

ECONOMIC RECESSION'S MITIGATION: INTERPRETATION OF QS. YUSUF [12]: 43- 48 WITH SEMIOTIC APPROACH

Muhammad Saiful Khair

Institut Agama Islam Negeri Palangka Raya

Email: mkhair819@gmail.com

Desi Erawati

Institut Agama Islam Negeri Palangka Raya

Email: erawati1377@gmail.com

Nor Faridatunnisa

Institut Agama Islam Negeri Palangka Raya

Email: norfaridatunnisa@iain-palangkaraya.ac.id

Abstract: *At the end of 2022, the world community was shocked by the issue of global economic recession. This threat is considered very worrying because it can cause the collapse of a country if there are no mitigation measures for this issue. Therefore, a reinterpretation of QS. Yusuf [12]: 43-48 using Roland Barthes' semiotic approach as an analytical was needed so that the Indonesian people could apply the strategies used by the Prophet Yusuf in dealing with the famine in Egypt in facing the threat of economic recession. The results show that improving the quality of human resources, especially in managing natural resources, is the primary key so that people can have a productive spirit and can create new jobs for others. In addition, implementing good regulations in all sectors of life and building good synergy between all elements of society are supporting factors in efforts to prevent the phenomenon of recession.*

Keyword: *Recession Mitigation, QS. Yusuf [12]: 43-48, Semiotics*

Abstrak: *Di penghujung tahun 2022, masyarakat dunia dikejutkan dengan isu resesi ekonomi global. Ancaman ini dinilai sangat mengkhawatirkan karena dapat menyebabkan keruntuhan suatu negara jika tidak ada langkah mitigasi atas isu ini. Oleh karena itu, muncullah penafsiran ulang terhadap QS. Yusuf [12]: 43-48 dengan menggunakan pendekatan semiotika Roland Barthes sebagai pisau analisis diperlukan agar masyarakat Indonesia dapat menerapkan strategi yang digunakan oleh Nabi Yusuf dalam menghadapi bencana kelaparan di Mesir dalam menghadapi ancaman resesi ekonomi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa peningkatan kualitas sumber daya manusia terutama dalam mengelola sumber daya alam menjadi kunci utama agar masyarakat dapat memiliki jiwa yang produktif dan dapat menciptakan lapangan pekerjaan baru bagi orang lain. Selain itu, penerapan regulasi yang baik di semua sektor kehidupan dan membangun sinergi yang baik antara semua elemen masyarakat menjadi faktor pendukung dalam upaya pencegahan fenomena resesi.*

Kata Kunci: *Mitigasi Resesi, QS. Yusuf [12]: 43-48, Semiotika*

Introduction

After the Covid 19 pandemic, global human life is still under threat. At the end of 2022, the world community was again shocked by the threat of an economic recession.¹ This threat is considered to be able to destabilize human life, which will lead to a depression in a country if no preventive steps are taken immediately.² This issue quickly spread and received a variety of opinions, one of which was from the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Joko Widodo, who called the coming year (2023) a dark year.³

Simply put, economic recession is a situation where a country's economy experiences a significant decline which can be seen from several indications such as a decrease in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for two consecutive quarters,⁴ an increase in the number of unemployed people,⁵ and high inflation values.⁶ The global economic turbulence began during the Covid-19 pandemic which started with the scarring effect and lockdown policies implemented in almost every country in the world which caused the export and import of goods to experience delays.⁷ Then, followed by the tension in geopolitical relations between Russia and Ukraine,⁸ causing sluggishness in world economic activities, which led to an economic recession on a global scale.

Indonesia, a country in the Southeast Asian region, is expected to be affected by the decline in economic activity. This is because Indonesia is involved in trade between nations.⁹ However, quoting from the official website of the International Monetary Fund, the GDP growth rate in Indonesia in 2023 shows a positive figure, reaching 5%.¹⁰ In addition, based on the latest data update on the official website of the Central Bureau of Statistics and the Ministry of Trade, shows that Indonesia's

¹ Sef, "Kabar Buruk Dari Bank Dunia, Resesi Global 2023", <https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/news/20220916104707-4-372632/kabar-buruk-dari-bank-dunia-resesi-global-2023>, accessed 02 Aug 2023, 08.47 WIB.

² Bachtiar Hassan Miraza, "Seputar Resesi Dan Depresi," *Jurnal Ekonomi KIAT*, Vol. 30, Issue 2, 2019, h. 12.

³ Haa, "Merinding! Ini Pidato Jokowi, Sri Mulyani & Luhut Soal Resesi", <https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/news/20220930065738-4-376136/merinding-ini-pidato-jokowi-sri-mulyani-luhut-soal-resesi>, accessed 02 Aug 2023, 08.56 WIB.

⁴ Fitriaty and Muhammad Haris Saputra, "Inflasi, Suku Bunga Dan Resesi Terhadap Kinerja Saham Perusahaan Properti Dan Real Estate Di Bursa Efek Indonesia," *Jurnal Manajemen Terapan Dan Keuangan*, Vol. 11, Issue 04, 2022, h. 986.

⁵ Erma Wulan Sari, Mareta Putri Hapsari, and Nadiva Arti Salsabila, "Pengaruh Resesi Ekonomi Global 2023 Bagi Perpajakan Di Indonesia," *Investasi Dan Syariah (EKUITAS)*, Vol. 4, Issue 3, 2023, h. 1023.

⁶ Sintia Nur Afifah and Nurul Fauziyyah, "Dampak Resesi 2023 Terhadap Harga Saham Di Indonesia," *Mizania*, Vol. 3, Issue 1, 2023, h. 293.

⁷ Arif Riyukuri et al., "Dampak PHK Karyawan Perusahaan Shopee Terhadap Perkembangan Perusahaan," *J-CEKI: Jurnal Cendekia Ilmiah*, Vol. 2, Issue 2, 2023, h. 124.

⁸ Bahtiar Effendi and Mohammad Adi Windiarko, "Kesiapan Bank Syariah Dalam Menghadapi Resesi 2023," *Jurnal Ilmiah Ekonomi Islam*, Vol. 9, Issue 1, 2023, h. 637.

⁹ Rustam Anwar, Roni Mohamad, and Muhdar HM, "Kuatkah APBN 2023 Menghadapi Guncangan Resesi Global?," *Mutawazin*, Vol. 3, Issue 1, 2023, h. 55.

¹⁰ International Monetary Fund, "Indonesia and the IMF", <https://www.imf.org/en/Countries/IDN>, accessed 02 Aug 2023, 09.28 WIB.

GDP figure in 2022 reached 5.31%¹¹ with details of the 3rd and 4th quarter values of the year 1.83% and 0.36% respectively.¹²

Based on data on the value of Indonesia's GDP quoted from the IMF, BPS, and the Ministry of Trade, it shows that Indonesia is still in a safe position from recession. On the contrary, this provides information that there is good synergy between the government and society in building the Indonesian economy, which had entered the brink of recession in 2020, with a GDP value of -2.07% with details of the value of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th quarters of 2020, respectively -2.41%, -4.19%, 5.05%, and -0.4%.¹³

Of course, this positive trend must be maintained and continuously improved by the Indonesian people. However, like a sudden disaster, a country's economic downturn remains an important thing that needs to be considered as a preventive measure so that a country does not fall into a miserable depression phenomenon. Therefore, regulations/strategies are needed that anticipate the decline in activities in the economic sector and can bring GDP figures in a positive and stable direction.

There is the Qur'an, a source of guidance for Muslims, and its teachings are universally applicable. In one of the suras, precisely in the group of verses QS. Yusuf [12]: 43-48, there is a story about the calamity that will befall the land of Egypt in the form of a famine season that leads to a food crisis.¹⁴ However, the disaster can be overcome thanks to the strategy proposed by Yusuf, in the form of a massive food planting movement at that time.

Reflecting on this phenomenon, the use of the verse group QS. Yusuf [12]: 43-48 can be applied as a foundation to face the threat of a global economic recession that is expected to occur in 2023. However, the strategies contained therein cannot be implemented directly if only taking the textual meaning. Instead, an interpretation method is needed to find the main points in a verse so that the contextualization process can be carried out according to the circumstances of the interpreter's era.

Roland Barthes' semiotics is one approach that can explore the primary meaning intended by the Qur'an. According to him, the meaning process in a language sign does not stop at the first stage/denotation meaning only (as coined by Saussure). However, the language sign can have another significance if it is connected to a culture that prevails in a society.¹⁵ This method is considered capable of dissecting Qur'anic verses due to the structured steps that an interpreter must pass to get an expansion of the meaning of a word.¹⁶ This is in line with the situation of the Qur'an

¹¹ Badan Pusat Statistik, *Pertumbuhan Ekonomi Indonesia Triwulan IV-2022*, <https://www.bps.go.id/pressrelease/2023/02/06/1997/ekonomi-indonesia-tahun-2022-tumbuh-5-31-persen.html>, accessed 02 Aug 2023, 09.32.

¹² Kementerian Perdagangan Republik Indonesia, "Gross Domestic Product Indonesia," 2023, <https://www.kemendag.go.id/>, accessed 02 Aug 2023, 09.32 WIB.

¹³ Kementerian Perdagangan Republik Indonesia, "Produk Domestik Bruto 2020", <https://satudata.kemendag.go.id/data-informasi/perdagangan-dalam-negeri/produk-domestik-bruto>, accessed 21 Sep 2023, 09.33 WIB.

¹⁴ M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah Jilid 6* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002), h. 466-472.

¹⁵ Fatimah, *Semiotika Dalam Kajian Iklan Layanan Masyarakat (ILM)* (Gowa: Tallasa Media, 2020), h. 45-46.

¹⁶ Abdul Rohman, "Konsep 'Pluralisme Agama' Dalam Al-Quran (Aplikasi Semiotika Roland Barthes Terhadap Qs. Al-Baqarah [2]: 62)," *Bayani: Jurnal Studi Islam*, Vol 1, Issue 2, 2021, h. 196.

itself which sometimes uses a word but contains several meanings or in terms called *musytarak* sentences.¹⁷

Several studies related to the 2023 global economic recession have been conducted. However, most of these studies only focus on how the implications of the recession on human life,¹⁸ and some strategies to deal with it are discussed through various perspectives, such as trade law,¹⁹ family financial management,²⁰ and strengthening through the UMKM sector.²¹ Thus, it can be concluded that the study of QS. Yusuf [12]: 43-48 using Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis tool contains novelty value.

This research is a qualitative research. The collection of data will use the thematic method which relate to QS. Yusuf [12]: 43-48, and Roland Barthes' Semiotics theory. The primary source of this research are several books of interpretation such as, "Tafsir Ibnu Katsir Volume 4" by Ibn Kathir, "Tafsir Al-Maraghi Volume 10" by Ahmad Mustafa Al-Maraghi, "Tafsir Al-Qurthubi Volume 9" by Al-Qurthubi, "Tafsir Ath-Thabari Volume 14" by Ath Thabari, "Tafsir Al-Misbah Volume 6" by M. Quraish Shihab, a book containing the Roland Barthes Semiotic's theory, namely "Elements of Semiology", the translated book such "Petualangan Semiologi" & "Mitologi" by Roland Barthes, and a book entitled "Sejarah dan Peradaban Mesir Kuno" by Jonar T.H. Situmorang. Besides primary data, this research also contains some secondary data, such as "Tafsir Al-Kasysyaf" by Az-Zamakhshari, "Tafsir Al-Azhar" by Hamka, "Al-Qur'an dan Tafsirnya Volume 4" by the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, a book entitled, "Sirah Nabawiyah" by Shafiyurrahman Al-Mubarakfuri, and several articles, theses, dissertations and online references totaling around 38 sources. This research using descriptive-analytical method, by describing and explaining the data related to the story of Yusuf's leadership and strategy in Egypt from all existing sources. Then, the data that has been presented will be analyzed using Roland Barthes' semiotics. As for the *first* step of Roland Barthes's semiotics it dividing a text into several arbitrary fragments. *Second*, determining the denotation meaning of the language sign objectively by reading the existing books of interpretation. *Third*, finding the connotation meaning of the language sign.²² By applying these steps, this research aims to find out the contextual meaning of the strategy applied by the Prophet Yusuf

¹⁷ Nurul 'Aini Pakaya, "Al-Musytarak Al-Lafzī; Analisis Kata Hisāb Dalam Surat Al-Nūr Nurul," *'A Jamiy: Jurnal Bahasa Dan Sastra Arab*, Vol. 11, Issue 2, 2022, h. 466.

¹⁸ Sutejo Parangin Angin et al., "Dampak Ancaman Resesi Ekonomi Dunia Terhadap Industri Kelapa Sawit," *Jurnal Ekonomi Dan Bisnis*, Vol. 25, Issue 1, 2023, h. 59-63.

¹⁹ Muhammad Raja Pramudita et al., "Resesi Ekonomi Dan Implikasinya Dari Perspektif Hukum Dagang Pasca Pandemi Tahun 2023," *Nusantara: Jurnal Pendidikan, Seni, Sains Dan Sosial Humaniora*, Vol. 1, Issue 1, 2022, h. 1.

²⁰ Muhammad Irwansyah Hasibuan, Wahyu Azhar Ritonga, and Syahrul Budiman, "Manajemen Keuangan Keluarga Dalam Menghadapi Ancaman Resesi Pada Masyarakat Di Daerah Sub-Urban," *Zam Zam: Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat*, Vol. 1, Issue 2, 2023, pp. 47.

²¹ Eneng Fitri Zakiyah, Arief Bowo Prayoga Kasmu, and Lucky Nugroho, "Peran Dan Fungsi Usaha Mikro Kecil Dan Menengah (UMKM) Dalam Memitigasi Resesi Ekonomi Global 2023," *Jurnal Cakrawala Ilmiah*, Vol. 2, Issue 4, 2022, h. 1657.

²² Roland Barthes, *Petualangan Semiologi* (Yogyakarta, 2007), h. 349-350.

in the group of verses QS. Yusuf [12]: 43-48 as a provision to face the threat of global economic recession.

Joseph and His Strategies in the Perspective of the Qur'an and Tafsir

Historically, QS. Yusuf was revealed to Rasulullah ﷺ during times of sorrow, namely due to the successive deaths of his uncle and beloved wife in the tenth year of his prophethood. As a result, the pressure exerted by the people of *Quraysh* on the da'wah of the Prophet ﷺ was increasing. This did not only happen to the Prophet ﷺ personally but also to other adherents of Islam.²³

Of course, the presence of QS. Yusuf is a medicine that can restore the spirit of the Prophet ﷺ. This is because almost all the verses are contained in QS. Yusuf tells the story of Joseph's struggle to get a lot of tests since he was a child until he succeeded to achieve glory in his life. Therefore, the Qur'an calls the story of Yusuf as *ahsanul qasas* or the best story in the Qur'an.²⁴

When viewed textually, the process of problem generation in the story of Yusuf has begun in QS. Yusuf [12]: 4, that is, from the time he had a strange dream until he entered the prison due to the slander that was inflicted on him (QS. Yusuf [12]: 35-42). Then, little by little, the episode of Yusuf's life met a turning point toward glory. This began when the leader of Egypt at that time had a strange dream that no one could interpret except Yusuf or in the Qur'an is told as follows,

وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ إِنِّي أَرَى سَبْعَ بَقَرَاتٍ سِمَانٍ يَأْكُلُهُنَّ سَبْعٌ عِجَافٌ وَسَبْعَ سُنبُلَاتٍ خُضْرٍ وَأُخَرَ يَبْسُوتٌ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأُ أَفْتُونِي فِي رُءْيَايَ إِنَّ كُنْتُمْ لِلرُّءْيَا تَعْبُرُونَ ٤٣ قَالُوا اضْغَعَتِ أَحْلَامٌ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِتَأْوِيلِ الْأَحْلَامِ بِعَالِمِينَ ٤٤

43. And [subsequently] the king said, "Indeed, I have seen [in a dream] seven fat cows being eaten by seven [that were] lean, and seven green spikes [of grain] and others [that were] dry. O eminent ones, explain to me my vision, if you should interpret visions." 44. They said, "[It is but] a mixture of false dreams, and we are not learned in the interpretation of dreams."²⁵

Quraish Shihab states that the reason why the Qur'an uses the word "الملك" is because it describes a ruler who is wise in leading.²⁶ Another opinion states that the King was not of native Egyptian origin, but immigrants who came and settled in the land of Egypt named Rayyan bin Walid.²⁷ Furthermore, he dreamed of seeing seven fat cows devoured by seven skinny cows and seven green stalks eaten by seven dry stalks. Having such a strange dream, the King immediately asked the royal dream interpreter to interpret his dream.²⁸ However, the royal dream interpreter replied, "اضْغَعَتِ أَحْلَامٌ" (in verse 44). Abu Ja'far, in his tafsir states that what is meant by "

²³ Shafiyurrahman Al-Mubarakfuri, *Sirah Nabawiyah* (Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Kautsar, 2022), h. 129.

²⁴ Departemen Agama RI, *Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsirnya (Edisi Yang Disempurnakan) Jilid 4* (Jakarta: Widya Cahaya, 2011), h. 495.

²⁵ English Sahih International in Word.

²⁶ M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah Jilid 6* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002), h. 467.

²⁷ Az-Zamakhsyari, *Tafsir Al-Kasyaf* (Beirut: Dar Al-Ma'rifah, 2009), h. 517.

²⁸ Al-Qurthubi, *Tafsir Al-Qurthubi Jilid 9* (Jakarta: Pustaka Azzam, 2008), h. 450-451.

"أَخْلَامٍ" is a dream that has been mixed up so that it has no meaning, a dream full of lies,²⁹ or a dream that comes from Satan.³⁰

Then, QS. Yusuf [12]: 45 reads,

وَقَالَ الَّذِي نَجَا مِنْهُمَا وَادَّكَرَ بَعْدَ أُمَّةٍ أَنَا أُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِتَأْوِيلِهِ فَأَرْسِلُونِ ٤٥

45. But the one who was freed and remembered after a time said, "I will inform you of its interpretation, so send me forth."³¹

The verse begins with the words of an inhabitant of the kingdom or what the Qur'an calls "نَجَا مِنْهُمَا", which refers to one of the young men who survived the death sentence and returned to his job in the kingdom.³² The worker told him that in prison, there was someone who was good at interpreting dreams, so he asked the King for permission to see him.

Then, QS. Yusuf [12]: 46, 47, 48 reads,

يُوسُفُ أَيُّهَا الصَّادِقُ افْتِنَا فِي سَبْعِ بَقَرَاتٍ سِمَانٍ يَأْكُلُهُنَّ سَبْعٌ عِجَافٌ وَسَبْعِ سُنبُلَاتٍ خُضْرٍ وَأُخَرَ يَبِيسٍ لَعَلِّي أَرْجِعُ إِلَى النَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ٤٦ قَالَ تَزْرَعُونَ سَبْعَ سِنِينَ دَابًّا فَمَا حَصَدْتُمْ فَذَرُوهُ فِي سُنْبُلِهِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِمَّا تَأْكُلُونَ ٤٧ ثُمَّ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ سَبْعٌ شِدَادٌ يَأْكُلْنَ مَا قَدَّمْتُمْ لَهُنَّ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِمَّا نُحْصِنُونَ ٤٨

46. [He said], "Joseph, O man of truth, explain to us about seven fat cows eaten by seven [that were] lean, and seven green spikes [of grain] and others [that were] dry - that I may return to the people; perhaps they will know [about you]." 47. [Joseph] said, "You will plant for seven years consecutively; and what you harvest leave in its spikes, except a little from which you will eat. 48. Then will come after that seven difficult [years] which will consume what you saved for them, except a little from which you will store."³³

In short, when the meeting took place, the royal delegation immediately recounted the dream that the King had experienced to Yusuf. Hearing what the royal delegation said, Yusuf replied "تَزْرَعُونَ", "Plant your crops (all Egyptians)!".³⁴ This is because the word "سِمَانٍ", which means fat and is attached to "سَبْعِ بَقَرَاتٍ", which means seven cows, means prosperity. However, the seven fat cows disappeared because they were eaten by another herd of thin cows (عِجَافٌ), thus symbolizing that there would be a disaster that could destroy all the wealth of Egypt.³⁵ This is in line with what Ali bin Abu Talib said about the interpretation of dreams that if in a dream there are fat cows, then this means good, namely prosperity. However, if the cows that are present are thin, then it indicates that there will be distress in the country.³⁶

²⁹ Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin Jarir Ath-Thabari, *Tafsir Al-Thabari Jilid 14* (Jakarta: Pustaka Azzam, 2009), h. 709.

³⁰ Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar* (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2015), h. 692.

³¹ English Sahih International in Word.

³² Az-Zamakhshari, *Tafsir Al-Kasyaf* (Beirut: Dar Al-Ma'rifah, 2009), h. 518.

³³ English Sahih International in Word.

³⁴ M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah Jilid 6* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002), h. 471-472.

³⁵ Ahmad Mustafa Al-Maraghi, *Terjemah Tafsir Al-Maraghi Jilid 10* (Semarang: CV. Toha Putra, 1992), h. 300.

³⁶ Al-Qurthubi, *Tafsir Al-Qurthubi Jilid 9* (Jakarta: Pustaka Azzam, 2008), h. 452.

As for the symbol of seven, Yusuf explained that the Egyptian people had to carry out massive farming activities for seven consecutive years. Because in the next period, the land of Egypt would be hit by a major drought,³⁷ which would make farming activities impossible even using the best methods.³⁸ Then, Yusuf also added several messages so that the existing crops could support the people of Egypt during the famine, namely by storing food ingredients on the stalks (فَمَا حَصَدْتُمْ فَذَرُوهُ فِي سُنْبُلِهِ)³⁹ so that they can last a long time (generally, wheat only lasts for two years),³⁹ and wisdom in managing food (frugality) which are reflected in the sentence, "إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّمَّا تُحْصِنُونَ".

Drought Triggers in Yusuf's era

Based on astronomical coordinates, Egypt is located at 26° 50' 8.76" latitude and 30° 47' 44.37" to the equator. This country is located in the North African region where most of its territory is desert, so it has a dry and hot climate. Even so, this country is the most fertile region on the African continent to the Mediterranean because there is a flow of the Nile, a source of life for Egyptians.⁴⁰

Every year, the Nile River will experience flooding, which causes a buildup of silt in the area through which it passes.⁴¹ The mud is a collection of fertile black sediments,⁴² so ancient humans flocked to come and settle along the Nile River.⁴³ However, this cycle is not always constant every year. Famine Stela, is a silent witness that drought hit Egypt for seven years during the old kingdom, to be precise during the reign of King Djoser of the third dynasty.⁴⁴ Other evidence finding a letter from a priest⁴⁵ or in other sources is a land owner who lived at the beginning of the 12th dynasty (middle kingdom) named Hekankht, who stated that during that time, a decrease in the availability of water in the river Nile.⁴⁶ Next, there is also a record originating from the reign of the 19th dynasty, namely Papyrus Harris and Papyrus Anastasi IV, respectively from the reigns of Ramses III and Seti II (New Kingdom),

³⁷ Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin Jarir Ath-Thabari, *Tafsir Al-Thabari Jilid 14* (Jakarta: Pustaka Azzam, 2009), h. 725-726.

³⁸ Ismail bin Umar bin Katsir al-Qursyi Ad-Damasyqi, *Terjemah Tafsir Ibnu Katsir Jilid 4* (Bogor: Pustaka Imam Syafi'i, 2003), h. 429.

³⁹ M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah Jilid 6* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002), h. 472.

⁴⁰ Ahmad Baihaqi and Yon Machmudi, "Masa Depan Demokrasi Mesir Pasca-Arab Spring," *Jurnal ICMES*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 2023, h. 47.

⁴¹ A. El-Gamal, S. Nasr, and A. El-Taher, "Study of the Spatial Distribution of Natural Radioactivity in the Upper Egypt Nile River Sediments," *Radiation Measurements*, Vol. 42, Issue 3, 2007, h. 457.

⁴² M. A. Hamdan et al., "Source of Nile Sediments in the Floodplain at Saqqara Inferred from Mineralogical, Geochemical, and Pollen Data, and Their Palaeoclimatic and Geoarchaeological Significance," *Quaternary International*, Vol. 501, 2019, h. 272.

⁴³ Jonar T.H. Situmorang, *Sejarah Dan Peradaban Mesir Kuno* (Yogyakarta: PBMR Andi, 2021), h. 26.

⁴⁴ Brian Paul Muhs, "Egyptian Scholars, Priests and Temples between Autonomy and State Authority," *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern History*, Vol. 8, Issue 1-2, 2021, h. 15.

⁴⁵ A. E. Demidchik, "Crop Failures in the Reign of Senusert I," *Vestnik NSU. Series: History and Philology*, Vol. 17, Issue 10, 2018, h. 39.

⁴⁶ Coulon and Laurent, "Famine," *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, Vol. 1, Issue 1, 2008, h.

which states that at that time there was a miserable drought.⁴⁷ Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the drought phenomenon that occurred during Yusuf's time, as mentioned in the Qur'an, is a phenomenon that has often happened. Even there are research records that in the 20th century, between 1900-2000 to be precise, every 20 years, the Nile River experienced seven years of water abundance and seven years of water shortage.⁴⁸

There are many possible reasons for the Nile River's water decline. One of the most significant factors is climate fluctuations,⁴⁹ such as reduced rainfall in the highlands of Ethiopia and some highland countries in the equatorial region. Furthermore, the effects of volcanic eruptions that occurred in the past were also believed to affect water availability in the Nile River. It is due to particles released into the air, causing the process of evaporation, leading to reduced rainfall.⁵⁰

In addition to natural factors, the reduction in the amount of water in the Nile River was also caused by the massive human migration during the Ancient Egyptian period, which had the consequence of clearing the forests around the Nile River for settlement purposes. This event also caused the local air quality to deteriorate, as massive wood-burning activities were carried out to fulfill the needs of daily life.⁵¹ The results of this burning will produce and accumulate carbon in the air, causing a greenhouse effect that leads to significant climate change on Earth.⁵²

Analysis of QS. Yusuf [12]: 43-48 Using Roland Barthes' Semiotics

According to Roland Barthes, the first step that must be taken in studying a text is to divide the text itself into several fragments that are arbitrary or according to the wishes of the perpetrator. In this case, QS. Yusuf [12]: 43-48 will be treated as a literary text that will be divided into three main fragments.

The first fragment contains two essential events, namely a strange dream experienced by the leader of Egypt at that time and the inability of the royal residents to interpret the dream (QS. Yusuf [12]: 43-44). Then, the second fragment tells the story of an inmate who asks the King for permission to meet Yusuf, who is in prison, to ask for an explanation of the dream he had (QS Yusuf [12]: 45). The third fragment tells the story of the meeting between the royal envoy and Yusuf. During the session,

⁴⁷ Tarneem Farag Bayoumy and Wessam Fekry Ibrahim, "Food Crises Management in the Pharaonic and the Ptolemaic Periods," *Journal of Tourism, Hotels and Heritage*, Vol. 3, Issue 1, 2021, h. 5.

⁴⁸ May Farouk Mahmud, "Environmental Sustainability in Ancient Egypt: 'I Have Never Stopped the Flow of Water'," *Journal of the Faculty of Tourism and Hotels-University of Sadat City*, Vol. 6, Issue 1/2, 2022, h. 213.

⁴⁹ Tarneem Farag Bayoumy and Wessam Fekry Ibrahim, "Food Crises Management in the Pharaonic and the Ptolemaic Periods," *Journal of Tourism, Hotels and Heritage*, Vol. 3, Issue 1, 2021, h. 1.

⁵⁰ Abdelkader T. Ahmed et al., "Egyptian and Greek Water Cultures and Hydro-Technologies in Ancient Times," *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, Vol. 12, Issue 22, 2020, h. 6-26.

⁵¹ May Farouk Mahmud, "Environmental Sustainability in Ancient Egypt: 'I Have Never Stopped the Flow of Water'," *Journal of the Faculty of Tourism and Hotels-University of Sadat City*, Vol. 6, Issue 1/2, 2022, h. 222.

⁵² Anky Zannati, "Perubahan Iklim Dan Cekaman Abiotik Salinitas," *Biotrends*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2015, pp. 5.

the royal envoy gets the meaning of the dream experienced by the King and the solution to deal with it (QS. Yusuf [12]: 46, 47, 48). For ease of reading, the division of fragments in QS. Yusuf [12]: 43-48 can be seen in Table 1 below

Table 1: Fragment Section of QS. Yusuf [12]: 43-48

| No. | Fragment | Event | Qur'an Chapter |
|-----|--------------|---|-------------------|
| 1. | Fragment I | Strange dreams and the King's questions for the residents of the kingdom. | Yusuf [12]: 43 |
| | | The inability of the kingdom's inhabitants to interpret dreams. | Yusuf [12]: 44 |
| 2. | Fragment II | A royal resident's request to go to Joseph. | Yusuf [12]: 45 |
| 3. | Fragment III | King's dream interpretation and solution | Yusuf [12]: 46-48 |

Then, the second step is to determine the language sign's denotation meaning objectively. That is, an interpreter will let the text speak as it is. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to analyze the building structure of the group of verses QS. Yusuf [12]: 43-48, such as determining the character, characterization, and setting, as well as reading the tafsir book to get an understanding of the words contained in the group of verses.

Regarding the actors in this story, in the first fragment, there are two figures who start the story, namely a leader of the Egyptian state/the King (الْمَلِكُ) and royal dream interpreters. Then, in the second fragment, there is a character who acts as a cupbearer⁵³ or royal garden worker⁵⁴ who is termed in the Qur'an as "نَجَّارٌ مِنْهُمَا". Last, in the third fragment, the story begins with a meeting between the royal delegation (the cupbearer/worker of the royal garden) and Yusuf. Thus, the last character in the group of verses is Yusuf, who is currently in prison. To make it clearer, the figures will be shown in the below table 2:

Table 2: The Character in QS. Yusuf [12]: 43-48

| Fragment | Figures | Description |
|----------|---------------------------------------|--|
| I | The King and Royal Dream Interpreters | There is a direct dialog between the King and Royal Dream Interpreters |
| II | The King and | There is a direct dialog between the King |

⁵³ M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah Jilid 6* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002), h. 469.

⁵⁴ Departemen Agama RI, *Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsirnya (Edisi Yang Disempurnakan) Jilid 4* (Jakarta: Widya Cahaya, 2011), h. 535.

| Fragment | Figures | Description |
|----------|-------------------------------|---|
| | Cupbearer/Royal Garden Worker | and Cupbearer/Royal Garden Worker. |
| III | Royal Delegation and Yusuf | There is a direct dialog between the Royal Delegation and Yusuf |

Turning to the discussion of the characteristics of each character, Quraish Shihab states in his tafsir that the reason the Qur'an uses the word *al-malik* is to show that Egypt at that time was led by someone who was just, had a high attitude of tolerance and was good at choosing royal officials.⁵⁵ Thus, the use of the word *Fir'aun* in this context is used differently than usual. Then, regarding the character of the interpreters of the royal dream, there are two possibilities due to the following two narrations. First, the royal leaders were experts in the field of dream interpretation, but they had no knowledge of the King's dream, so they called it a mixed dream. Secondly, the dream interpreters deliberately concealed the dream's meaning to avoid the King's worries.⁵⁶ Thus, it can be concluded that the interpreters of the kingdom were either honest and did not impose anything that was beyond their reach (based on the first opinion) or were dishonest (based on the second opinion). Of course, this analysis is one-sided because the intensity of the character's appearance is too little in the story, namely once in the 44th verse. Next, a discussion of the character of a cupbearer or royal garden worker. To know this, re-reading the group of verses QS. Yusuf [12]: 36-42 is necessary. Quraish Shihab mentions that the worker has a high sense of humor and is willing to lie to entertain the people around him.⁵⁷ This worker can also be categorized as a critical person. This is based on a narration that states that the dream experienced by the young man (verse 36) was only to test Yusuf's ability to interpret dreams.⁵⁸ Finally, there is Joseph. Joseph is the main character in this story and is the key to solving the problems that will occur in the land of Egypt. He has all the ideal traits possessed by other protagonists. The character is inherent in Yusuf in the group of verses QS. Yusuf [12]: 43-48 is a brilliant and solutive figure.

The background/setting in this group of verses is estimated to have occurred between 1900-1522 BC⁵⁹ or during the Middle Kingdom era. Then, there are two other settings, namely the royal background, which can be seen in verses 43, 44, and 45, and the prison background, found in verses 46, 47, and 48. Especially for the prison setting, this can be known by looking at the episode of Joseph's life in QS. Yusuf [12]: 36-42.

After studying the story structure in the previous section, the next step is to conduct further studies related to words (signs) that have the potential to contain connotation meanings in them. However, it is necessary to know beforehand that a

⁵⁵ M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah Jilid 6* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002), h. 467.

⁵⁶ Al-Qurthubi, *Tafsir Al-Qurthubi Jilid 9* (Jakarta: Pustaka Azzam, 2008), h. 455.

⁵⁷ M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah Jilid 6* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002), h. 451.

⁵⁸ Ismail bin Umar bin Katsir al-Qursyi Ad-Damasyqi, *Terjemah Tafsir Ibnu Katsir Jilid 4* (Bogor: Pustaka Imam Syafi'i, 2003), h. 422.

⁵⁹ M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah Jilid 6* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002), h. 467.

sign has a *signifier* and *signified*. *Signifier* is something that can be sensed. Meanwhile, the *signified* is “a mental representation of the thing” or refers to the concept contained in a *signifier*.⁶⁰

In the first fragment, the story begins when a King whom the Qur'an refers to as al-malik sees (*arā*) fat cows (*baqarātin*) and green grain (*sumbulātin*) vanish in his dream. As a result, the King was restless and asked the royal dream interpreter to interpret the dream with the exclamation, "يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأُ". However, he did not get what he wanted because the royal dream interpreters said that the dream was just something meaningless.

Then, in the second fragment, the story begins when a worker (*نَجًا مِنْهُمَا*), who refers to the royal cupbearer/garden worker, asks the King for permission to meet someone who can interpret dreams who is currently in prison (*يُوسُفَ*). Furthermore, in the third fragment, when the worker meets the person he refers to, Yusuf, he immediately interprets the King's dream. Yusuf explained that a drought would soon occur in the land of Egypt. But before that happens, Egypt will experience fertile times, so Yusuf advised the royal delegation to carry out agricultural activities or "تَزْرَعُونَ". Then, agricultural products should be stored on the stalk (*فَدَّرُوهُ فِي سُنْبُلِهِ*) so that they can last long. As for facilitating the reading of signifier and signified in the group of verses QS. Yusuf [12]: 43-48 will be in the table 3 below:

Table 3: Signifier and Signified/Denotation Meanings

| No. | Signifier | Signified |
|-----|------------------------------|---|
| 1. | <i>Al-malik</i> | An Egyptian leader |
| 2. | <i>arā</i> | Sleep visions (dreams) |
| 3. | <i>baqarātin</i> | A herd of Cows |
| 4. | <i>sumbulātin</i> | A bunch of grains |
| 5. | <i>Tazra`ūna</i> | Food growing activities |
| 6. | <i>Fazarūhu fī sumbulihi</i> | Yusuf's message is that the plants that have been harvested are left on the stalks. |

Then, the third step is to look for the connotation meaning contained in the sign. Connotation meaning is a system in which myths are contained, built on denotation meaning.⁶¹ According to Barthes, myth is a system of significance for something that society has agreed upon.⁶² To find it, some language signs that

⁶⁰ Roland Barthes, *Elements of Semiology* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), h. 42-47.

⁶¹ Rohman, "Konsep 'Pluralisme Agama' Dalam Al-Quran (Aplikasi Semiotika Roland Barthes Terhadap Qs. Al- Baqarah [2]: 62)," *Bayani*, Vol. 1, Issue 2, 2021, h. 195.

⁶² Roland Barthes, *Mitologi* (Yogyakarta: Kreasi Wacana, 2011), h. 152.

have been found before are connected to a cultural system.⁶³ Therefore, some language signs exist in the group of verses QS. Yusuf [12]: 43-48 will be connected to the life of Ancient Egypt.

In the first Fragment, there is a character called the Qur'an with the term "*al-malik*". Quraish Shihab said that the title referred to Rayyan bin Al-Walid because he came from a group called *Ru'aaf*⁶⁴ or *Hyksos*. This group came from Asia, settled and ruled Egypt between 1900 BC to 1522 BC.⁶⁵

According to the records of Manetho, a well-known Egyptian historian, the entry of the *Hyksos* into Egyptian land was an invasion activity accompanied by the destruction of existing cities and temples, killings, and the practice of enslavement of civil society.⁶⁶ However, this statement is countered by contemporary researchers. They say that the *Hyksos* have lived in Egypt for generations. As for the entry of the *Hyksos* nation into the ranks of government, it is a form of infiltration in the political sphere from time to time.⁶⁷ This means there is no indication of territorial invasion activities carried out by the group. This is also supported by the continued existence of previous Egyptian cultures in the tombs of the *Hyksos* kings.⁶⁸

Manetho mentions that six kings ruled during the *Hyksos* in Egypt: Salitis, Bnon, Apachnan, Apophis, Iannas, and Kertos/Khamudy.⁶⁹ Meanwhile, the name Rayyan bin Al-Walid was not found in the literature of archaeological studies, making it difficult to learn how the government was implemented by Rayyan bin Al-Walid, during the time of Yusuf. However, based on the denotation meaning obtained from the reading of several books of tafsir and several historical records related to the *Hyksos* nation mentioned earlier, it can provide a connotation meaning that the word "الملك" is someone who has an ideal character in leading and can automatically influence many people.

Furthermore, in his dream, Rayyan saw a group of fat cows and green grains swallowed up by a group of thin cows and dry grains. Speaking of dreams, Ancient Egypt is one of the oldest civilizations to focus on dreams. Along with Mesopotamia, the Egyptian civilization often wrote down dreams experienced on inscriptions, letters, and dream books.⁷⁰ The oldest evidence of the development of dream culture in Ancient Egypt is the discovery of a letter on the tomb of someone who has died.⁷¹

⁶³ Roland Barthes, *Petualangan Semiologi* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2007), h. 351.

⁶⁴ Ahmad Mustafa Al-Maraghi, *Terjemah Tafsir Al-Maraghi Jilid 10* (Semarang: CV. Toha Putra, 1992), h. 302.

⁶⁵ M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah Jilid 6* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002), h. 467.

⁶⁶ T. Save-Soderbergh, "The Hyksos Rule in Egypt," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 37, Issue 1, 1951, h. 56.

⁶⁷ Donald B. Redford, "The Hyksos Invasion in History and Tradition," *Orientalia*, Vol. 39, Issue 1, 1970, h. 3.

⁶⁸ T. Save-Soderbergh, "The Hyksos Rule in Egypt," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 37, Issue 1, 1951, h. 56-57.

⁶⁹ T. Save-Soderbergh, "The Hyksos Rule in Egypt," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 37, Issue 1, 1951, h. 56.

⁷⁰ J Donald Hughes, "Dream Interpretation in Ancient Civilizations," *Dreaming*, Vol. 10, Issue 1, 2000, pp. 7.

⁷¹ Kasia Azpakowska, "Dream Interpretation in the Ramesside Age," *Ramesside Studies in Honour*, 2011, h. 509.

Usually, the people of Ancient Egypt did this to get help from the deceased regarding the difficulties he faced.⁷² In addition, there is a dream stele around the sphinx statue, which is a silent witness to a dream experienced by an individual. In the dream, he was instructed to do this and that so that he would one day become a ruler of Egypt. That person was Tuthmose IV.⁷³

As for the dream that happened to Rayyan is similar to what happened to Tuthmose IV, who received a message from something considered to have the highest power regarding information about something that will happen in the future. Based on this, the word “*araa*” has a connotation as a source of information.

Later in his dream, Rayyan ibn Al-Walid saw a herd of fat cows and green grains eaten by a herd of thin cows and dry grains. In this case, the words “*baqarātin*” and “*sumbulātin*” were chosen as the objects that appeared in his dream because they are related to the local natural resources.

As mentioned earlier, the Nile River annually carries sedimentary soil containing minerals, phosphorus, and organic matter from the southern highlands. As a result, the periphery of the Nile in ancient times became a green land with various types of natural resources in it,⁷⁴ such as Acacia, Fig, and Jujube trees; Fruits, namely Dates, Grapes, Apples, etc.; Root crops: Shallots, Garlic, Radish, etc.; and oil-producing wild plants, i.e. Castor, as well as various other types of plants that cannot be mentioned one by one.⁷⁵

Turning to the world of fauna, there are a wide variety of animals to be found, such as elephants, giraffes, camels, rhinos, various species of birds and waterfowl.⁷⁶ However, there is an animal that has a close relationship with the people of Ancient Egypt, namely cows. Since ancient times, this animal was used by the people of Ancient Egypt to plow agricultural land. Meanwhile, its body products, such as milk and meat, were used by the people to fulfill their protein needs. Furthermore, in Ancient Egyptian culture, cows became a symbol of a person's nobility (the more the number, the higher the degree of a person). Then in a religious context, beef is also used for slaughtering activities which are then offered to the gods. Even the worship of the Ancient Egyptians, namely the god Apis and the god Hathor, was also associated with a cow.⁷⁷ It can be concluded that the use of the words “*baqarātin*” and “*sumbulātin*” in QS. Yusuf [12]: 43-48 depicts Egypt's natural wealth at that time. Thus, both words have connotative meanings in the form of the value/potential of the local wealth of a region.

⁷² William Kelly Simpson, “The Letter To The Dead From The Tomb Of Meru (N 3737) At Nag’ Ed-Deir,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 52, Issue 1, 1966, h. 40.

⁷³ J Donald Hughes, “Dream Interpretation in Ancient Civilizations,” *Dreaming*, Vol. 10, Issue 1, 2000, h. 8.

⁷⁴ J. Donald Hughes, “Sustainable Agriculture in Ancient Egypt,” *Agriculture History*, Vol. 66, Issue 2, 1992, h. 13.

⁷⁵ Jules Janick, “Ancient Egyptian Agriculture and the Origins of Horticulture,” *Acta Horticulturae*, 2002, h. 25-26.

⁷⁶ J. Donald Hughes, “Sustainable Agriculture in Ancient Egypt,” *Agriculture History*, Vol. 66, Issue 2, 1992, h. 19-20.

⁷⁷ Nicolle Leary, “Fit for the Job : Proportion and the Portrayal of Cattle in Egyptian Old and Middle Kingdom Elite Tomb Imagery,” *Arts*, Vol. 10, Issue 1, 2021, h. 6-7.

Turning to the second fragment, when the King's dream had spread throughout the kingdom, a worker asked him for permission to convey the dream to someone in prison, namely Joseph. Then, the third fragment begins when the royal messenger meets with Joseph and conveys the King's dream. Joseph then interpreted that the land of Egypt would soon be hit by drought. Therefore, on this occasion, Yusuf suggested that all Egyptians carry out agricultural activities on a large scale, or the Qur'an termed it with the word "*tazra'ūna*", so that the harvest obtained could be a supply to face difficult times.

Historically, the strategy suggested by Joseph to deal with drought was practiced during the *old kingdom*. The *Sadd El-Kaffara* Dam is a magnificent construction located on the east side of the Nile River or 30 KM from Cairo. Its purpose was to store excess water during the flood season so that it could be reused in agricultural activities during drought.⁷⁸ This provides information that the actions that have become a daily routine by the community at that time will continue, even in times of drought. In line with what Yusuf said, then "*tazra'ūna*" in this group of verses has a connotation meaning that every human being has a productive soul/does productive activities.

Yusuf also advised that the existing agricultural products should be used as effectively as possible to meet the needs during the drought. In addition, he also gave way for stored foodstuffs to last a long time, namely by letting the harvest remain on the stalk or in the Qur'an is termed "*fazarūhu fī sumbulihī*".

Regarding the preservation methods of foodstuffs in the Ancient Egyptian era, especially the two main plants as foodstuffs for the Egyptian people, namely barley and wheat, have certain classifications and treatments so that they can be stored for a long time. While in general, the storage system that was commonly practiced during *the old kingdom to the middle kingdom* was to store it in the ground and keep the temperature stable. It can be concluded that what Yusuf suggested was a new system that could increase the storage duration of preserved foodstuffs. Thus, the word "*fazarūhu fī sumbulihī*", has the connotation of a good system. To facilitate the reading of the connotation meaning contained in QS. Yusuf [12]: 43-48, can be seen in Table 4 below:

Table 4: Connotative Meaning

| No. | Word | Connotative Meaning |
|-----|------------------------------|---|
| 1. | <i>Al-malik</i> | Someone has an ideal character in leading and can influence many people |
| 2. | <i>arā</i> | Source of information |
| 3. | <i>Baqarātin, sumbulātin</i> | Natural Resources of a region |

⁷⁸ Tarneem Farag Bayoumy and Wessam Fekry Ibrahim, "Food Crises Management in the Pharaonic and the Ptolemaic Periods," *Journal of Tourism, Hotels and Heritage*, Vol. 3, Issue 1, 2021, h. 3.

| | | |
|----|------------------------------|-------------|
| 4. | <i>Tazra'ūna</i> | Productive |
| 5. | <i>Fazarūhu fī sumbulihi</i> | Good System |

Contextualization of Verses

Based on the previous description, we obtained the connotation meaning of several language signs in QS. Yusuf [12]: 43-48. When associated with the threat of a global economic recession, as a whole, this group of verses contains a preventive message that every country must have updated information technology devices to provide early information. Because with this, it allows a country to prepare anticipatory steps if there are things that can destabilize the country.

In addition, so that a country does not experience a crisis (one of which is an economic recession), its people should have a productive spirit. To create a productive society requires hard work from all elements of society (including stakeholders/government as well as individuals/agencies that have influence in society and are competent in their fields) to conduct socialization, counseling, and training to ordinary people about local natural resources. This needs to be done so that the community knows the potential contained in each region and can manage its natural resources. This may become a source of livelihood and open new jobs for others. As for people who already have businesses, stakeholders can support the productivity of their community businesses by issuing a good system/regulation. For example, there are tax incentives issued by the Indonesian government to increase the economic activities of UMKM players as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.⁷⁹

Conclusion

This research was found that the mitigation measure to prevent recession is by improving the quality of human resources, especially religious knowledge and natural resource management. This will raise the awareness and encourage people to be productive and creative. In addition, the good human quality in a country will affect the development of information technology. Therefore, it is necessary to have a good synergy between all levels of society and qualified regulatory management by stakeholders in every sector of life. If all these things are done, then the threat of economic recession can be minimized and avoided.

Furthermore, this research not only contributes to providing mitigation measures to face the threat of economic recession. However, this study also provides an understanding that Roland Barthes' semiotic method can not only be applied to study literary objects as is commonly done. However, this method can also be used to find other meanings of a verse in the Qur'an.

⁷⁹ Nita Andriyani Budiman, Mamik Indaryani, and Sri Mulyani, "Dampak Covid-19 Dan Pemanfaatan Insentif Pajak Terhadap Keberlangsungan Usaha Pada UMKM Tenun Troso Jepara," *Jurnal Manajemen Dan Keuangan*, Vol. 9, Issue 3, 2020, h. 278.

Based on the description that has been presented, this research is only still talking at the level of how humans must take steps to prevent economic recession by taking the perspective of QS. Yusuf [12]: 43-48, which analyze by Roland Barthes' theory. Of course, this provides the space for further researchers to research similar topics in different Qur'anic verses, focuses, and even methods. Thus, in the future, the economic recession that threatens the global community will no longer be a big problem because various strategies have been prepared to deal with it.

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