

Weighing the Soundness of the *Sanad*: The Epistemological Position of Muhammad Abū Shuhbah on *Isrā'iliyyāt* in the Case Study of Hārūt and Mārūt

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ABSTRACT

Isrā'iliyyāt narratives in classical tafsīr literature raise an unresolved tension between naqd al-sanad and naqd al-matan. When a report has a sound sanad yet contradicts Islamic doctrine, scholarly responses diverge. Some scholars preserve such reports through ta'wīl, while others reject them entirely. Muhammad Abū Shuhbah occupies the most uncompromising position in this spectrum, yet the epistemological basis of his rejection lacks systematic examination. Using a qualitative library research method, this study explains the epistemological foundation of Abū Shuhbah's rejection of *Isrā'iliyyāt* reports with sound transmission chains and tests his argument's consistency through the Hārūt and Mārūt case. The primary source is Abū Shuhbah's *Al-Isrā'iliyyāt wa al-Mawḍū'āt fī Kutub al-Tafsīr*, analyzed alongside relevant classical works via descriptive-analytical content analysis. Abū Shuhbah adopts the standard tripartite classification but treats a report as an indivisible whole. He rejects the Hārūt and Mārūt narrative due to an invalid matan, even when parts of its sanad are considered sound, and provides an alternative interpretation of Q. al-Baqara [2]:102 containing no *Isrā'iliyyāt* elements. The soundness of a sanad cannot rehabilitate a report whose matan contradicts textual and rational evidence. This principle contributes to qawā'id al-tafsīr by clarifying the structural relationship between naqd al-sanad and naqd al-matan, reframing Abū Shuhbah's stance as a principled epistemological position that assigns naqd al-matan the role of final arbiter.

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INTRODUCTION

Classical *tafsīr* literature is not entirely free from narratives drawn from non-Islamic sources. Among the most pervasive of these is *Isrā'īliyyāt*, a term referring to stories and reports originating from Jewish and Christian religious traditions.¹ The presence of *Isrā'īliyyāt* in *tafsīr* raises significant concerns. Some of these reports contain elements that are rationally implausible, contradict Islamic doctrinal principles, or diminish the status of the prophets. As a result, such narratives risk obscuring the message of the Quran and providing grounds for those who seek to cast doubt on Islamic teachings.²

Muslim scholars have addressed this problem by developing evaluative guidelines for assessing *Isrā'īliyyāt*. These guidelines generally divide such reports into three categories. The first consists of narratives whose content aligns with Islamic law and may therefore be accepted. The second consists of narratives whose content contradicts Islamic law and must therefore be rejected. The third consists of narratives whose truth or falsity cannot be determined, and toward which the appropriate stance is *tawaqquf*, that is, neither affirming nor denying them.³ This tripartite classification is based primarily on an assessment of a report's content. In addition to content evaluation, a report is also assessed in terms of its chain of transmission, or *sanad*. In practice, these two forms of evaluation typically proceed in tandem, and a report with a sound *sanad* is generally considered acceptable.⁴ A problem arises, however, when the two evaluations diverge, that is, when a report carries a sound *sanad* but its content is judged to be problematic. This tension constitutes the central concern of the present study.

One of the clearest examples of this tension is the narrative concerning Hārūt and Mārūt in Sūrah al-Baqarah, verse 102. Several reports relating to this story are considered to have strong chains of transmission, yet their content depicts two angels committing grave sins, a portrayal that directly contradicts the belief in angelic impeccability.⁵ Notably, scholars have not responded to such reports with a uniform position. Some have retained these narratives through allegorical interpretation, others have accepted certain portions while rejecting others, and still others have invalidated them entirely. It is against this background of scholarly divergence that the thought of Muḥammad Abū Shuhbah becomes particularly significant. Through his work *Al-Isrā'īliyyat wa al-Mawḍū'āt fī Kutub al-Tafsīr*, Abū Shuhbah adopts the most uncompromising stance among these positions.⁶

On the basis of the foregoing discussion, this study is organised around three research questions. First, how have scholars understood the *ḥadīth* concerning the People of the Book, and how has this understanding given rise to the evaluative guidelines and tripartite classification framework for *Isrā'īliyyāt*. Second, what is the epistemological argument underlying Abū Shuhbah's evaluation of *Isrā'īliyyāt* narratives, and what distinguishes his position as the most uncompromising in the spectrum of scholarly attitudes toward reports with sound chains of transmission. Third, how is this argument

¹ Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Dhahabī, *Al-Tafsīr Wa al-Mufasssīrūn* (Maktabat Wahbah, 2000), 1:121.

² Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Suwaylim Abū Shuhbah, *Al-Isrā'īliyyāt Wa al-Mawḍū'āt Fī Kutub al-Tafsīr*, 4th ed. (Maktabat al-Sunnah, 1988), 4–5.

³ al-Dhahabī, *Al-Tafsīr Wa al-Mufasssīrūn*, 1:130.

⁴ Subi Nur Isnaini, "Manhaj Ibn 'Aṭīyah Fī al-Ta'āmūl Ma'a al-Isrā'īliyyāt Fī al-Muḥarrar al-Wajīz," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis* 23, no. 2 (2022): 261–84, <https://doi.org/10.14421/qh.v23i2.3756>.

⁵ Muḥammad Misbah, "Dakhil Ayat Kisah Dalam Al-Quran: Studi Analisis Kisah Harut Dan Marut Dalam Tafsir Ad-Durr Al-Mantsur Karya Jalaluddin As-Suyuthi," *HERMENEUTIK* 11, no. 2 (2017): 226, <https://doi.org/10.21043/hermeneutik.v11i2.5545>.

⁶ Abū Shuhbah, *Al-Isrā'īliyyāt Wa al-Mawḍū'āt Fī Kutub al-Tafsīr*, 163–64.

applied in practice, and how consistent is it when tested through the case study of Hārūt and Mārūt.

This study aims to explain the epistemological basis of Abū Shuhbah's position on *Isrā'īliyyāt* and to test its consistency through a single case study. The findings are expected to contribute to the field of *qawā'id al-tafsīr*, particularly in clarifying the relationship between *naqd al-sanad* and *naqd al-matan* in the evaluation of *Isrā'īliyyāt* reports. In addition, this study aims to extend prior scholarship beyond its current descriptive limitations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study adopts a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to map existing scholarship on *Isrā'īliyyāt* and to identify the gap that the present research addresses. The review draws on articles indexed in Google Scholar, Moraref, Sinta, and DOAJ, using the keywords "*Isrā'īliyyāt*," "Abū Shuhbah," "*naqd al-matan*," "Hārūt and Mārūt," and their variants in Indonesian, Arabic, and English. The publication window is set to 2015–2025 for journal articles, while a small number of foundational earlier studies are retained where they remain essential for tracing the intellectual genealogy of the discussion. Inclusion is limited to peer-reviewed journal articles and academic books that directly discuss *Isrā'īliyyāt*, its evaluation in *tafsīr* literature, or Abū Shuhbah's scholarly thought. Non-peer-reviewed web pages, popular commentaries, and studies of only tangential relevance are excluded. The search yields an initial pool of approximately 45 records. After screening for direct thematic relevance, 15 journal articles are retained as the basis for the thematic synthesis presented below.

The retained literature is organized into four thematic clusters. The first cluster comprises theoretical studies on the definition, history, and classification of *Isrā'īliyyāt*. Studies in this cluster conclude that *Isrā'īliyyāt* is a neutral term whose evaluation depends on the conformity of a given report with Islamic law.⁷ The second cluster consists of studies that examine *Isrā'īliyyāt* within specific *tafsīr* works or in relation to particular exegetes. These studies map varying positions, ranging from lenient acceptance to critical rejection.⁸ The third cluster focuses on the Hārūt and Mārūt narrative across various *tafsīr* works. This cluster reveals a strong tendency among exegetes to reject the narrative on the grounds of angelic impeccability.⁹ The fourth cluster comprises studies devoted

⁷ Usman Usman, "Memahami Isrā'īliyyāt Dalam Penafsiran Al-Qur'an," Articles, *Ulumuna* 15, no. 2 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v15i2.200>; Hawira Ira, "Hakikat Tafsir Israiliyat Dalam Penafsiran Al-Qur'an," *Jurnal Al-Mubarak: Jurnal Kajian Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 3, no. 1 (2018): 12–17, <https://doi.org/10.47435/al-mubarak.v3i1.211>; Abd Kahar, "Memahami Eksistensi Israiliyyat Dalam Tafsir," *El-Furqania: Jurnal Ushuluddin Dan Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 2, no. 01 (2016): 17–34, <https://doi.org/10.54625/elfurqania.v2i01.1418>; Ahmad Sa'id Samsuri, "Israiliyat: Perkembangan Dan Dampaknya Dalam Tafsir Al-Qur'an," *Islamuna: Jurnal Studi Islam* 2, no. 2 (2015): 197–217, <https://doi.org/10.19105/islamuna.v2i2.662>.

⁸ Supriyanto Supriyanto, "Israiliyyat Dalam Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-Azhim Karya Ibnu Katsir," *Al-A'raf: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam Dan Filsafat* 12, no. 2 (2015): 1–9, <https://doi.org/10.22515/ajpif.v12i2.1171>; Isnaini, "Manhaj Ibn 'Atiyyah Fī al-Ta'āmūl Ma'a al-Isrā'īliyyāt Fī al-Muḥarrar al-Wajīz"; Rofiq Junaidi, "Al-Ashil Wa Dakhil Fī Tafsir," *Al-A'raf: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam Dan Filsafat* 11, no. 2 (2014): 67–88, <https://doi.org/10.22515/ajpif.v11i2.1192>.

⁹ Muhammad Saekul Mujahidin, "Ragam Kisah Sihir Dalam Al-Qur'an: Dari Harut-Marut Hingga Turunnya Surah al-Mu'awwidhatain," *Tasamuh: Jurnal Studi Islam* 16, no. 1 (2024): 90–112, <https://doi.org/10.47945/tasamuh.v16i1.1275>; Ghazi Mubarak and Febriyatul Jannah, "Harut Dan Marut

specifically to Abū Shuhbah's thought. The study by Zahidah Zainal Abidin and Ahmad Yunus Mohd Noor maps the methodology of *Al-Isrā'iliyyāt wa al-Mawḍū'āt* from three angles: Abū Shuhbah's scholarly background, an introduction to the work, and an analysis of his argumentative method.¹⁰ The study by Safira Azzalia examines Abū Shuhbah's treatment of *Isrā'iliyyāt* narratives through *Mawārid al-Bayān* and notes that he rejects the Hārūt and Mārūt story on the basis of angelic impeccability.¹¹

The thematic synthesis reveals a consistent gap. Both studies devoted to Abū Shuhbah remain at the descriptive-methodological level. They record that he rejects reports with sound chains of transmission and criticizes Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī and as-Suyūṭī. However, neither examines the epistemological basis of that rejection, and neither clarifies what distinguishes his evaluative principles from those of scholars who preserve such reports through allegorical reinterpretation. The broader clusters share a similar limitation. They focus either on the classification framework or on the positions of individual exegetes, without addressing the underlying epistemological principle that makes one position more uncompromising than another. The term "epistemological" in this study's title points to this gap. The concern is not simply what Abū Shuhbah's position is, but the evaluative principle on which that position rests. Based on this gap, the present study treats Abū Shuhbah's stance as a principled epistemological position that assigns *naqd al-matan* a decisive role in evaluating *Isrā'iliyyāt*.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach through library research methodology, in which written sources serve as the primary object of investigation. The data sources are divided into two categories. Primary sources include Muhammad Abū Shuhbah's *Al-Isrā'iliyyat wa al-Mawḍū'āt fī Kutub al-Tafsīr* as the main reference, alongside *tafsīr* works relevant to the Hārūt and Mārūt narrative, namely al-Ṭabarī's *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, Ibn Kathīr's *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, and al-Rāzī's *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*. Primary sources also include *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* together with Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī's commentary *Fath al-Bārī*, and al-Dhahabī's *Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasssīrūn*. Secondary sources consist of journal articles and books addressing *Isrā'iliyyāt*, the Hārūt and Mārūt narrative, and Abū Shuhbah's scholarly thought. Data were collected through documentary techniques and subsequently analysed using a descriptive-analytical content analysis method. The descriptive dimension serves to present the concept of *Isrā'iliyyāt*, the content of the relevant *ḥadīth*, and Abū Shuhbah's positions, while the analytical dimension examines the argumentative foundations underlying those positions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Dalam Tafsir Modrn (Studi Komparasi Penafsiran Sayyid Qutub Dan Wahbah Zuhaili)," *Reflektika* 14, no. 1 (2019): 183–201, <https://doi.org/10.28944/reflektika.v14i1.954>.

¹⁰ Zahidah Zainal Abidin, "Metodologi Kitab Al-Isrā'iliyyat Wa Al-Mawḍū'āt Fī Kutub Al-Tafsīr Karya Sheikh Abu Syahbah: Satu Analisis," *Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Ushuluddin* 16, no. 1 (2017): 51–66, <https://doi.org/10.18592/jiu.v16i1.1151>.

¹¹ Safira Azzalia, "Riwayat Isrā'iliyyāt dalam Kisah Hārūt dan Mārūt: Telaah Kitab Mawārid al-Bayān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān," *Diya Al-Afkar: Jurnal Studi al-Quran dan al-Hadis* 12, no. 1 (2024): 1–22, <https://doi.org/10.24235/diyaafkar.v12i1.18053>.

A. The Concept of *Isrā'īliyyāt* and Its Place in the Principles of *Tafsīr*

The term *Isrā'īliyyāt* derives etymologically from the word *Isrā'īl*, the epithet of the Prophet Ya'qūb (Jacob), who is the forefather of the Israelites.¹² At the terminological level, scholars have offered varying definitions of the term's scope. Muhammad Husayn al-Dhahabī defines *Isrā'īliyyāt* as reports originating from Jewish and Christian sources, whether in the form of narratives, historical accounts, or legal rulings, that have entered into Quranic exegesis. Al-Dhahabī notes that while the term ostensibly refers to Jewish influences in *tafsīr*, its scope equally encompasses Christian influences. The predominance of the Jewish label reflects the historical reality that Jewish elements were more pervasive in classical *tafsīr* than Christian ones.¹³

Some scholars have extended the scope of the term beyond the People of the Book. Muhammad Abū Shuhbah regards *Isrā'īliyyāt* as encompassing not only reports from Jewish and Christian sources, but also any report derived from non-Islamic cultures, including ancient Persian traditions, that has been absorbed into *tafsīr* literature.¹⁴ This broader view is consistent with the historical observation that mythological narratives in classical *tafsīr* drew from a wide range of civilisational sources, not exclusively from Judeo-Christian tradition. On the basis of these scholarly positions, this study defines *Isrā'īliyyāt* as any report originating from sources outside the Islamic tradition, particularly Jewish and Christian ones, and in a broader sense inclusive of other pre-Islamic traditions, that has entered *tafsīr* literature in the form of narratives, verse explanations, or historical accounts. In the broader study of *tafsīr*, *Isrā'īliyyāt* is intrinsically linked to the concept of *al-dakhīl*, meaning that all *Isrā'īliyyāt* narratives are classified under this category of baseless foreign insertions, although *al-dakhīl* itself encompasses a wider range of unauthentic influences.¹⁵

Historically, the infiltration of *Isrā'īliyyāt* into *tafsīr* preceded the formal establishment of the term itself. Reports from the People of the Book began to be incorporated into Quranic interpretation during the era of the Companions, when some of them consulted converts from the People of the Book to fill in details of Quranic narratives that were mentioned only in general terms. This process of absorption expanded further during the Successors' era as the number of converts from the People of the Book continued to grow.¹⁶ The word *Isrā'īliyyāt* itself appears in fourth-century Hijri works, including the writings of al-Mas'ūdī, though its usage at that time was not yet standardised. The term was employed sporadically, sometimes to refer to wondrous tales and at other times merely to indicate the title of a particular book.¹⁷ The term entered the technical vocabulary of *tafsīr* scholarship through Ibn Taimiyyah (d. 728 AH) and reached its most systematic application in the work of his student Ibn Kathīr (d. 774 AH). Ibn Kathīr was the first scholar to use the term consistently and systematically to identify, reject, and critique reports he considered unreliable and traceable to influences outside the Islamic tradition.¹⁸ In his evaluative framework, Ibn Kathīr does not accommodate these reports uncritically. He applies a structured interpretive strategy that integrates

¹² Muḥammad ibn Mukarram ibn 'Alī al-Anṣārī Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān Al-'Arab*, 3rd ed. (Dār Ṣādir, 1994), 11:400.

¹³ al-Dhahabī, *Al-Tafsīr Wa al-Mufasssīrūn*, 1:121.

¹⁴ Abū Shuhbah, *Al-Isrā'īliyyāt Wa al-Mawḍū'āt Fī Kutub al-Tafsīr*, 13–14.

¹⁵ Suci Romadani Siregar et al., "Critical Study of Al-Dakhil from the Path of Isra'iliyat," *AHKAM* 4, no. 2 (2025): 662–74, <https://doi.org/10.58578/ahkam.v4i2.6335>.

¹⁶ Ira, "Hakikat Tafsir Israiliyat Dalam Penafsiran Al-Qur'an."

¹⁷ Roberto Tottoli, "Origin and Use of the Term Isrā'īliyyāt in Muslim Literature," *Arabica* 46, no. 2 (1999): 202, JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4057496>.

¹⁸ Tottoli, "Origin and Use of the Term Isrā'īliyyāt in Muslim Literature," 205–8.

both transmission criticism and content evaluation. This assessment is conducted by comparing the content of the narratives with Qur'anic verses and authenticated prophetic traditions.¹⁹

Scholars of *ḥadīth* and *tafsīr* classify *Isrā'iliyyāt* into three categories. The basis for this classification is an evaluation of a report's content rather than its chain of transmission alone. The first category comprises reports whose content is consistent with the Quran or the Sunnah and may therefore be accepted, such as the identification of al-Khaḍir as the companion of the Prophet Mūsā in a report recorded by al-Bukhari. The second consists of reports whose content contradicts Islamic law or sound reason and may neither be accepted nor transmitted. The third comprises reports that fall between the two, whose truth or falsity cannot be determined with certainty. Toward this third category, Muslims are instructed to adopt a stance of *tawaqquf*, that is, to suspend judgement by neither affirming nor denying the report.²⁰

One of the foundational principles governing the Muslim attitude toward reports from the People of the Book is the following maxim:

كل ما جاء من أهل الكتاب غير مصدق ولا مكذب

"Everything that comes from the People of the Book is neither to be confirmed nor denied."²¹

This principle is grounded in a *ḥadīth* transmitted by Imam al-Bukhari on the authority of Abū Hurayra. The *ḥadīth* recounts that the People of the Book during the Prophet's time would read the Torah in Hebrew and interpret it in Arabic for the Muslims. In response, the Prophet instructed Muslims neither to confirm nor deny what the People of the Book reported, but instead to declare their belief in God and in what had been revealed to them.²² This prophetic instruction functions as a vital epistemological guideline, acting as a normative framework to carefully negotiate the boundaries between authentic Islamic revelation and external religious traditions.²³

This principle applies specifically to the third category of *Isrā'iliyyāt*, namely reports whose authenticity or falsity cannot be determined. The stance of *tawaqquf* places Muslims in a neutral position: such reports are neither accepted as part of Islamic teaching nor rejected outright, provided they do not contradict the Quran and the Sunnah. This classical principle constitutes an important normative reference point for evaluating any exegete's treatment of *Isrā'iliyyāt*. As will be discussed in the following section, Abū Shuhbah's position reflects a considerably more stringent orientation than this normative standard, even with respect to reports whose chains of transmission are deemed sound.

This study adopts al-Dhahabī's terminological definition of *Isrā'iliyyāt* as reports of Jewish and Christian origin that have entered *tafsīr* literature. The analytical focus is directed at the problem that arises within the second category, namely reports whose

¹⁹ Supriyanto Supriyanto and El Hassen Sid Ahmed El Habib, "Isrā'iliyyāt Narratives in Ibn Kathir's Tafsir: Methodological Perspectives and Their Implications for Qur'anic Studies," *Tanzil: Jurnal Studi Al-Quran* 8, no. 2 (2026): 233–52, <https://doi.org/10.20871/tjsq.v8i2.563>.

²⁰ Abdur Rokhim Hasan, *Qawa'id at-Tafsir: Qa'idah-Qa'idah Tafsir al-Qur'an*, 1st ed. (Yayasan Alumni Perguruan Tinggi Ilmu Al-Quran, 2020), 177.

²¹ Hasan, *Qawa'id at-Tafsir: Qa'idah-Qa'idah Tafsir al-Qur'an*, 175.

²² Abū 'Abdillāh Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl ibn Ibrāhīm ibn al-Mughīrah al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, 1st ed. (Dār Ibn Kathīr, 2002), 6:2679, 2742.

²³ Hudiyanti Hudiyanti and Muh Baehaqi, "Negotiating Authority in Qur'anic Exegesis: The Epistemological Function of Isrā'iliyyāt Narratives from the People of the Book," *Al-Afham: Journal of Islamic Studies* 2, no. 2 (2025): 166–81, <https://doi.org/10.62509/ajis.v2i2.253>.

content is judged to contradict Islamic law. It is within this category that an unresolved tension exists when a report carries a *sanad* considered sound, yet its content contradicts established doctrinal evidence. In such cases, scholars have diverged in their responses. Some have attempted to reconcile the report through allegorical interpretation so that it may be retained, while others have rejected it directly. This divergence is precisely the space in which Abū Shuhbah applies his critical approach, as will be examined in the discussion that follows.

B. The *Ḥadīth* Foundations and the Tripartite Classification of Attitudes toward *Isrāʾīliyyāt*

Scholarly attitudes toward *Isrāʾīliyyāt* did not emerge in a vacuum. They are rooted in two *ḥadīth* that appear, at first glance, to be in tension with one another: the first permits the transmission of reports, while the second urges caution. It is the reconciliation of these two *ḥadīth* that gave rise to the tripartite classification framework. The first *ḥadīth*, permitting transmission from the Israelites, is recorded by Imam al-Bukhari:

بلغوا عني ولو آية، وحدثوا عن بني إسرائيل ولا حرج²⁴

"Convey from me, even if it is a single verse, and narrate from the Children of Israel, and there is no objection."

The second *ḥadīth* instructs Muslims to exercise restraint toward reports from the People of the Book. Also transmitted by Imam al-Bukhari on the authority of Abū Hurayra, it describes the practice of the People of the Book of reading the Torah in Hebrew and interpreting it in Arabic for the Muslims. In response to this practice, the Prophet instructed Muslims neither to confirm nor deny what they reported.²⁵

The apparent tension between these two *ḥadīth* is one of surface contradiction rather than genuine conflict. Scholars resolved it through the method of reconciliation (*al-jamʿ*). Imam al-Shāfiʿī argued that the Prophet could not have permitted the transmission of falsehood, and therefore the permissive *ḥadīth* must be understood in a restricted sense, applying only to reports whose falsity has not been established.²⁶ Imam Malik offered a comparable explanation, holding that permission to transmit from the Israelites applies only to what is good, while reports whose falsity is known may not be transmitted.²⁷ Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī further clarified the matter by stating that the prohibition on both confirming and denying applies exclusively to reports that are *muḥtamal*, that is, reports that could plausibly be either true or false. Reports whose content is clear-cut are to be evaluated on the basis of that content.²⁸

This process of reconciliation ultimately crystallised into the tripartite classification. Reports consistent with Islamic law belong to the first category and may be accepted. Reports that contradict Islamic law belong to the second category and must be rejected. Reports that are *muḥtamal* belong to the third category and are to be met with *tawaqquf*. It is important to note that both the permissive *ḥadīth* and the cautionary one

²⁴ Abū ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl ibn Ibrāhīm ibn al-Mughīrah al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, 1st ed. (Dār Ibn Kathīr, 2002), 3:1275.

²⁵ al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, 6:2679, 2742.

²⁶ Abū Shuhbah, *Al-Isrāʾīliyyāt Wa al-Mawḍūʿāt Fī Kutub al-Tafsīr*, 113.

²⁷ Abū Shuhbah, *Al-Isrāʾīliyyāt Wa al-Mawḍūʿāt Fī Kutub al-Tafsīr*, 111.

²⁸ Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fath al-Bārī Bi-Sharḥ al-Bukhārī*, ed. Muḥammad Fuʾād ʿAbd al-Bāqī and Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb (al-Maktabah al-Salafiyyah, 1970), 6:388.

employ the content of a report as the primary basis for evaluation. Scholars distinguished between types of reports according to whether the falsity of their content was known, not solely according to the quality of their chain of transmission. The tripartite classification is therefore, at its foundation, a content-based framework, grounded in the evaluation of a report's *matan*.

This discussion makes clear that the evaluation of *Isrā'iliyyāt* involves two analytically distinct instruments. The first is *naqd al-sanad*, the criticism of the chain of transmission, which examines the continuity of the chain and the reliability of its narrators, and yields a judgement of sound (*ṣaḥīḥ*), good (*ḥasan*), or weak (*ḍa'īf*). The second is *naqd al-matan*, the criticism of a report's content, which examines the conformity of that content with the Quran, stronger *ḥadīth*, and sound reason. These two instruments are independent of one another and do not necessarily yield the same conclusions. A report may carry a sound *sanad* while its *matan* contains elements that contradict Islamic law.

A problem arises when the conclusions of *naqd al-sanad* and *naqd al-matan* diverge. In such cases, scholarly responses are not uniform but span a spectrum of positions. At one end stand scholars who retain the report by subjecting its *matan* to allegorical interpretation, on the grounds that a sound *sanad* ought not to be disregarded. In the middle stand scholars who adopt a selective approach, accepting elements of the report that align with the Quran while setting aside details traceable to *Isrā'iliyyāt* sources. At the other end stand scholars who invalidate the report entirely on the basis of its *matan*, even when its *sanad* is considered sound. It is this last position that Muhammad Abū Shuhbah occupies. How Abū Shuhbah constructs and defends this position will be the subject of the following section.

C. Abū Shuhbah's Argument for Rejecting *Isrā'iliyyāt* Reports with Sound *Sanad*

Before analysing Abū Shuhbah's argument, it is necessary to establish his scholarly background. Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Suwaylim Abū Shuhbah was an Azhari scholar who specialised in the fields of the Quran and the Sunnah. He served as Dean of the Faculty of Uṣūl al-Dīn at al-Azhar University's Asyūṭ branch and played a role in the founding of that branch.²⁹ This scholarly background positioned Abū Shuhbah as a scholar with depth in two disciplines simultaneously, namely *tafsīr* and *ḥadīth* studies, both of which shaped his approach to evaluating *Isrā'iliyyāt* narratives.

This background is directly reflected in his major work. *Al-Isrā'iliyyat wa al-Mawḍū'āt fī Kutub al-Tafsīr* was written at the request of the Majma' al-Buḥūth al-Islāmiyya at al-Azhar. Its stated purpose is to explain the *Isrā'iliyyāt* narratives scattered throughout *tafsīr* literature while demonstrating their weaknesses and invalidity.³⁰ Several researchers have noted that the work was composed as a work of critical scholarship with a distinctive approach, rather than merely as a survey of *Isrā'iliyyāt*.³¹ This assessment aligns with Abū Shuhbah's own stated motivation: he regarded the composition of such a work as an urgent necessity, given that corrupt *Isrā'iliyyāt* narratives had come to obscure authentic *tafsīr* and cloud the guidance of the Quran.³² To

²⁹ Abdul Rohim et al., "Abu Suhbah and As-Siba'i's Rebuttal of the Inkar Sunnah Group (Thought Analysis Study)," *Al-Afkar, Journal For Islamic Studies* 8, no. 2 (2025): 1512–23, <https://doi.org/10.31943/afkarjournal.v8i2.1453>.

³⁰ Abū Shuhbah, *Al-Isrā'iliyyāt Wa al-Mawḍū'āt Fī Kutub al-Tafsīr*, 4.

³¹ Abidin, "Metodologi Kitab Al-Isrā'iliyyat Wa Al-Mawḍū'āt Fī Kutub Al-Tafsīr Karya Sheikh Abu Syahbah: Satu Analisis."

³² Abū Shuhbah, *Al-Isrā'iliyyāt Wa al-Mawḍū'āt Fī Kutub al-Tafsīr*, 4–5.

address this issue, Abū Shuhbah systematically applied both transmission-based (*riwāya*) and content-based (*dirāya*) analyses to meticulously scrutinize and filter out unauthentic *Isrā'īlyyāt* narratives across major classical exegesis works.³³

As a work of critical scholarship, the book nonetheless operates within the established classificatory framework. At the theoretical level, Abū Shuhbah accepts and employs the tripartite classification in the same manner as other scholars. He divides *Isrā'īlyyāt* narratives into three groups: reports that accord with Islamic law and may be affirmed, reports that contradict Islamic law and are definitively false, and reports whose truth or falsity cannot be determined, toward which the appropriate stance is *tawaqquf*.³⁴ Since this tripartite framework is commonly employed in *Isrā'īlyyāt* scholarship, Abū Shuhbah's adoption of it places him within the established evaluative tradition.³⁵ Up to this point, his position appears to be no different from that of scholars in general.

This similarity, however, is limited to the classificatory framework. The difference between Abū Shuhbah and other scholars lies not in the tripartite structure itself, but in how he applies it to specific reports. His distinctiveness emerges in his treatment of reports whose *sanad* is considered sound yet whose *matan* is problematic. In such cases, Abū Shuhbah does not treat the soundness of the *sanad* as a guarantee of a report's acceptability. Instead, he positions *naqd al-matan* as an evaluative instrument capable of overriding the conclusions of *naqd al-sanad*.

This stance is evident in his criticism of exegetes who cite chains of transmission without evaluating the reliability of their narrators. Abū Shuhbah identifies one of the principal causes of error in *tafsīr bi al-ma'sūr* as the inability to distinguish sound reports from weak ones, compounded by the tendency to consider the mere citation of a *sanad* sufficient without subjecting its narrators to critical scrutiny.³⁶ This view is consistent with findings in prior studies, which conclude that the presence of a *sanad* does not automatically render a report acceptable, since an assessment of its content remains necessary.³⁷ For Abū Shuhbah, the existence of a *sanad* is insufficient to guarantee a report's acceptability, because every report must still be tested against its content.

The evaluation of a report's content rests on explicit criteria. The basis for Abū Shuhbah's *naqd al-matan* encompasses two elements: the conformity of a report with textual evidence (*dalīl naqlī*) in the form of the Quran and sound *ḥadīth*, and its conformity with rational evidence (*dalīl 'aqlī*) in the form of sound reason. A report that contradicts either of these two bases is judged to be invalid, even if its chain of transmission appears strong.³⁸ This methodological stance resonates with broader academic efforts to bridge the *riwāya-dirāya* divide, demonstrating that while a chain of transmission serves as an initial epistemic anchor, it cannot legitimize narratives that violate foundational axiological and rational principles.³⁹ This framework provides Abū Shuhbah with a principled basis for rejecting specific *Isrā'īlyyāt* reports even when their *sanad* has been deemed sound by *ḥadīth* scholars.

³³ Muhammad Sholihin et al., "Kritik Konten Israiliyyat Dalam Tafsir Dan Hadis: Analisis Riwayat Dan Dirayat," *Al-Hasyimi: Jurnal Ilmu Hadis* 2, no. 1 (2025): 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.63398/0r740g27>.

³⁴ Abū Shuhbah, *Al-Isrā'īlyyāt Wa al-Mawḍū'āt Fī Kutub al-Tafsīr*, 106–7.

³⁵ Usman Usman, "Memahami Isrā'īlyyāt Dalam Penafsiran Al-Qur'an."

³⁶ Abū Shuhbah, *Al-Isrā'īlyyāt Wa al-Mawḍū'āt Fī Kutub al-Tafsīr*, 113.

³⁷ Junaidi, "Al-Ashil Wa Dakhil Fī Tafsīr," 67–88.

³⁸ Abū Shuhbah, *Al-Isrā'īlyyāt Wa al-Mawḍū'āt Fī Kutub al-Tafsīr*, 113–14.

³⁹ Moh Akib, "The Integration of Sanad in the Contextual Interpretation of the Qur'an: A Maqasid-Based Perspective: (Integrasi Sanad Dalam Penafsiran Kontekstual Al-Qur'an: Sebuah Perspektif Berbasis Maqasid)," *Al Muhafidz: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 5, no. 2 (2025): 234–50, <https://doi.org/10.57163/almuhafidz.v5i2.190>.

Abū Shuhbah's uncompromising stance is evident not only in his treatment of the second category of *Isrā'iliyyāt*, but also in his approach to the third. Reports in the third category are those whose truth or falsity cannot be determined; normatively, they are met with *tawaqquf* and their transmission is permitted. Nevertheless, Abū Shuhbah tends to recommend that even these reports be avoided in the practice of *tafsīr*. His reasoning is not that such reports are definitively false, but rather that they provide no benefit and instead obstruct sound exegesis.⁴⁰ This position reinforces the picture of a scholar who adopts a considerably more stringent approach than the normative standard implied by the tripartite classification.

This uncompromising stance raises a question that requires clarification. The *ḥadīth* permitting transmission from the Israelites is, in its textual form, permissive, and Abū Shuhbah's position therefore appears to require alignment with it. He resolves this tension by interpreting the permissive *ḥadīth* in a restricted sense, in line with Imam al-Shāfi'ī's explanation that permission to transmit applies only to reports whose falsity has not been established.⁴¹ This interpretation is also noted in prior research, which explains that Abū Shuhbah uses the permissive *ḥadīth* as a basis for transmission while restricting it to reports consistent with the Quran and *ḥadīth*.⁴² On this reading, the permissive *ḥadīth* cannot be invoked to justify transmitting corrupt *Isrā'iliyyāt* reports, nor can it be used to defend any report whose *matan* contradicts Islamic law.

On the basis of the foregoing discussion, Abū Shuhbah's epistemological argument can be summarised in a single conclusion. He employs the same tripartite framework as other scholars, but assigns *naqd al-matan* a decisive role. For Abū Shuhbah, the soundness of a *sanad* is not sufficient to guarantee a report's acceptability; any report whose *matan* contradicts textual or rational evidence must be rejected. The consistency with which this argument is applied in practice will be examined through the case study of the Hārūt and Mārūt narrative in the following section.

D. The Consistency of Abū Shuhbah's Argument: A Case Study of Hārūt and Mārūt

The narrative of Hārūt and Mārūt provides an appropriate case through which to test the consistency of Abū Shuhbah's argument. The story is connected to God's words in Sūrah al-Baqarah, verse 102, which mentions two angels named Hārūt and Mārūt in the land of Babylon. The verse states that the two did not teach sorcery to anyone without first declaring that they were a trial, so that whoever received their instruction should not become an unbeliever. The problem does not arise from the verse itself, but from the *Isrā'iliyyāt* narratives that developed around it.

Isrā'iliyyāt reports concerning Hārūt and Mārūt are widely dispersed throughout classical *tafsīr* literature. As-Suyūṭī in *Al-Durr al-Manthūr* compiled numerous reports on this narrative, several of which are also transmitted by Ibn Jarir al-Ṭabarī in his *tafsīr*.⁴³ The core of these reports depicts two angels who descended to earth, were tempted by a woman, and ultimately fell into grave sins including drinking wine, committing adultery, and killing. Several studies have noted that such reports are frequently encountered in

⁴⁰ Abū Shuhbah, *Al-Isrā'iliyyāt Wa al-Mawḍū'āt Fī Kutub al-Tafsīr*, 109.

⁴¹ Abū Shuhbah, *Al-Isrā'iliyyāt Wa al-Mawḍū'āt Fī Kutub al-Tafsīr*, 113.

⁴² Abidin, "Metodologi Kitab Al-Isrā'iliyyat Wa Al-Mawḍū'āt Fī Kutub Al-Tafsīr Karya Sheikh Abu Syahbah: Satu Analisis."

⁴³ Jalāl al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakr al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Durr al-Manthūr Fī al-Tafsīr Bi al-Ma'thūr* (Dār al-Fikr, 2011), 1:97–103; Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr ibn Yazīd ibn Kathīr ibn Ghālīb al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' Al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Āy al-Qur'ān*, 1st ed., ed. 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī (Dār Hajar li al-Ṭibā'ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī' wa al-I'lān, 2001), 1:362–67.

classical *tafsīr* and are commonly associated with the exegesis of the verse on sorcery.⁴⁴ Some of these reports even take the form of traditions attributed directly to the Prophet.

The central problem with these reports lies in their content. The depiction of angels committing grave sins directly contradicts the doctrine of angelic impeccability. The Quran affirms that angels never disobey God's commands and always carry out what they are instructed to do.⁴⁵ The *Isrā'iliyyāt* reports concerning Hārūt and Mārūt therefore stand in direct opposition to unambiguous textual evidence and are equally irreconcilable with rational considerations that reject such a portrayal.

Scholars have occupied different positions across a spectrum of responses to these reports. On the side of retention, some scholars adopted the path of *ta'wīl*, accepting the reports as having a valid basis while reinterpreting their meaning so as not to conflict with the doctrine of angelic impeccability. The logic of this position deserves to be understood before it is evaluated. Proponents of *ta'wīl* argued that angelic impeccability applies to angels in their angelic condition. When God sent Hārūt and Mārūt to earth endowed with human desires, as some reports mention, the trial they underwent occurred under conditions different from those of angels in general. Within this interpretive framework, the reports need not be discarded, and their strong chains of transmission become a reason to retain them while moderating their meaning.⁴⁶ Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī occupied this position. In *Fath al-Bārī*, he judged the Hārūt and Mārūt narrative to rest on an acceptable evidentiary basis, citing a chain of transmission of *ḥasan* quality through the *ḥadīth* of Ibn ʿUmar in *Musnad Aḥmad*. On the strength of this *sanad* evaluation, he rejected the verdict of invalidity issued by al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ, and as-Suyūṭī subsequently followed his view.⁴⁷ This position, therefore, is not one that disregards doctrine; it is one that chooses to preserve a strongly attested report through semantic adjustment, a path with its own coherent logic within the *ḥadīth* critical tradition.

In the middle of the spectrum, scholars such as Ibn Kathīr adopted a selective approach: accepting the apparent meaning of the Quranic text while setting aside the details derived from *Isrā'iliyyāt* sources, without resorting to *ta'wīl* and without invalidating the reports entirely.⁴⁸ At the far end of the spectrum, Abū Shuhbah rejects the narrative in its entirety. He declares that the Hārūt and Mārūt reports, however strong their chains of transmission may be, are fabricated and cannot be accepted. This position aligns with those of al-Rāzī, Abū Ḥayyān, Abū Suʿūd, and al-Ālūsī, who had previously rejected the narrative.

What is most significant about Abū Shuhbah's stance is the basis on which he rejects these reports. His rejection of the Hārūt and Mārūt narrative is grounded primarily not in the weakness of the *sanad*, but in the invalidity of the *matan*. He asserts that such reports contradict textual evidence (*dalīl naqlī*), namely the Quranic affirmation of angelic impeccability, as well as rational evidence (*dalīl ʿaqlī*), namely the sound reasoning that

⁴⁴ Misbah, "DAKHIL AYAT KISAH DALAM AL-QURAN."

⁴⁵ Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, *Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahannya*, Edisi Penyempurnaan (Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, Badan Litbang dan Diklat, Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2019).

⁴⁶ Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, *Al-Zawājir ʿan Iqtirāf al-Kabāʾir*, 1st ed. (Dār al-Fikr, 1987), 2:172.

⁴⁷ Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fath al-Bārī Bi-Sharḥ al-Bukhārī*, 6:191; bandingkan dengan Abū al-Faḍl Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Al-Ujāb Fī Bayān al-Asbāb*, ed. ʿAbd al-Ḥakīm Muḥammad al-Anīs (Dār Ibn al-Jawzī, 1997), 1:333.

⁴⁸ Abū al-Fidāʾ Ismāʿīl ibn ʿUmar Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Al-Qurʾān al-ʿAẓīm*, 2nd ed., ed. Sāmī ibn Muḥammad Salāmah (Dār Ṭayyibah li-al-Nashr wa-al-Tawzīʿ, 1999), 1:360.

rejects the portrayal of angels as perpetrators of grave sins.⁴⁹ For Abū Shuhbah, it is this contradiction at the level of the *matan* that constitutes the primary basis for rejection, rendering the quality of the *sanad* no longer a decisive consideration. Therefore, while modernist scholars often relied on homiletic polemics or linguistic rationalizations to dismiss the supernatural aspects of the Hārūt and Mārūt narrative, Abū Shuhbah anchors his rejection strictly within the epistemological boundaries of traditional *hadith* sciences by prioritizing the doctrinal integrity of the *matan*.⁵⁰

Abū Shuhbah's position becomes even clearer when set against that of Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī. In *Fath al-Bārī*, Ibn Ḥajar holds that the Hārūt and Mārūt narrative rests on an acceptable evidentiary basis. He judges the report to have reached him through a *ḥasan* chain via Ibn ʿUmar, and maintains that the cumulative weight of the transmission lines presented by al-Ṭabarī demonstrates that the narrative has a legitimate foundation. On this basis, Ibn Ḥajar explicitly rejects the position that the narrative is invalid, including the view held by al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ, and as-Suyūṭī followed him in this. Ibn Ḥajar therefore does not invalidate the Hārūt and Mārūt reports; he retains them as reports with a sound foundation, anchoring his judgement in the results of *naqd al-sanad*.

This difference in position clarifies precisely what is distinctive about Abū Shuhbah. Both Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī and Abū Shuhbah uphold the doctrine of angelic impeccability, so their disagreement is not one of doctrinal principle. Their disagreement concerns the unit of evaluation applied to a report. Ibn Ḥajar treats the *sanad* and the *matan* as two separable layers, such that a report may simultaneously carry a strong evidentiary basis and contain elements requiring allegorical reinterpretation. Abū Shuhbah, by contrast, treats a report as an indivisible whole. He explicitly criticises Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī's tendency, characterising the acceptance of these reports as an overly rigid adherence to the criteria of *sanad* criticism without adequate attention to the consequences of declaring them sound.⁵¹

The most important element of Abū Shuhbah's argument lies in the principle he states directly. He acknowledges that some chains of transmission for the Hārūt and Mārūt reports are indeed sound or *ḥasan* up to certain Companions or Successors. He nevertheless insists that the soundness of a report's attribution does not eliminate the invalidity of its content.⁵² This principle is the key to his entire argument, and its epistemological implications warrant explicit articulation. Abū Shuhbah effectively separates two questions that the *ḥadīth* critical tradition has often treated as one: the question of whether a report was genuinely uttered by the narrator cited, and the question of whether the content of that report is true. The soundness of a *sanad* answers only the first question. It establishes that the chain of transmission is reliable, but it does not establish that what was transmitted is true. For Abū Shuhbah, the second question, concerning the truth of the content, must be answered through *naqd al-matan*, and it is this answer that is final. Within this framework, Abū Shuhbah rejects the "salvaging" function that a sound *sanad* has traditionally been permitted to perform. A strong chain of transmission cannot rescue a report whose *matan* contradicts more certain evidence, nor can it open space for *taʿwīl* to preserve such a report.

⁴⁹ Abū Shuhbah, *Al-Isrāʾīliyyāt Wa al-Mawḍūʿāt Fī Kutub al-Tafsīr*, 62–164.

⁵⁰ Stephen R. Burge, "The Demystification of Magic in the Tafsīr Al-Manār: An Analysis of the Exegetical and Homiletic Devices Used in the Discussion 'Mabḥath al-Siḥr Wa-Hārūt Wa-Mārūt,'" *Religions* 12, no. 9 (2021): 734, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12090734>.

⁵¹ Abū Shuhbah, *Al-Isrāʾīliyyāt Wa al-Mawḍūʿāt Fī Kutub al-Tafsīr*, 164.

⁵² Abū Shuhbah, *Al-Isrāʾīliyyāt Wa al-Mawḍūʿāt Fī Kutub al-Tafsīr*, 164.

Having rejected the *Isrāʾīliyyāt* reports, Abū Shuhbah does not stop at refusal alone. He supplements his rejection by presenting what he considers the correct interpretation of Sūrah al-Baqarah, verse 102. According to Abū Shuhbah, the verse does not speak at all of two angels who committed sins. Rather, it addresses the sorcery spread by the devils during the time of the Prophet Sulaymān, while affirming that the Prophet Sulaymān neither disbelieved nor taught sorcery.⁵³ The act of teaching mentioned in the verse is understood as an introduction to sorcery so that people could distinguish it from miracles and prophethood, not as instruction in sorcery for practical use. Through this interpretation, Abū Shuhbah demonstrates that the verse can be fully explained without recourse to *Isrāʾīliyyāt* reports whatsoever.

On the basis of the foregoing discussion, the case study of Hārūt and Mārūt demonstrates that Abū Shuhbah's argument is applied consistently. The position he formulated at the theoretical level, namely evaluating a report as an indivisible whole with *naqd al-matan* as the decisive instrument, is genuinely applied when he confronts specific reports. He rejects the Hārūt and Mārūt narrative on the grounds of its invalid *matan*, maintains that rejection even when some of its chains of transmission are considered sound, and supplements it with an alternative interpretation entirely free of *Isrāʾīliyyāt*. This consistency constitutes the principal finding of the present case study.

CONCLUSION

This study arrives at three principal conclusions. First, scholarly attitudes toward *Isrāʾīliyyāt* are rooted in two *ḥadīth* that appear, at first glance, to be in tension: the *ḥadīth* permitting transmission from the Israelites and the *ḥadīth* instructing restraint toward reports from the People of the Book. Scholars reconciled these two *ḥadīth* by distinguishing between types of reports on the basis of their content, and this reconciliation crystallised into the evaluative guidelines and tripartite classification of reports that are accepted, rejected, and suspended in judgement (*tawaqquf*). This framework is fundamentally grounded in the assessment of the *matan*, while *naqd al-sanad* functions as a complementary instrument that operates alongside it.

Second, Abū Shuhbah employs the same tripartite framework as scholars in general, yet occupies the most uncompromising position in the spectrum of scholarly attitudes toward *Isrāʾīliyyāt* reports with sound chains of transmission. His distinctiveness lies in his unit of evaluation: he treats a report as an indivisible whole. His epistemological argument rests on the principle that the soundness of a report's *sanad* does not eliminate the invalidity of its content, such that a corrupt *matan* invalidates the report in its entirety, leaving no room for either allegorical reinterpretation or selective acceptance.

Third, the case study of Hārūt and Mārūt demonstrates that this argument is applied consistently. Although some chains of transmission for these reports were judged sound by prominent *ḥadīth* scholars, Abū Shuhbah nonetheless rejects them on the grounds of their invalid *matan*, and supplements that rejection with an interpretation of Sūrah al-Baqarah, verse 102, that is entirely free of *Isrāʾīliyyāt*. This consistency confirms that his epistemological principle is not merely a theoretical declaration, but a principle that genuinely governs his interpretive practice.

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that Abū Shuhbah's distinctiveness lies not in his classificatory framework, but in his separation of the authenticity of transmission from the truth of content as an epistemological position that assigns *naqd al-matan* the role of final arbiter. This finding contributes to the field of *qawāʿid al-tafsīr*,

⁵³ Abū Shuhbah, *Al-Isrāʾīliyyāt Wa al-Mawḍūʿāt Fī Kutub al-Tafsīr*, 165.

particularly in clarifying the relationship between *naqd al-sanad* and *naqd al-matan*. Further research is recommended to test the consistency of this position across other *Isrā'iliyyāt* cases, so that a more complete mapping of Abū Shuhbah's methodology may be established.

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