore the concept of the seven heavens and the Prophet as their guardian in the Qur'an and Hadith using historical and theological approaches. It is hoped that this research will be able to explore the relevance of this concept in addressing the challenges of modern science and reinforce the theological understanding among Muslims.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research is a qualitative study employing descriptive analytical methods. In this study, the data collection technique used is document study. This technique involves the collection, examination, and analysis of documents relevant to the research topic. The data analysis technique involves thematic analysis to identify and group the main themes related to the concept of the seven heavens, as well as a historical approach to trace the development of interpretations of this concept from classical to contemporary times. The analysis is conducted integratively to connect textual, contextual, and spiritual dimensions in building a comprehensive understanding relevant to modern contexts.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Overview of the Sky**

In Arabic, the term for sky is **السموات** (as-samawat), which is the plural form of **السماء** (as-samā'), meaning it appears blue to the human eye. In a broader sense, it refers

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<sup>4</sup> Nurul Izzah Hutapea et al., "Penafsiran Achmad Baiquni Tentang Tujuh Lapis Langit Dan Bumi" (UIN Ar-Raniry Darussalam Banda Aceh, 2024). iv-v.

<sup>5</sup> Wira Syuhada, "Al-Qur'an Dan Kehebatan Konsep Langit Tanpa Tiang" 4 (2024): 9496–9517.

<sup>6</sup> Lutfiatur Rohmah, "Penafsiran Tentang Penyangga Langit Dalam al Quran" (UIN Walisongo Semarang, 2023). xix.

to the horizon, everything above you, the back of a horse, or ceilings.<sup>7</sup> According to the Indonesian dictionary (KBBI), the sky is defined as the vast space that stretches above the earth, where the moon, stars, sun, and other planets reside.<sup>8</sup> The word “sky” is mentioned in the Qur’an 310 times, with the form as-sama’ occurring 120 times and as-samawat occurring 190 times in various verses of the Qur’an.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, the meaning of the sky is also interpreted as layers that complement the earth or objects that exist in outer space. The number of objects present in the sky is indicated by the term as-samawat, which carries a plural meaning as mentioned earlier.<sup>10</sup> This aligns with what Oemar Bakri, a Nusantara mufasssir, translates as-samawat as “outer space.”<sup>11</sup> From a scientific perspective, the sky is composed of gases and air with varying compositions in each of its layers. The sky is also described as a source of water through the hydrological process, beginning with evaporation that rises to form clouds and then changes into rain. Additionally, the sky is referred to as the upper part that envelops the earth, including clouds, stars, and galaxies.<sup>12</sup>

### The Concept of the Seven Heavens in the Perspective of the Qur’an

As explained above, the word sky in the noun form is mentioned 120 times, while in the plural form it is mentioned 190 times in the Qur’an. The verse about the creation of the seven heavens is mentioned five times, namely in QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 29, QS. Al-Isra: 44, QS. Al-Mu’minun: 86, QS. Fussilat [41]: 12, QS. At-Thalaq [65]: 12, QS. Al-Mulk [67]: 3, and QS. Nuh [71]: 15.

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ أَسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَسَوَّاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

Meaning: “He is the One Who created everything in the earth for you. Then He turned towards the heaven, forming it into seven heavens. And He has ‘perfect’ knowledge of all things.” (QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 29)

Quraish Shihab interprets this verse by emphasizing the discussion on “istawa,” which originally means to be upright and not bent, and is then understood metaphorically as moving swiftly and purposefully towards a destination, akin to someone walking straight without looking to the left or right. The term “kemudian” (then) or “berkehendak” (willing) implies a temporal interval in terms of hierarchy. Thus, He perfects them by creating the seven heavens and establishing laws that govern their respective journeys, as well as preparing suitable provisions for those who reside there, regardless of who they may be. All of this is the creation of Allah, the Most Perfect and Highly Precise.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Ahmad Warson Munawwir, *Kamus Al-Munawwir*, II (Surabaya: Pustaka Progressif, 2002).

<sup>8</sup> KBBI Daring, “Musyrik,” n.d. diakses tanggal 30 Desember 2024 di link <https://kbbi.web.id/langit>

<sup>9</sup> Muhammad Fu’ad Abd Al-Bāqiy, *Al-Mu’jam al-Mufahras Li Alfaz al-Qur’an al-Karīm*, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1981. 42.

<sup>10</sup> Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf al-Qur’an Al-Qur’an, *Manfaat Benda-Benda Langit Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur’an Dan Sains* (Jakarta: Lajnah Pentashihha Mushaf Al-Qur’an, 2012). 3-4

<sup>11</sup> Oemar Bakry, *Tafsir Rahmat* (Jakarta: Mutiara, 1984). xi.

<sup>12</sup> Kementrian Agama, *Penciptaan Jagat Raya Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur’an Dan Sains* (Jakarta: Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur’an, 2010). 59.

<sup>13</sup> Quraisy Syihāb, *Tafsir Al-Misbah*, IV (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2011). 138.

This interpretation illustrates that Allah created the seven heavens along with everything within them according to binding laws. All of this signifies Allah's power to create all marvelous things, including the seven layers of heaven, as a manifestation of His perfection and meticulousness in creation, regulation, and preservation.

Hasby Ash-Shiddiqiey interprets that after Allah created everything on earth, He directed His attention to the higher realms to establish the heavens. Allah's will cannot be obstructed by anyone, including the creation of the seven layered heavens arranged perfectly. This verse implicitly suggests that Allah first created the earth and its contents before creating the layered heavens. Although some scholars interpret the seven layers of heaven as referring to the seven major planets, the Qur'an does not limit it to just seven planets but allows for more. Additionally, another opinion indicates that the term "seven layers of heaven" signifies that there are many heavens and is not solely focused on the seven heavens within our solar system.<sup>14</sup>

تُسَبِّحُ لَهُ السَّمَوَاتُ السَّبْعُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ حَلِيمًا غَفُورًا

Meaning: "The seven heavens, the earth, and all those in them glorify Him. There is not a single thing that does not glorify His praises—but you 'simply' cannot comprehend their glorification. He is indeed Most Forbearing, All-Forgiving." (QS. Al-Isra [17]: 44)

Hasby Ash-Shiddiqiey holds the view that prior to this verse, the Qur'an discusses the polytheists who associate partners with Allah. However, Allah is above the accusations made by the polytheists who seek to oppose Him and compete for divine status. This is reflected in this verse, where the seven heavens, the earth, and all creatures within them glorify Allah, absolving Him from the accusations and assumptions of the polytheists by magnifying Him and acknowledging His Oneness in both His Lordship and Divinity.<sup>15</sup>

In this verse, Quraish Shihab references the opinion of Thaba'Thabai regarding the concept of glorification (tasbih). This verse serves to complete the argument presented in the preceding verses, which explain that if there were other gods, power would become a matter of contention. However, everything in the heavens and the earth glorifies Him and bears witness that there are no partners to Him. The glorification of the heavens and the earth is understood by some scholars in a metaphorical sense, signifying obedience to Allah's laws with harmony and precision in His creation, which demonstrates that Allah is Most Perfect.<sup>16</sup>

قُلْ مَنْ رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ

Meaning: "And ask them, 'Who is the Lord of the seven heavens and the Lord of the Mighty Throne?'" (QS. Al-Mu'minun [23]: 86)

<sup>14</sup> Muhammad Hasby Ash-Shiddiqy, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Majid An-Nur* (Semarang: PT. Pustaka Rizki Putra, 1987). Jilid 1, 69.

<sup>15</sup> Ash-Shiddiqy. Jilid 3, 2328.

<sup>16</sup> Syihāb, *Tafsir Al-Misbah*. Jilid 7, 474-475.

Hamka groups this verse with others from verses 84-89 under the theme of everything belonging to Allah. This cluster of verses contains several questions regarding ownership: “To whom does the earth and its contents belong? The seventh heaven with its twinkling stars, along with the sun and the moon, up to the great Throne—all of these belong to Allah.” Thus, no one can claim that everything on earth or in the heavens belongs to anyone but Allah alone. The purpose of this verse is to awaken the hearts, ears, and eyes of those who disbelieve in the existence of God.<sup>17</sup>

فَقَضَاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ وَأَوْحَىٰ فِي كُلِّ سَمَاءٍ أَمْرَهَا وَزَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصْبِيحٍ وَحِفْظًا ذَٰلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ  
الْعَلِيمِ

Meaning: “So He formed the heaven into seven heavens in two Days, assigning to each its mandate. And We adorned the lowest heaven with ‘stars like’ lamps ‘for beauty’ and for protection. That is the design of the Almighty, All-Knowing.” (QS. Fussilat [41]: 12)

Hamka, in this verse, explains that after Allah set His intention towards the heavens, He commanded the heavens and the earth to submit and obey, establishing the heavens in seven levels. Over the course of two days, it is best for us to submit the meaning and interpretation of these seven levels to Allah. Hamka believes that human knowledge cannot fully comprehend the true nature of what these seven heavens signify. Some scholars attempt to interpret them as referring to seven celestial bodies by counting the stars and satellites up to seven; however, the earth itself is also included in this count.

Another perspective suggests that the seven heavens represent seven galaxies, groups of millions of stars surrounding their own sun, yet galaxies number in the thousands, not just seven. Some have also stated that the moon is located in the first heaven and the sun in the fourth. According to Hamka, none of these interpretations hold firm evidence. It is better to accept what Allah has clearly stated about the seven heavens, including that rain falls from them. Each heaven has its designated role, operating according to the lines drawn by Allah’s command. The term “ornament of the sky” refers to the portion of the sky visible to the human eye, no matter the distance, illustrating the beauty and splendor of lights at night. This explanation regarding stars is also informed by the scientific field known as astronomy.<sup>18</sup>

In agreement with Hasby Ash-Shiddiqiey’s interpretation, it is noted that Allah perfected the seven layered heavens within two days, in addition to the four days previously mentioned. In each heaven, Allah created everything that aligned with His wisdom, issuing commands to the inhabitants of the heavens and assigning them appropriate tasks. This verse highlights the evidence of Allah’s perfection and the exaltation of His wisdom in creating the heavens and the earth through various phases, completing them in a manner befitting their significance.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Abdulmalik Abdulkarim Amrullah Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar* (Singapura: Pustaka Nasional Pte Ltd, n.d.). Jilid 6, 4824-4825.

<sup>18</sup> Hamka. Jilid 8, 6432-6434.

<sup>19</sup> Ash-Shiddiqiey, *Tafsir Al-Qur’an Majid An-Nur*. Jilid 4, 3649-3651.

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ وَمِنَ الْأَرْضِ مِثْلَهُنَّ يَتَنَزَّلُ الْأَمْرُ بَيْنَهُنَّ لِتَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَحَاطَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا

Meaning: “Allah is the One Who created seven heavens ‘in layers’, and likewise for the earth. The ‘divine’ command descends between them so you may know that Allah is Most Capable of everything and that Allah certainly encompasses all things in ‘His’ knowledge.” (QS. At-Talaq [65]: 12)

Quraish Shihab interprets that the preceding verse discusses the rewards and promises from Allah given to those who believe and engage in righteous deeds. To further affirm the truth of this promise, the current verse emphasizes the greatness of Allah’s power by declaring that Allah is the Creator of the seven heavens and the earth from nothing. Between these seven heavens and the earth, divine commands are issued, with the Angel Gabriel being sent to earth to bring forth the divine revelations and various decrees of Allah that manifest in this world. Quraish Shihab quotes Sayyid Quthb, highlighting the significant insights from two perspectives: first, that Allah’s knowledge encompasses everything, with the decrees mentioned reflecting an understanding of human conditions, circumstances, welfare, and their potential. Second, the divine decrees are entrusted to the human conscience, concerning all matters that serve as guarantees for the sensibility of the heart regarding issues that are of no use except in promoting piety toward Allah.<sup>20</sup>

Hasby Ash-Shiddiqiey interprets that Allah created the seven layered heavens and the earth. This statement implies that there are only seven heavens, signaling that there are many heavens, as supported by contemporary Muslim scholars. However, within them, Allah organizes and commands everything that exists in the heavens and the earth according to His knowledge. Similarly, Allah’s decree applies among these layers, allowing one to recognize the essence of Allah’s power.<sup>21</sup>

الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا ۚ مَا تَرَىٰ فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِن تَفْوُتٍ ۚ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَىٰ مِن فُطُورٍ

Meaning: “‘He is the One’ Who created seven heavens, one above the other. You will never see any imperfection in the creation of the Most Compassionate.<sup>1</sup> So look again: do you see any flaws?” (QS. Al-Mulk [67]: 3)

Hasby Ash-Shiddiqiey interprets that Allah is the one who created the seven layered heavens, with some layers placed above others in the exalted sky, without pillars to support them and without bonds to hold them together. Each layer occupies a specific space and has its own solid regulations. Only gravitational forces bind these heavens.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Syihāb, *Tafsir Al-Misbah*. Jilid 14, 308-309.

<sup>21</sup> Ash-Shiddiqy, *Tafsir Al-Qur’an Majid An-Nur*. Jilid 5, 4269-4270.

<sup>22</sup> Ash-Shiddiqy. Jilid 5, 4289.

Hamka explains that the concept of the seven heavens has been the subject of interpretation by many, incorporating both emerging knowledge and contemporary science. However, Hamka maintains the principle that the true meaning of the seven layered heavens is known only to Allah. Despite many scholars attempting to investigate the heavens and the moon, humanity remains unable to fully comprehend the sky and uncover all its secrets.<sup>23</sup>

أَلَمْ تَرَوْا كَيْفَ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا

Meaning: “Do you not see how Allah created seven heavens, one above the other,” (QS. Nuh [71]: 15)

Hamka interprets that readers are urged to contemplate that the seven heavens are as wondrous as Allah’s creation of humans through stages within a mother’s womb. Thus, if He can create mankind, certainly Allah is all-powerful in forming the seven layered heavens. There is no one who can provide a detailed explanation of what exactly is meant by these seven layered heavens, including the distance between each layer.<sup>24</sup>

In contrast, Quraish Shihab explains that the seven heavens denote a plural form that literally means Allah has created a shining moon within these seven heavens. Scholars understand that one of these heavens is the one closest to humans, as the moon is only visible in the nearest sky to the earth. Quraish Shihab emphasizes that the seven heavens, or what we might call the universe, contain numerous moons, each reflecting light obtained from stars and other planets.<sup>25</sup>

From the interpretations of the three mufasssirs, it can be concluded that they all agree that the seven layered heavens are a tangible manifestation of Allah’s power and perfection. They highlight that the universe is created with unparalleled order and wisdom. Despite some differences in their approaches—such as Quraish Shihab linking these interpretations to concepts of wisdom and metaphorical meanings; Hasby Ash-Shiddiqiey focusing on the sequence of creation and the flexible meaning of the number of heavens; and Hamka leaning toward relinquishing the essence of the heavens to Allah’s wisdom while appreciating the beauty of creation through a scientific perspective—there is a shared acknowledgment of the extraordinary nature of the heavens as evidence of divine creation.

### **The Concept of the Seven Heavens in the Perspective of Hadith**

In contrast to the concept of the seven heavens in the Qur’an, the description of the seven heavens in Hadith does not provide specific explanations but is closely related to the event of Isra and Mi’raj, which is one of the great miracles of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Behind this event, the Prophet experienced a period of sadness due to several factors, including the loss of his beloved wife, Siti Khadijah, the death of his uncle, Abu Talib, and the economic pressures from the Quraysh against the Muslim community. In a Sahih Hadith narrated by Imam Muslim, it is stated that during the Mi’raj

<sup>23</sup> Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*. Jilid 10, 7532-7533.

<sup>24</sup> Hamka., 7661.

<sup>25</sup> Syihāb, *Tafsir Al-Misbah*. Jilid 14, 467.



journey, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was taken by the Angel Gabriel through the seven layers of heaven. At each heaven, the Prophet met with the prophets who served as guardians of each layer.<sup>26</sup>

The Hadith that narrates the story of the Isra and Mi'raj is quite lengthy and is reported by Anas bin Malik as follows:

حَدَّثَنَا شَيْبَانُ بْنُ فَرُّوخَ حَدَّثَنَا حَمَّادُ بْنُ سَلَمَةَ حَدَّثَنَا ثَابِتُ الْبُنَائِي عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ أَتَيْتُ بِالْبَرَقِ وَهُوَ دَابَّةٌ أَبْيَضُ طَوِيلٌ فَوْقَ الْحِمَارِ وَدُونَ الْبُغْلِ يَضَعُ حَافِرُهُ عِنْدَ مُنْتَهَى طَرَفِهِ قَالَ فَرَكَبْتُهُ حَتَّى أَتَيْتُ بَيْتَ الْمَقْدِسِ قَالَ فَرَبَطْتُهُ بِالْحَلْقَةِ الَّتِي يَرَبُطُ بِهَا الْأَنْبِيَاءُ قَالَ ثُمَّ دَخَلْتُ الْمَسْجِدَ فَصَلَّيْتُ فِيهِ رَكَعَتَيْنِ ثُمَّ خَرَجْتُ فَبَجَّعَنِي جِبْرِيلُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ بِإِنَاءٍ مِنْ خَمْرٍ وَإِنَاءٍ مِنْ لَبَنٍ فَاخْتَرْتُ اللَّبَنَ فَقَالَ جِبْرِيلُ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ اخْتَرْتَ الْفُطْرَةَ ثُمَّ عَرَجَ بِنَا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَاسْتَفْتَحَ جِبْرِيلُ فَقِيلَ مَنْ أَنْتَ قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ قِيلَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ قِيلَ وَقَدْ بُعِثَ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ قَدْ بُعِثَ إِلَيْهِ فَفُتِحَ لَنَا فَإِذَا أَنَا بِأَدَمَ فَرَحَّبَ بِي وَدَعَا لِي بِخَيْرٍ ثُمَّ عَرَجَ بِنَا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الثَّانِيَةِ فَاسْتَفْتَحَ جِبْرِيلُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ فَقِيلَ مَنْ أَنْتَ قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ قِيلَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ قِيلَ وَقَدْ بُعِثَ إِلَيْهِ فَفُتِحَ لَنَا فَإِذَا أَنَا بِإِبْنِ الْحَالَةِ عِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ وَيَحْيَى بْنَ زَكَرِيَّا صَلَوَاتُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِمَا فَرَحَّبَا وَدَعَا لِي بِخَيْرٍ ثُمَّ عَرَجَ بِي إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الثَّالِثَةِ فَاسْتَفْتَحَ جِبْرِيلُ فَقِيلَ مَنْ أَنْتَ قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ قِيلَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ قِيلَ وَقَدْ بُعِثَ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ قَدْ بُعِثَ إِلَيْهِ فَفُتِحَ لَنَا فَإِذَا أَنَا بِيُوسُفَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِذَا هُوَ قَدْ أُعْطِيَ شَطْرَ الْحُسْنِ فَرَحَّبَ وَدَعَا لِي بِخَيْرٍ ثُمَّ عَرَجَ بِنَا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الرَّابِعَةِ فَاسْتَفْتَحَ جِبْرِيلُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ قِيلَ مَنْ هَذَا قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ قِيلَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ قِيلَ وَقَدْ بُعِثَ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ قَدْ بُعِثَ إِلَيْهِ فَفُتِحَ لَنَا فَإِذَا أَنَا بِإِدْرِيسَ فَرَحَّبَ وَدَعَا لِي بِخَيْرٍ قَالَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ { وَرَفَعْنَاهُ مَكَانًا عَلِيًّا } ثُمَّ عَرَجَ بِنَا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الْخَامِسَةِ فَاسْتَفْتَحَ جِبْرِيلُ قِيلَ مَنْ هَذَا قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ قِيلَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ قِيلَ وَقَدْ بُعِثَ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ قَدْ بُعِثَ إِلَيْهِ فَفُتِحَ لَنَا فَإِذَا أَنَا بِهَارُونَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَرَحَّبَ وَدَعَا لِي بِخَيْرٍ ثُمَّ عَرَجَ بِنَا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ السَّادِسَةِ فَاسْتَفْتَحَ جِبْرِيلُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ قِيلَ مَنْ هَذَا قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ قِيلَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ قِيلَ وَقَدْ بُعِثَ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ قَدْ بُعِثَ إِلَيْهِ فَفُتِحَ لَنَا فَإِذَا أَنَا بِمُوسَى صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَرَحَّبَ وَدَعَا لِي بِخَيْرٍ ثُمَّ عَرَجَ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ السَّابِعَةِ فَاسْتَفْتَحَ جِبْرِيلُ فَقِيلَ مَنْ هَذَا قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ قِيلَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ قِيلَ وَقَدْ بُعِثَ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ قَدْ بُعِثَ إِلَيْهِ فَفُتِحَ لَنَا فَإِذَا أَنَا بِإِبْرَاهِيمَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مُسْنِدًا ظَهْرَهُ إِلَى الْبَيْتِ الْمَعْمُورِ وَإِذَا هُوَ يَدْخُلُهُ كُلُّ يَوْمٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ مَلَكٍ لَا يَعُودُونَ إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ ذَهَبَ بِي إِلَى السِّدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَى وَإِذَا وَرَقُهَا كَأَذَانِ الْفِيلَةِ وَإِذَا ثَمَرُهَا كَالْقِلَافِ قَالَ فَلَمَّا غَشِيَهَا مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ مَا غَشِيَ تَغَيَّرَتْ فَمَا أَحَدٌ مِنْ خَلْقِ اللَّهِ يَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ يَنْعَتَهَا مِنْ حُسْنِهَا فَأَوْحَى اللَّهُ إِلَيَّ مَا أَوْحَى فَفَرَضَ عَلَيَّ خَمْسِينَ صَلَاةً فِي كُلِّ يَوْمٍ وَلَيْلَةٍ فَتَزَلْتُ إِلَى مُوسَى صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ مَا فَرَضَ رَبُّكَ عَلَيَّ أَمَتِكَ قُلْتُ خَمْسِينَ صَلَاةً قَالَ ارْجِعْ إِلَى رَبِّكَ فَاسْأَلْهُ التَّخْفِيفَ فَإِنَّ أَمَتَكَ لَا يَطِيقُونَ ذَلِكَ فَإِنِّي قَدْ بَلَوْتُ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ

<sup>26</sup> Miswari and Dzul Fahmi, "Historitas Dan Rasionalitas Isra' Mi'raj," *Jurnal At-Tafkir* XII, no. 2 (2019): 152–67.

وَحَبَرْتُهُمْ قَالَ فَرَجَعْتُ إِلَى رَبِّي فَقُلْتُ يَا رَبِّ خَفِّفْ عَلَيَّ أَمْتِي فَحَظَّ عَلَيَّ خَمْسًا فَرَجَعْتُ إِلَى مُوسَى فَقُلْتُ حَظَّ عَلَيَّ خَمْسًا قَالَ إِنَّ أَمْتِكَ لَا يُطِيقُونَ ذَلِكَ فَارْجِعْ إِلَى رَبِّكَ فَاسْأَلْهُ التَّخْفِيفَ قَالَ فَلَمْ أَزَلْ أَرْجِعُ بَيْنَ رَبِّي تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى وَبَيْنَ مُوسَى عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ حَتَّى قَالَ يَا مُحَمَّدُ إِنَّهُمْ خَمْسَ صَلَوَاتٍ كُلُّ يَوْمٍ وَلَيْلَةٍ لِكُلِّ صَلَاةٍ عَشْرُ فَذَلِكَ خَمْسُونَ صَلَاةً وَمَنْ هَمَّ بِحَسَنَةٍ فَلَمْ يَعْمَلْهَا كُتِبَتْ لَهُ حَسَنَةٌ فَإِنْ عَمِلَهَا كُتِبَتْ لَهُ عَشْرًا وَمَنْ هَمَّ بِسَيِّئَةٍ فَلَمْ يَعْمَلْهَا لَمْ تُكْتَبْ شَيْئًا فَإِنْ عَمِلَهَا كُتِبَتْ سَيِّئَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ قَالَ فَنَزَلْتُ حَتَّى انْتَهَيْتُ إِلَى مُوسَى صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَأَخْبَرْتُهُ فَقَالَ ارْجِعْ إِلَى رَبِّكَ فَاسْأَلْهُ التَّخْفِيفَ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقُلْتُ قَدْ رَجَعْتُ إِلَى رَبِّي حَتَّى اسْتَحْيَيْتُ مِنْهُ (رواه مسلم)

Meaning: "It has been reported to us by Shayban bin Farrukh, who narrated from Hammad bin Salamah, who narrated from Thabit al-Bunani, from Anas bin Malik that the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) said: 'I was brought the Buraq, a white creature larger than a donkey but smaller than a mule. It lowered itself so that I could mount it.' He continued, 'I rode it until I reached Baitul Maqdis. Then I tied it to a post in the mosque as the Prophets usually do. Subsequently, I entered the mosque and performed two rak'ahs of prayer. After finishing, I went out, and suddenly Gabriel came to me with a bowl of wine and a bowl of milk. I chose the milk, and Gabriel said, 'You have chosen fitrah (natural state).' Then, Gabriel took me up to the heavens. When Gabriel asked for the door to be opened, he was questioned, 'Who are you?' Gabriel replied, 'I am Gabriel.' Then he was asked, 'Who is with you?' Gabriel answered, 'Muhammad.' The next question was, 'Has he been sent?' Gabriel affirmed, 'Yes, he has been sent.' The door was opened for us, and I met Adam, who welcomed me and prayed for me. Then I was taken up to the second heaven. Gabriel requested the door to be opened. The same questions were asked, and after the door opened, I met Isa (Jesus) the son of Mary and Yahya (John) the son of Zakariya. They welcomed me and prayed for me. I was then taken to the third heaven. Gabriel once again requested the door to be opened. After answering the questions, the door was opened, and I met Nabi Yusuf (Joseph), who welcomed me and prayed for me. Next, I was taken to the fourth heaven, where I met Nabi Idris (Enoch), who welcomed me and prayed for me. Allah said about him, 'And We raised him to a high station.' I ascended to the fifth heaven, where I met Nabi Harun (Aaron), who welcomed me and prayed for me. Then, I ascended to the sixth heaven, where I met Nabi Musa (Moses), who welcomed me and prayed for me. Finally, I was taken to the seventh heaven, where I met Nabi Ibrahim (Abraham), who was leaning against Baitul Makmur, a place as vast as the expanse of the heavens where seventy thousand angels enter every day and do not return. Then, I was taken to Sidratul Muntaha, whose leaves were as large as the ears of elephants, and its fruits were as big as large jars. When I reached it by Allah's command, the Sidrah changed in an indescribable way due to its beauty. Then Allah commanded me to observe fifty prayers daily. I descended and encountered Nabi Musa, who asked, 'What did your Lord enjoin upon your people?' I replied, 'Fifty prayers.' He said, 'Return to your Lord and ask for a reduction, for your people will not be able to fulfill it. I have tested Bani Israel (the Children of Israel).' I returned to my Lord, asking for leniency. Allah then reduced the number from fifty to five prayers. When I went back to Moses, I told him about this reduction. He urged me again, 'Return to your Lord and ask for a lighter burden.' I said, 'I have gone back too many times to my Lord; it has made me shy of Him.' Ultimately, it was decreed that I must perform five daily prayers, with each prayer counting ten-fold, thus making it equivalent to fifty prayers in reward. Additionally, anyone who intends to do a good deed but does not carry it out is credited with one good deed, and if he carries

*it out, he is credited with ten. Conversely, if one intends to commit a sin but does not do it, nothing is recorded against him; if he does commit it, it is recorded as a single sin.’ I descended until I reached Nabi Musa again and informed him. He still said, ‘Return to your Lord and ask for a reduction.’ I responded, ‘I feel ashamed to return to Him after so many requests.’” (HR. Muslim).<sup>27</sup>*

From the above hadith, it is explained that during the Isra and Mi’raj, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) traversed through the seven layers of heaven. Each layer of heaven has guardians tasked with overseeing the gates of the heavens, and the Prophet (SAW) had to pass a series of questions posed by these guardians before the gates were opened. At each layer, the Prophet encountered previous prophets: Nabi Adam in the first heaven, Nabi Isa and Nabi Yahya in the second, Nabi Yusuf in the third, Nabi Idris in the fourth, Nabi Harun in the fifth, Nabi Musa in the sixth, and Nabi Ibrahim in the seventh. Each of these meetings highlights the honor given to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), who is the final messenger of Allah (SWT).<sup>28</sup>

The prophets present in each layer of heaven are not only figures welcoming the Prophet (SAW) but also symbols of their status within the hierarchy of prophethood. For instance, Nabi Adam, situated in the first heaven, is viewed as the father of mankind, while Nabi Ibrahim in the seventh heaven represents the father of the prophets. In the seventh heaven, Nabi Ibrahim is seen near Baitul Ma’mur, a sacred place that receives seventy thousand angels every day. Moreover, this journey underlines that each layer of heaven possesses specific order and function within the Islamic cosmological system, reflecting the significant position of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in the history of prophethood as the bearer of the final revelation. This encounter underscores the continuity and connection between previous prophets and the final prophecy, establishing a profound link within the spiritual and prophetic lineage in Islam.<sup>29</sup>

### **The Concept of the Seven Heavens and Their Guardian Prophets in Historical Study**

The concept of the seven heavens is a recurring theme in Islamic tradition, particularly within the Qur’an and Hadith. Historically, this concept has become a subject of interpretation and discussion among scholars and Muslim intellectuals. In the Qur’an, the term “seven heavens” appears in several verses, as previously explained. In interpretative traditions, scholars have diverse views regarding the meaning of the seven heavens. Some interpret it literally as seven distinct physical layers, while others see it as a symbolization of the complexity and majesty of Allah’s creation.<sup>30</sup> According to Buya Hamka’s Tafsir Al-Azhar, the number seven in this context can be understood as

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<sup>27</sup> Pusat Kajian Hadis, “Hadits Peristiwa Isra’ Mi’raj,” Februari, 2022.

<sup>28</sup> Juriyah Juriyah and Nadi Suprpto, “Kajian Perjalanan Isra’ Mi’Raj Nabi Muhammad Saw Dalam Perspektif Fisika,” *IPF: Inovasi Pendidikan Fisika* 10, no. 3 (2022): 21–31, <https://doi.org/10.26740/ipf.v10n3.p21-31>.

<sup>29</sup> Miswari and Fahmi, “Historitas Dan Rasionalitas Isra’ Mi’raj.”152-167.

<sup>30</sup> Reza Nur Mulyani, “Tujuh Langit Dalam Prespektif Al-Qur’an Dan Sains (Studi Tafsir Ilmi Kementerian Agama RI),” *Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Mulana Hasanuddin* (2021).

representing a large, limitless quantity, reflecting Allah's greatness and power in creating the universe.<sup>31</sup>

Modern interpretations also attempt to relate the concept of the seven heavens to scientific discoveries. For instance, Achmad Baiquni, in his research, interprets the seven heavens as referring to an unlimited number of parallel universes, as a manifestation of Allah's greatness. This approach demonstrates efforts to understand sacred texts within the framework of contemporary knowledge.<sup>32</sup>

Additionally, the concept of the seven heavens is linked to the event of Isra and Mi'raj, where the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) undertook a spiritual journey through the seven layers of heaven, meeting previous prophets along the way. This event reinforces the understanding of the cosmological structure within Islamic tradition and affirms the position of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in the sequence of prophethood.<sup>33</sup> From a historical perspective, the concept of the seven heavens is not exclusive to Islam. Several other religious traditions, such as Judaism and Christianity, also have similar concepts. For instance, in Jewish tradition, the idea of seven heavens is also found, where each layer is considered the dwelling place for angels and other celestial beings. This indicates that the concept has wide roots in various cultures and religious traditions.<sup>34</sup>

Overall, the concept of the seven heavens in Islam reflects the grandeur and complexity of Allah's creation. The diverse interpretations, from theological to scientific perspectives, showcase the richness of Islamic intellectual tradition in understanding and contemplating the universe. Historical studies on this concept help us comprehend how Muslims throughout history have endeavored to integrate revelation with empirical knowledge and how this concept has played a role in shaping the Islamic worldview.

Thus, the concept of the seven heavens has a rich historical dimension, reflecting the cosmological and spiritual views of various civilizations. In Islam, this concept is integrated with the teachings of monotheism, emphasizing Allah's greatness and power as the creator of an orderly and harmonious universe. Historical studies on this concept provide insights into how cosmological ideas have evolved and adapted across different religious traditions.

### **The Theological Significance of the Concept of the Seven Heavens and Their Guardian Prophets**

The concept of the seven heavens and the existence of guardian prophets holds significant theological importance in Islam, particularly in affirming the greatness of Allah and the perfect cosmic order. In the Qur'an, the mention of the seven heavens, as seen in Surah Al-Mulk [67:3], indicates that the creation of the universe is carried out with perfect balance, reflecting Allah's nature as Al-Khaliq (The Creator). The prophets encountered by Prophet Muhammad (SAW) during the Isra and Mi'raj journey through

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<sup>31</sup> Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*. 7152.

<sup>32</sup> Hutapea et al., "Penafsiran Achmad Baiquni Tentang Tujuh Lapis Langit Dan Bumi." iv-v.

<sup>33</sup> Miswari and Fahmi, "Historitas Dan Rasionalitas Isra' Mi'raj." 152-167.

<sup>34</sup> Hendra Yohanes, "Langit Dan Bumi Yang Baru: Eskatologi Berdasarkan Teologi Biblika Tentang Tempat Kediaman Allah," *GEMA TEOLOGIKA: Jurnal Teologi Kontekstual Dan Filsafat Keilahian* 5, no. 2 (2020): 155, <https://doi.org/10.21460/gema.2020.52.496>.

each layer of heaven also represent the continuity of divine messages and respect for spiritual hierarchy.<sup>35</sup>

The presence of guardian prophets in each layer of heaven, as stated in the accounts of Isra and Mi'raj, carries significant theological value in Islamic tradition. The meetings between Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and the prophets, such as Nabi Adam in the first heaven and Nabi Ibrahim in the seventh, illustrate the continuity of the prophetic duty to convey monotheism (tauhid) to humanity. This signifies a close relationship between each prophet and their roles as moral and spiritual guardians of their communities in their respective times.

Theologically, this concept also teaches about the role of humanity as khalifah (stewards) on earth. By understanding the cosmic structure of the seven heavens, Muslims are encouraged to reflect on Allah's greatness and their responsibility to maintain balance on earth. Classical interpretations, such as those by Imam Al-Qurtubi, highlight that the creation of the seven heavens exemplifies Allah's perfection in the organization of the universe, serving as a model for humans to carry out their leadership responsibilities with care.<sup>36</sup>

Furthermore, the existence of the seven heavens alongside their guardian prophets imparts moral lessons about respect for spiritual authority. The journey of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) through the layers of heaven reminds Muslims of the importance of emulating the moral values taught by previous prophets. Symbolically, this emphasizes that human life should be guided by divine principles conveyed through the prophets.<sup>37</sup> Ultimately, the theological significance of the concept of the seven heavens and their guardian prophets strengthens faith in Allah as the Almighty Creator and the organizer of the universe. This concept also underscores the importance of upholding the values of monotheism, maintaining balance, and following the teachings of the prophets in daily life. Reflecting on this concept provides profound insights into the relationship between humans, Allah, fellow humans, and the universe as a whole.

## CONCLUSION

The concept of the seven heavens mentioned in the Qur'an focuses primarily on the aspect of creation, while the explanation about their guardian prophets is detailed in Hadith through the event of Isra and Mi'raj. The concept of the seven heavens in the Qur'an has led to various interpretations among scholars. Some scholars interpret it as seven layers of the atmosphere, seven major planets, or seven galaxies; however, all these interpretations acknowledge the limitations of human knowledge in understanding the true essence. Hamka's interpretation, for example, emphasizes the importance of accepting Allah's greatness without attempting to specify the exact meaning of the seven

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<sup>35</sup> Zidni Irfani, "Konsep Sab'a Samawat Dalam Al-Qur'an (Studi Komparasi Penafsiran Saintifik Antara Tafsir Mafatih Al-Ghaib Dan Tafsir Ilmi Kementrian Agama RI)." 67-85.

<sup>36</sup> Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Abu Bakr Al-Anshari Al-Qurthubi, *Tafsir Al-Qurthubi Terj. Muhammad Ibrahim Al-Hifnawi Dan Mahmud Hamid Utsman* (Jakarta: Pustaka Azzam, 2017). Jilid 1.

<sup>37</sup> Muhamad Nuryadin, "Peristiwa Isra ' Mi ' Raj Nabi Muhammad SAW Dalam Tinjauan Konsep Teleportasi Dan Lintas Dimensi," *Momentum: Jurnal Sosial Dan Keagamaan* 11, no. 1 (2022): 38-42.

heavens. This study highlights the theological significance of discussing the seven heavens from the perspectives of the Qur'an, Hadith, and historical contexts regarding the importance of understanding both the metaphoric and scientific meanings of the creation of the heavens in the Qur'an as a reflection of Allah's greatness, while also opening avenues for dialogue between the interpretation of the Qur'an and modern scientific knowledge.

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