

## **Tafsir Ilmi Versus Tafsir Ilmi: Ants in Scientific Interpretation Discourses**

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**Abstract:** *This article is based on the Ayat-Ayat Semesta dan Nalar Ayat-ayat Semesta written by Agus Purwanto and Tafsir 'Ilmi: Animals in the Perspective of the Qur'an and Science published by Lembaga Pentashih Mushaf al-Qur'an (LPMQ) of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Indonesia in collaboration with the Indonesian Institute of Sciences with a focus on the interpretation of the word "Ant" or al-namlah in QS. al-Naml [27]: 18. Preliminary findings show that the interpretations of Purwanto and LPMQ tend to be different even though they are both based on scientific reasons. There are three questions asked in explaining this. First, what is the construction of Agus Purwanto and LPMQ's interpretation of "Ants" in the Qur'an. Second, why do the two differ in interpretation regarding the theme? Third, what are the implications of these different interpretations on the discourse of ilmi interpretation. This article uses content analysis to show Purwanto's interpretive construction of the diction "Qā lat namlah" in QS. al-Naml [27]:18 means "queen of ants," while LPMQ means "al-namlah" with "an ant," so it has a different meaning. This difference lies in the emphasis of both; Purwanto emphasizes more linguistic aspects as a support for scientific findings to interpret "al-namlah" with the queen ant, which also emphasizes that this queen is the leader in the colony. At the same time, LPMQ uses an interpretive logic that does not emphasize "who rules the ants" These two models of interpretation must be positioned as part of an evolving dynamic of interpretation; Moreover, it is recognized that the same discourse also appeared in explanation in the past although it was more on theological and linguistic aspects.*

**Keywords:** *Scientific Reason; Tafsir Ilmi; Contemporary Interpretation; Ant*

**Abstrak:** Artikel ini menganalisis Ayat-ayat Semesta dan Nalar Ayat-ayat Semesta yang ditulis oleh Agus Purwanto dan Tafsir 'Ilmi: Hewan dalam

*Perspektif al-Qur'an dan Sains* yang diterbitkan oleh Lembaga Pentashih Mushaf al-Qur'an (LPMQ) Kementerian Agama Indonesia atas kerjasama dengan Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia dengan fokus pada penafsiran kata "Semut" atau al-namlah dalam QS. al-Naml [27]: 18. Temuan awal menunjukkan bahwa ternyata penafsiran Puwanto dan LPMQ cenderung berbeda padahal sama-sama berpijak pada nalar saintifik. Terdapat tiga pertanyaan yang diajukan dalam menjelaskan hal tersebut. *Pertama*, bagaimana konstruksi penafsiran Agus Purwanto dan LPMQ terkait "Semut" dalam al-Qur'an? *Kedua*, mengapa terjadi perbedaan penafsiran antar keduanya terkait tema tersebut? *Ketiga*, bagaimana implikasi dari perbedaan penafsiran tersebut terhadap diskursus tafsir ilmi? Dengan menggunakan analisis isi, artikel ini menunjukkan bahwa konstruksi penafsiran Purwanto mengenai diksi "*Qālat namlah*" dalam QS. al-Naml [27]:18 mempunyai arti "ratu semut" sedangkan LPMQ memaknai "*al-namlah*" dengan "seekor semut" sehingga mempunyai makna yang cenderung berbeda. Perbedaan ini terletak pada aspek penekanan keduanya; Purwanto lebih menekankan aspek kebahasaan sebagai pendukung temuan ilmiah sehingga memaknai "*al-namlah*" dengan ratu semut yang sekaligus mempertegas bahwa ratu inilah yang menjadi pimpinan dalam koloni tersebut, sedangkan LPMQ menggunakan logika penafsiran yang tidak menekankan "siapa yang memerintah semut" Dua model penafsiran ini harus diposisikan sebagai bagian dari dinamika tafsir yang terus berkembang; apalagi, diakui bahwa diskursus yang sama juga muncul dalam tafsir di masa lalu meskipun lebih pada aspek teologi dan kebahasaan.

**Kata Kunci:** *Nalar Saintifik; Tafsir Ilmi; Tafsir Kontemporer; Semut*

## INTRODUCTION

Ayat-ayat Semesta and Nalar Ayat-ayat, written by Agus Purwanto and the Tafsir Ilmi series published by the Indonesian Ministry of Religion's Pentashih Mushaf Al-Qur'an Institute (LPMQ) in collaboration with the Indonesian Institute of Sciences<sup>1</sup> became one of the positive signals of the rise of tafsir ilmi in Indonesia. It is common knowledge that the existence of ilmi interpretation has always remained within polemics. The existence of Purwanto and LPMQ through these works reinforces their position amid the polemic that ilmi interpretation can be an

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<sup>1</sup> Badan Litbang, *Tafsir 'ilmi - Hewan: Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an Dan Sains*, 2012.

alternative.<sup>2</sup> For Purwanto, the Qur'an is the basis for the development of science; the publication of two of his works cannot be separated from his concern for the decline of the people in the field of science; through these two works, he wanted to emphasize that by re-examining the Koran, the revival of Islamic science could be achieved again.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, for LPMQ, the publication of scientific interpretations is an effort to understand the verses of the Qur'an, which contain scientific hints from the perspective of modern science.<sup>4</sup> This paradigm of Qur'anic openness to science brought together Purwanto and LPMQ.

According to a scientific point of view, the "ant" mentioned by the word "*al-namlah*" in the Qur'an is an important part.<sup>5</sup> which is discussed in two works of Purwanto and tafsir ilmi LPMQ. For both, ants are described in QS. al-Naml [27]: 18 in a narrative "*Qālat namlah*" as an affirmation that all those referred to are female according to the findings of science.<sup>6</sup> This ant is called the queen – who, in this context, is instructing her colony to enter the "house" so as not to be trampled by the Prophet and Solomon and his army crossing their "territory."<sup>7</sup> Tafsir ilmi LPMQ also alludes to the same thing even though it does not understand "*al-namlah*" as the queen of ants. In particular, LPMQ completely disagrees with placing the queen ant as the supreme leader of a colony.<sup>8</sup> For LPMQ, the queen ant is only in charge of reproducing; Ant colonies are in a very efficient division of labor and social structure that do not need a supreme leader or centralized command to manage the lives of each other. At this point, one thing

<sup>2</sup> Ahmad Fakhurrizi Mohammed Zabidi, Nurul Iman Izzah Harun, and Mahfuzah Mohammed Zabidi, "Tafsir 'Ilmi Di Institut Pengajian Tinggi: Sorotan Literatur," *Al-Turath Journal of Al-Quran and Al-Sunnah* 5, no. 2 (2020): 23–27, <http://spaj.ukm.my/jalturath/index.php/jalturath/article/view/121>.

<sup>3</sup> Mohamad Yasin Yusuf, "Epistemologi Sains Islam (Studi Pemikiran Agus Purwanto Dalam Buku Ayat-Ayat Semesta Dan Nalar Ayat-Ayat Semesta)," *Disertasi*, 2017, 1–333.

<sup>4</sup> Faizin Faizin, "Integrasi Agama Dan Sains Dalam Tafsir Ilmi Kementerian Agama RI," *Jurnal Ushuluddin* 25, no. 1 (June 21, 2017): 19, <https://doi.org/10.24014/jush.v25i1.2560>.

<sup>5</sup> Rajid Dioldi Darma, *SEMUT DALAM KAJIAN PENAFSIRAN AL-QUR'AN (Studi Komparatif Tafsir Al-Ayat Al-Kauniyah Fi Al-Qur'an Al-Karim Dan Tafsir Ilmi Kementerian Agama RI)*, 2016.

<sup>6</sup> Mohammad Ruslan, "KEBERADAAN SEMUT; MU'JIZAT SAINTIS AL-QUR'AN(STUDI TAFSIR SAINS SURAH AN-NAML AYAT 18-19)" 02, no. 01 (2022): 56–62.

<sup>7</sup> Purwanto, *Nalar Ayat-Ayat Semesta: Menjadikan Al-Qur'an Sebagai Basis Konstruksi Ilmu Pengetahuan*.

<sup>8</sup> Litbang, *Tafsir 'ilmi - Hewan: Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an Dan Sains*.

can be ascertained these two models of interpretation are not in the same conclusion.

Regrettably, recent studies have neglected the above dynamics.<sup>9</sup> Research on Universal Verses and Reason Universal Verses are limited to how Purwanto's epistemology of scientific interpretation and how he offers a conception of Islamic science as the primary step to catch up with science in the Islamic world.<sup>10</sup> Meanwhile, research on the scientific interpretation of LPMQ has been done relatively widely, considering the various objects and titles.<sup>11</sup>

So far, LPMQ's scientific interpretations contain various themes such as the Apocalypse, Extinction of Living Things, Mountains, Animals, Light, Water, Time, Plants, Oceans, Creation of the Earth, Stories of Pre-Ibrahim Prophets, and so on..<sup>12</sup> However, research on the interpretation of LPMQ *ilmu* is generally limited to how epistemology, ideological interests, and patterns of integration of Islam science based on the Qur'an in it.<sup>13</sup> It must be admitted that these studies have yet to photograph these two objects simultaneously even though they are connected in the same pattern, namely integration.<sup>14</sup>

The interpretation of the word "and" above clearly has significance to be examined further. In this case, the author takes the role of examining this theme more clearly. However, from the beginning, Purwanto gave a general criticism of the undefined meaning of "*al-namlah*" as a female ant; For him, this meaning violates the Arabic language's structure and contradicts scientific findings.<sup>15</sup> In

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<sup>9</sup> Aswatun Nor Hasanah, "KISAH AL-NAML DALAM AL-QURAN (STUDI KOMPARATIF)," 2019.

<sup>10</sup> Mohamad Yasin, Sutrisno, Karwadi, "Epistemologi Sains Islam Perspektif Agus Purwanto."

<sup>11</sup> Faizin, "Integrasi Agama Dan Sains Dalam Tafsir Ilmi Kementerian Agama RI."

<sup>12</sup> Jauhar Azizy, "Corak Ilmi Dalam Tafsir Kemenag (Edisi Yang Disempurnakan)," *ULUL ALBAB Jurnal Studi Islam* 15, no. 2 (2015): 148, <https://doi.org/10.18860/ua.v15i2.2667>.

<sup>13</sup> Sujat Zubaidi Saleh, "Epistemologi Penafsiran Ilmiah Al-Qur'an," *Tsaqafah* 7, no. 1 (2011): 109, <https://doi.org/10.21111/tsaqafah.v7i1.112>.

<sup>14</sup> Ach Maimun, "Integrasi Agama Dan Sains Melalui Tafsir 'Ilmī (Mempertimbangkan Signifikansi Dan Kritiknya)," *Anil Islam: Jurnal Kebudayaan Dan Ilmu Keislaman*, Vol 12, No 1, June 2019 12, no. 1 (2019): 36–62.

<sup>15</sup> Purwanto, *Ayat-Ayat Semesta: Sisi Al-Qur'an Yang Terlupakan*.

this case, LPMQ interprets al-namlah as an ant in general, not specifically as a queen ant.<sup>16</sup>

In this case, LPMQ criticizes the specific meaning of Puwanto's style, namely in its effort to position the queen ant as an ant leader who can give specific instructions to manage his fellow ants. This section shows how the work of interpretation, equally grounded in scientific reasoning, interprets the QS. al-Naml [27]: 18 shows the dynamics, namely scientific interpretation vs scientific interpretation. Thus, this research can also support and fill in the gaps in various related studies.

Three basic questions are elaborated in this research. First, how is the construction of Agus Purwanto's and LPMQ's interpretation regarding "Ants" in the Koran? Second, why do the two differ in interpretation regarding this theme? Third, what are the implications of the construction and differences in the interpretation of the scientific interpretation discourse? All three are based on the basic assumption that an interpretation – let alone one based on scientific reasoning – must have a methodological construction; this methodological construction allows the birth of different interpretations even though the paradigm is the same, namely integration. In addition, these two patterns of interpretation have an essential influence. Purwanto is known as a scientist with phenomenal work as well as LPMQ is known as an authoritative institution in the field of interpretation, both of which are considered to have contributed to scientific interpretation. Recognition of the contributions, one of them, is evidenced by the emergence of various studies – as mentioned above. This means that the implications of these two patterns cannot be denied at all. More than that, these three questions more comprehensively capture the dynamics of the two interpretations above.

## **METHOD**

In explaining the three questions that are the goal, this research is formatted as pure literature research by adopting a content analysis approach (content analysis).

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<sup>16</sup> Litbang, *Tafsir 'ilmi - Hewan: Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an Dan Sains*.

All the data is based on written data obtained through a documentation search process, focusing on what can be found in written objects without interviews, observations, etc. In this case, the data are the Verses of the Universe and the Reasoning of the Verses of the Universe by Agus Purwanto and the Tafsir series 'Animal Science in the Perspective of the Qur'an and Science published by the Pentashih Mushaf al-Qur'an Institute (LPMQ). Specifically, the central part that becomes the object of study is the interpretation of QS. al-Naml [27]: 18 in each of these works. This section confirms that these three simultaneously function as primary data because they are indeed the central part directly correlated with the purpose of the study. Apart from these three, the works mentioned in this study are entirely secondary data, such as other LPMQ commentary works, scientific articles, and so on.

The collected data were analyzed using three analytical methods adapted to the research objectives. First, in the construction process of Agus Purwanto and LPMQ's interpretation of "Ants" in the Koran, content analysis is used. In this section, the author objectively describes how both interpret the word "al-namlah" contained in QS. al-Naml [27]: 18. The author's leading work in this section focuses on presenting the data as it is. Second, in explaining why there are differences in interpretation between the two related to the theme using interpretation methods. In this case, the author conducts further investigations regarding the methods, approaches, or paradigms used by these two interpreters, influencing the results of their interpretations. Third, regarding the implications of the construction and differences in interpretation of the scientific interpretation discourse, the author uses the correlative method. The intended correlative method rests on the primary assumption that the results of Purwanto's and LPMQ's interpretation have a minimal contribution to enriching the discourse that develops in scientific interpretation.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### Construction of Agus Purwanto's Interpretation and LPMQ Related to Ants

The discussion of "ants" in the Qur'an is the central part of QS. al-Naml [27]: 18, which is clarified with the next verse, namely QS. al-Naml [27]: 19. This verse tells that Prophet Sulayman and his soldiers once crossed a valley of ants. In this situation, an ant calls out to its colony members, "O ants! Prophet Sulayman and his army are approaching our village; save yourselves. Enter into your nests so that Solomon and his army do not step on you while they are unaware of our existence." Hearing this, Prophet Sulayman then smiled and laughed. He also thanked God for the grace he had received. Specifically, the Qur'an mentions:

﴿حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَتَوْا عَلَىٰ وَادِ النَّمْلِ قَالَتْ نَمْلَةٌ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّمْلُ ادْخُلُوا مَسْكِنَكُمۡ لَّا يَحِطُمَنَّكُمۡ سُلَيْمٰنُ  
وَجُنُودُهُۥ وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ فَتَّبَسَّمَ صَاحِبًا مِّنۡ قَوْلِهَا وَقَالَ رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِيۡٓ أَنۡ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ  
الَّتِيۡ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنۡ أَعْمَلَ صَٰلِحًا تَرْضَاهُ وَأَدْخِلْنِيۡ بِرَحْمَتِكَ فِيۡ عِبَادِكَ  
الصَّٰلِحِينَ ﴿١٩﴾﴾

In the exposition of the Qur'an, ants calling for their colonies to enter the nest are referred to as al-namlah. The Qur'an uses the sentence structure "Qālat namlah," interpreted as an ant saying. In this case, a question arises, is this ant male or female? In this case, Agus Purwanto focuses on the linguistic aspect of the Verses of the Universe and the Reasoning behind the Verses of the Universe. In explaining this, he also criticized the various meanings that have developed regarding the word "al-namlah", both as mentioned in several dictionaries such as the Arabic-Indonesian Dictionary by Mahmud Yunus; in this dictionary, the author defines "namlatun" as an ant (no gender description); Elias Modern Dictionary defines "namlun" with ants (plural) "namlatun" means its single meaning, and in al-Munawwir's dictionary the author describes "namlun wa namalun" and "namulatun wa namlatun".<sup>17</sup>

Agus Purwanto in his analysis of language, explains that "al-namlu" is a single mudzakkar (a male ant), while "al-namlah" is a form of its sole muannats (a

<sup>17</sup> Purwanto, *Nalar Ayat-Ayat Semesta: Menjadikan Al-Qur'an Sebagai Basis Konstruksi Ilmu Pengetahuan*.

female ant). In this case he argues that "namlatun" is the isim muannats and qālat is a fi'liyyah sentence and the fi'il relies on "dhamir hiya" so that it becomes "Qālat namlah" which is followed by sentences containing exclamations and command words.<sup>18</sup> Thus the analysis of the meaning of "Qālat namlah" from Purwanto's perspective has the meaning of female ants who are leaders of a pseudo-colony.<sup>19</sup>

In *Nalar Ayat-Ayat Semesta*, Purwanto wrote:

"In a swarm of ants, one ant screams and commands the other ants. Who is the screaming ant? Why is it the ant screaming and not the other ants? What is the status of the screaming ant in the ant community? In his translation, Mahmud Yunus states that the screaming ant is the King of the Ants. 'Until they arrived at the ant valley, said the Ant King. O Ants, enter your nests so that Solomon and his army will not step on you while they are unaware.' Why the King, not the queen ant? the reason may be very subjective, namely, that leaders are generally from male groups, not women."<sup>20</sup>

Purwanto's presentation put forward logic, essential in understanding and interpreting kauniyah verses, including in QS. al-Naml [27]:18. Before examining the verse in scientific aspects, Purwanto conducted a semantic and linguistic analysis; he asserted that the Qur'an was revealed in Arabic so that it had a different diction if not examined further.<sup>21</sup> Purwanto also believes that every sentence, every word, and even every letter in the Qur'an has its meaning, which, if it is not examined further, there will be different interpretations.<sup>22</sup> Science itself is a necessity, and results will be zero if built without religious foundations. In this

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<sup>18</sup> Purwanto.

<sup>19</sup> Purwanto.

<sup>20</sup> Purwanto.

<sup>21</sup> Aqdi Rofiq Asnawi, Syukron Affani, and Zaenatul Hakamah, "Scientific Qur'anic Exegesis in Indonesia: Contributions by Scholars, Institutions, and the Government," *Australian Journal of Islamic Studies* 6, no. 4 (2021): 25–46, <https://ajis.com.au/index.php/ajis/article/view/401>.

<sup>22</sup> R Putri, "Integrasi-Interkoneksi Sains Dan Agama Pemikiran Agus Purwanto Dan Implikasinya Terhadap Pendidikan Agama Islam," *Book Chapter of Proceedings Journey-Liaison ...* 1, no. 1 (2022): 400–411, <https://j-las.lemkomindo.org/index.php/BCoPJ-LAS/article/view/41%0Ahttps://j-las.lemkomindo.org/index.php/BCoPJ-LAS/article/download/41/339>.



case, Purwanto chose not to research something further without relying on Islamic principles and relying on the primary source, namely the Qurán.<sup>23</sup>

For Purwanto, the existence of an ant queen, which means female, does not violate the basic principle of the Koran that a queen can carry out leadership in specific contexts. He gave the example of Negeri Saba' which was led by a queen, as an analogy that men are not the only choice in leadership; he also positioned the ant story as part of a series of episodes of the Story of Prophet Sulaiman. In this case, he uses the hypothetical logic that when Negeri Saba' is led by a queen, then as a series of stories, ants can also be led by a queen ant. He also emphasized that giving the status of King of Ants to an ant who rules in that verse is a pattern of interpretation that is not strong. He wrote:

"Even the Koran also states that men are leaders for women, Surah Al-Nisa [4]: 34. However, in the episode of Prophet Sulayman a.s. Today, the story of the ants is one of a series of episodes. Another episode is the story of the land of Saba' which was led by a queen. This means that women were once leaders, so male leadership is one of many options for understanding ant leadership. Thus, the basis for granting ant king status to an ant that screamed in verse just now is not solid."<sup>24</sup>

In contrast to Purwanto, LPMQ on the Interpretation of 'Animal Science in the perspective of the Qur'an and Science does not focus on the interpretation of QS. al-Naml [27]:18 on linguistic aspects. It can be seen from the sub-chapter in the commentary entitled "the life of Ants," in which LPMQ discusses the workings of ants, the life of ants, the strengths of ants, and how to communicate. In this section, LPMQ tends to avoid discussing ants from the linguistic aspect. LPMQ mentions that ants need a leadership structure. For LPMQ, the ant community is known as a caste system. First caste, there are queens and males. The queen's job is to reproduce, while the males marry the queen. When the male has done his job, he will die. The second caste is the soldier ant, whose job is to hunt and find new habitats for living. The third caste worker is ants, who find

<sup>23</sup> A Purwanto, "Nalar Ayat-Ayat Semesta, Ikhtiar Islamisasi Ilmu Alam," *PROCEEDING IAIN Batusangkar*, no. October(2017):15–16, <https://ojs.iainbatusangkar.ac.id/ojs/index.php/proceedings/article/view/530%0Ahttps://ojs.iainbat.usangkar.ac.id/ojs/index.php/proceedings/article/viewFile/530/528>.

<sup>24</sup> Purwanto, *Nalar Ayat-Ayat Semesta: Menjadikan Al-Qur'an Sebagai Basis Konstruksi Ilmu Pengetahuan*.

food and clean the nest. In this section, the phrase "Qālat namlah" in QS. Al-Naml [27]:18, from the perspective of LPMQ, explained as "an ant" without specifying whether the ant is male or female. LPMQ further explained that the ants did not care about the position held and that the ant group's sustainability was more important to them. But, in the interpretation of LPMQ, the queen ant is not the highest leader of an ant colony. LPMQ wrote:

"Ant colonies don't need police to rule their lives. If we think that the queen ant is the highest leader of the group, then in reality, this is not the case. The queen's job is only to ensure the continuity of the kind. There is no leadership structure based on a chain of command within the ant colony. If so, who gave the orders?"

Purwanto's interpretation by emphasizing the analysis of linguistic aspects is essential precisely for classifying ants into female or male sex. In this case, Purwanto does not interpret "al-namlah" as an ant that is still general. In Purwanto's interpretation, QS. al-Naml [27]:18 means, "the queen of the ants who is shouting orders and instructs the other ants to go to their nest, so that Solomon and his soldiers do not trample them. In the context of LPMQ's interpretation of the word in the same verse, it seems that it does not pay much attention to the linguistic aspect, namely regarding the word "al-namlah". LPMQ focuses more on the features of a tolerance system and good cooperation between ants in each colony. In this case, the position of the queen ant in LPMQ is not too important. In this pattern of interpretation, the meaning of al-namlah in QS. al-Naml [27]:18 According to LPMQ, "an ant was shouting orders and instructions to other ants to enter their nest so that Prophet Sulaiman and his soldiers would not trample them.

### **Differences in Interpretation of Agus Purwanto and LPMQ related to Ants**

It must be admitted that the existence of Reasoning Universal Verses and Universal Verses appeared in the same era as Tafsir 'Animal Science' in the perspective of the Qur'an and Science, namely the contemporary era. All three are based on the same paradigm, using the integration paradigm to interpret the QS.

Al-Naml [27]:18. The integration referred to in this section attempts to correlate QS. al-Naml [27]:18 with the life of ants based on scientific findings. Purwanto and LPMQ both mentioned that ants are unique animals; the specialty of ants is marked by the existence of a particular surah in the Qur'an with the name al-Naml, which means ant; in this letter also explained about ants. These three books also reinforce al-Namlah's explanation with evidence from scientific observations, such as that ants have ways of working, communicating, high tolerance, etc.

In Purwanto's interpretation, "Qālat namlah" followed by the letter nida' ya' with the word fi'il amr, "udkhulu", indicates that the leader of the ant colony is the queen. This is different from the tendency of the pattern of LPMQ interpretation, which focuses more on the discussion of the life of ants and is not too concerned with the position of the queen ant in its leadership. Through this pattern, it is unsurprising that "al-namlah" is interpreted as "an ant" by LPMQ. In other words, the difference between Purwanto and LPMQ in interpreting "al-namlah" in the sentence "Qālat namlatun" occurs in the aspect of emphasis. From this, why is there a difference between the two, even though they both use scientific interpretation of reason and the integration of the Qur'an with science?

However, Purwanto's interpretation has consequences. The choice to mention al-namlah as the queen of the ants, who can then give specific instructions to the colony's members, shows that the position of the queen of ants is so essential that it cannot be translated into a general form. The Ant Queen in this case, is the leader of the colony. In the context of the verse above, if no one had led and given instructions to the other ants, Prophet Sulaiman, and his troops could have stepped on them. This logic is used in interpreting LPMQ, which did not initially emphasize "who rules the ants ."The existence of an ant queen for LPMQ is to breed and increase the population. LPMQ remains based on the basic logic that the ants already have their system and division of tasks, so they don't need to be ruled by one leader.

**Implications of Agus Purwanto and LPMQ's interpretive construction related to ants on Ilmi's interpretation discourse**

The general public who need help understanding Arabic so they cannot understand a verse will directly conclude what has been written without critically analyzing and thinking. Just as when stating that "Qālat namlah" is "an ant", then people who do not know about language and science certainly do not have the thought that the "al-namlah" referred to here is the "queen ant" or a female ant. The existence of Purwanto's interpretation of the word al-namlah is that the word refers to a type of female ant or queen ant which, according to him, is more linguistically appropriate and supported by scientific findings. Purwanto's interpretation has its uniqueness; In his book, Purwanto several times mentions and emphasizes "al-namlah" which means "queen ant," which means he does not discriminate between genders to be able to lead a group.<sup>25</sup> For Puwanto, even a female can become a leader; especially in ancient times, a country called Saba 'was also led by a queen.<sup>26</sup>

Meanwhile, according to LPMQ, a detailed explanation regarding the interpretation of QS. al-Naml [27]:18 is needed to reveal all about the life of ants. In his explanation, LPMQ is well aware of the existence of an interpretation that states that namlah refers to a specific sex, namely female, which, later in Puwanto's explanation, means the Queen of Ants. LPMQ did not criticize Puwanto, but from his statement, it appears that LPMQ disagreed with the positioning of the queen ant as the leader of the colony; according to him, ants do not need this because from the start the ant community system has been well organized as mentioned earlier.<sup>27</sup>

Another main thing that makes the discussion about ants in the minds of Agus Purwanto and LPMQ interesting is the way ants communicate and work together. According to them, this exciting side is why Allah later immortalized "Ants" in one letter of the Qur'an, namely an-Naml. The ants have many features;

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<sup>25</sup> Purwanto, *Nalar Ayat-Ayat Semesta: Menjadikan Al-Qur'an Sebagai Basis Konstruksi Ilmu Pengetahuan*.

<sup>26</sup> Purwanto.

<sup>27</sup> Litbang, *Tafsir 'ilmi - Hewan: Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an Dan Sains*.

it's just an insect with a small size. In this case, ants are recognized as animals with a complete social structure up to their duties. The second explanation states that ants have a chemical communication method, namely by secreting a hormone called pheromone. This hormone has a way of working, when an ant secretes this hormone, other ants will receive it by smelling it or touching it so that there is a reaction between the two.<sup>28</sup> It was also explained that ants also have an excellent husbandry system and a sound navigation system.<sup>29</sup> In the Reasoning Verses of the Universe and the Verses of the Universe, it is explained that ants know a system of collective warfare between different colonies; The queen ant leads this war.<sup>30</sup> However, in the 'Scientific Tafsir: Animals in the Perspective of the Qur'an and Science, it is stated that there are no superiors and subordinates in an ant colony because the ants are aware of their respective duties..<sup>31</sup>

### **Purwanto's Interpretation and LPMQ's Interpretation of Ants: An Old Discourse in a New Design**

Based on the explanation above, it is clear that in determining the types of ants mentioned in QS. al-Naml [27]: 18, Purwanto chooses to be based on the aspect of the basic linguistic rules of the verse. In this case, for Purwanto, the letter ta' in the word "qālat" indicates that the type of ant in question is a female, namely the queen ant. LPMQ did not do the same; he prefers to use the translation "an ant" rather than emphasizing its kind. From this difference, a question arises: why can the two be different even though the interpretation paradigm is the same, that is, they are both scientifically based? As mentioned earlier, these differences appear to arise from methodological choices outside of paradigm issues. This finding further clarifies that a single paradigm does not necessarily produce uniform interpretations.

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<sup>28</sup> Litbang, *Tafsir 'ilmi - Hewan: Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an Dan Sains*.

<sup>29</sup> Purwanto, *Nalar Ayat-Ayat Semesta: Menjadikan Al-Qur'an Sebagai Basis Konstruksi Ilmu Pengetahuan*.

<sup>30</sup> Purwanto, *Ayat-Ayat Semesta: Sisi Al-Qur'an Yang Terlupakan*.

<sup>31</sup> Litbang, *Tafsir 'ilmi - Hewan: Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an Dan Sains*.

In the context of LPMQ, for example, the interpretation carried out by one institution does not necessarily end with one conclusion. In the 2019 issue of LPMQ's translation of the Qur'an, QS. al-Naml [27]: 18 translates to: "Until when you arrived at the valley of the ants, the queen of the ants said, "O ants, enter your nest so that Solomon and his army do not step on you, while they are not aware of it." This is different from the pattern of interpretation in other LPMQ publications. In the *Tafsir Tahlili* published by LPMQ, it is stated:

"Hearing the words of the King of the ants that Solomon and his army did not intend to destroy them and do evil made Solomon smile. The King of the ants also said that if Solomon and his soldiers trampled any ants, this was not done on purpose, but because Solomon and his soldiers did not see them, because their bodies were tiny.."<sup>32</sup>

In the interpretation above, al-namlah is interpreted as the King of the ants, which certainly has consequences as a leader. However, in this section, it appears that this pattern is also a part that LPMQ questions in its Scientific Interpretation with the logic that an ant colony does not need a leader who is in charge of managing each other; this pattern of interpretation automatically becomes the part that Purwanto criticizes – as mentioned above. Even though the object of Purwanto's criticism focuses on Mamud Yunus's presentation, the content of *Tafsir Tahlili*'s translation has problems that are both questioned by Purwanto.

More than that, the type of ants has become a discourse in the history of interpreting the Koran. The question of whether the ants in the story of Prophet Sulaiman are female or male, at least, has been asked since the 2nd century H. This history states that the question was asked to Abū Hanīfah. In this case, he answered that the ants in QS. al-Naml [27]: 18 female. This opinion he based on the use of the word "qālat". For him, if the ant is male, then the word used in the Qur'an is "qāla." Up to this point, there has not been a history that rejects related explanations, especially in those centuries. Rejection in the sense of giving a non-

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<sup>32</sup> Departemen Agama RI, *AL-QUR'AN DAN TAFSIRNYA Disempurnakan) Jilid 2 Jakarta : Departemen Agama RI, 2011.*

singular meaning can only be confirmed in the 8th century H, namely through the opinion of Abū Ḥayyān al-Andalūsī that the word *al-namlah* does not always refer to the female gender. However, apart from this discourse, differences arise from linguistic aspects and are not correlated with scientific issues. This is understandable according to the situation and the development of science at that time.

The dynamics of interpretation, which is always tied to the situation and the development of science, is also reinforced by other data on how past interpreters explained the problem of the communication pattern of ants in that verse. Al-Rāzī, for example, emphasized that ants can speak is something that can happen (*gair mustab'ad*). However, the reasoning used by al-Rāzī is theological reasoning which connects ant communication to the power of Allah, which can create reason and speak in ant colonies. Up to this point, Purwanto and LPMQ are essential in distributing and transmitting an interpretation with a different paradigm that creates dynamics. More than that, it seems that the dynamics of interpretation related to this matter can also be seen within LPMQ.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the three main questions that are the focus of this research, this article shows the construction of Purwanto's interpretation of the diction "*Qālat namlah*" in QS. *al-Naml* [27]: 18 means "queen ant," so that it means "the queen ant who is shouting to order and give instructions to other ants to enter their respective nests so that they are not stepped on by Solomon and his soldiers. In this case, LPMQ interprets "*al-namlah*" with "an ant" so that it has the meaning "An ant shouting orders and instructions to other ants to enter their respective nests so that Prophet Sulaiman and his soldiers do not step on them.

*"Nalar Ayat-Ayat Semesta, Ayat-Ayat Semesta, and Tafsir 'Ilmi Hewan dalam perspektif al-Qur'an dan Sains* both are based on the integration paradigm in interpreting the verse, but there are different aspects of emphasis between the two. Purwanto emphasizes more on linguistic aspects, while LPMQ uses a logical interpretation that does not emphasize "who commands the ants"; according to

LPMQ, ants already have a system and division of tasks, so they don't need to be ruled by one leader.

In this case, the main thing that needs to be clarified is that the same paradigm sometimes ends with different interpretations; in the cases of Purwanto and LPMQ, their emphasis on interpretation ends with conclusions that are not always the same. The interpretation of Puwanto and LPMQ with the scientific paradigm has significant implications in maintaining a dynamic pattern of interpretation; however, the discourse on the types of ants in the story of Prophet Sulaiman has been going on since the 2nd century H. This discourse has continued until several centuries later, although it is more on theological and linguistic aspects. In this section, the existence of the work of Puranto and LPMQ gives a new nuance to the discourse that has developed, namely a scientific nuance.

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