# The Meaning of Istighfar in The Qur'an
# (Charles Sanders Pierce Semiotic Analysis)

**Aan Andesra**
Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan KalijagaYogyakarta
aanandesra@gmail.com

**Miftahul Jannah**
Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang
miftahulj341@gmail.com

**Abstrak**

Penelitian ini mengkaji tentang makna Istighfar dalam al-Qur'an, yang selama ini dipahami sebagai bentuk memohon ampunan, baik berupa tindakan maupun ucapan *Astagfirullah al-Adzim*. Namun, dalam al-Qur'an Istighfar dapat dimaknai secara luas. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk melihat tanda-tanda dari kata Istighfar dalam al-Qur'an dengan menggunakan pendekatan semiotika. Dalam hal ini, penulis menggunakan teori semiotika Charles Sanders Pierce, yaitu trikotomi atau triadic (Representamen, Objek dan Interpretant) untuk mengungkap makna Istighfar sebagai tanda. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode kepustakaan (*Library Research*). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Istighfar tidak hanya dimaknai sebatas bentuk memohon ampunan, baik berupa tindakan ataupun ucapan seperti mengucapkan lafaz *Astaghfirullah al-Adzim*, akan tetapi juga bermakna *Fath al-Rizq* (membuka pintu rezeki), *al-Ijabah* (dikabulkan-nya doa), dan *Takziyat al-Qalb* (membersihkan hati). Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pemaknaan mengenai Istighfar serta dapat memberikan wawasan bagi penelitian semiotika.

**Kata Kunci:** *Istighfar, al-Qur'an, Semiotika, Pierce*

**Abstract**

This research examines the meaning of Istighfar in the Qur'an, which has been understood as a form of asking for forgiveness, both in the form of actions and words *Astagfirullah al-Adzim*. However, in the Qur'an Istighfar can be interpreted broadly. The purpose of this study is to look at the signs of the word Istighfar in the Qur'an using a semiotic approach. In this case, the author uses Charles Sanders Pierce's semiotic theory, namely the trichotomy or triadic (Representamen, Object and Interpretant) to reveal the meaning of Istighfar as a sign. This research uses a qualitative approach with a *library research* method. The results showed that Istighfar is not only interpreted as a form of asking for forgiveness, either in the form of actions or words such as *Astaghfirullah al-Adzim*, but also means *Fath al-Rizq* (opening the door to sustenance), *al-Ijabah* (answered prayer), and *Takziyat al-Qalb* (cleansing the heart). This research contributes to the meaning of Istighfar and can provide insight for semiotic research.

**Keywords:** *Istighfar, al-Qur'an, Semiotics, Pierce*

**INTRODUCTION**

In the normative application of *Istighfar*, it will be understood as the action and utterance of *Astaghfirullah al-Azim* as a form of asking forgiveness to Allah Swt. However, if analyzed atomistically in the Qur'an, the meaning contained is not stagnant in asking for forgiveness alone, but many interpretant products are born from a word, namely Istighfar. The idealism that develops in society in assessing Istighfar is often focused on actions and speech when post-prayer or any condition as a form of ritual to seduce God to be given forgiveness[1], as stated in surah al-Baqarah verse 199. However, many practices are exemplified by the Prophets in the Qur'an that Istighfar can also be an alternative to achieving *Fath al-Rizq* (opening the door to sustenance) applied by Prophet Noah[2], the toll road in *al-Ijabah* (answered prayer) applied by Prophet Shaleh[3], as well as *Service Takziyat al-Qalb* (cleaning the heart) applied by Prophet Muhammad Saw.[4] Broadly speaking, the meaning of Istighfar has many interpretants not only in the form of asking for forgiveness, but other interpretants in the form of *Fath al-Rizq, al-Ijabah,* and *Takziyat al-Qalb.*[5]

Studies on Istighfar dominantly discuss the meaning of Istighfar with various interpretations of classical, modern, and even contemporary *Mufassirs.* there are several existing studies, namely *First,* studies by looking at Istighfar in the perspective of *Mufassir* figures such as Darul Mahdah[6], Ahmad Rizky Annafi[7], and Ruwaida Hasibuan.[8] *Second,* studies by looking at the meanings contained in Istighfar such as Abd Halik writing Istighfar as a Solver of All Problems (Interpretation of Qur'anic verses on Istighfar),[9] Hermi Pasmawati write The Miracle of

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[1] Leli Susanti, Nurwinda Apriyani, dan Mustafida Mustafida, "Pembentukan Karakter Religius Santri Melalui Pembiasaan Istighfar Bersama Di Pondok Pesantren Hidayatul Mubtadiin Lampung Selatan," *Journal on Education* 6, no. 2 (15 Januari 2024): 12341.

[2] M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan dan Keserasian al-Qur'an*, vol. 14 (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002), 463.

[3] Buya Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar*, vol. 5 (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1989), 3500.

[4] Jarman Arroisi, Rohmah Akhirul Mukharom, dan Maulida 'Izzatul Amin, "Sufistic Phsycoterapy; Telaah Metode Psikoterapi Ibnu Qayyim al-Jauziyyah," *Analisis: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 21, no. 2 (30 Desember 2021): 264–256, https://doi.org/10.24042/ajsk.v21i2.9884.

[5] "5 Makna Istighfar, Amalan Pelengkap Ibadah Memohon Ampunan," 20 Mei 2020, https://www.merdeka.com/jabar/5-makna-istighfar-amalan-pelengkap-ibadah-sholat-kln.html.

[6] Darul Mahmadah, "Pemikiran Hamka Tentang Taubat dalam al-Qur'an," *Jurnal al-Fath* 11, no. 02 (2017).

[7] Ahmad Rizky Annafi, "Makna Tasbih Dan Istighfar Dalam Q.S an-Nasr Menurut Ibnu Asyur," *Tashdiq: Jurnal Kajian Agama Dan Dakwah* 2, no. 2 (4 Februari 2024): 92–108, https://doi.org/10.4236/tashdiq.v2i2.2295.

[8] Ruwaida Hasibuan, et al., "Istigfar Dalam Alqur'an: Perspektif Sayyid Quthb Dalam Tafsir Fi Zhilal Al-Qur'an," *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai* 8, no. 1 (22 Februari 2024): 9628–47, https://doi.org/10.31004/jptam.v8i1.13849.

[9] Abd Halik, et al., "Istighfar Sebagai Pemecah Segala Permasalahan (Penafsiran Ayat Al-Qur'an Tentang Istighfar)," *AHSANA MEDIA: Jurnal Pemikiran, Pendidikan Dan Penelitian Ke-Islaman* 8, no. 2 (25 Juli 2022): 177–86.

Istighfar and Sadaqah (As an Alternative Islamic Therapy to Get Offspring),[10] and Zainur writing the Concept of Rizqi in Islamic Economic Perspective [11]. Studies that look at the nature of Istighfar by analyzing atomistically that there are various interpretants that are not only fixated on the concept of asking for forgiveness, but can also be *Fath al-Rizq, al-Ijabah,* and *Takziyat al-Qalb* are still minimal in scholarly attention, especially if analyzed with Charles Sanders Pierce semiotics. The presence of atomistic analysis of the meaning of Istighfar can be a solution to new understanding in adding diverse meanings.

The purpose of this writing is to complete the void of literature that has been pointed out above. Namely, the idealization of Istighfar is not only limited to the concept of asking for forgiveness, but many other interpretants in interpreting Istighfar become a study in this paper. In exploring this, two questions are asked, *First,* what is the meaning of Istighfar as a sign in the Qur'an? *Second,* how is the process of sustainable interpretation of the sign of Istighfar in the Qur'an? These two questions are important to show that Istighfar, which is understood as an act of asking for forgiveness, in fact has various meanings and is not limited to one meaning.

This research is based on the argument that in the perspective of Charles Sanders Pierce's semiotics[12], Istighfar contained in the stories of Prophet Noah, Prophet Shaleh, and Prophet Muhammad Saw, is another interpretant as an alternative in understanding the meaning of Istighfar. This happens starting from the idealism that has been embedded in the general view where in understanding and applying Istighfar is limited to activities and saying *Astaghfirullah al-Adzim* as a form of asking for forgiveness for the sins committed as stated in the story of Prophet Ibrahim. Other interpretant products contained in the stories of Prophet Noah, Prophet Shaleh, and Prophet Muhammad, are able to provide a new understanding

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[10] Hermi Pasmawati, "Keajaiban Istighfar Dan Sedekah (Sebagai Alternatif Terapi Islami Untuk Mendapatkan Keturunan)," *DAWUH : Islamic Communication Journal* 2, no. 1 (19 Maret 2021): 15–25.

[11] Zainur Zainur, "Konsep Rizqi Dalam Perspektif Ekonomi Islam (Kajian Terhadap Surat Ar-Ra'd Ayat 26, Dengan Pendekatan Metode Tafsir Asy-Syaukani)," *Jurnal An-Nahl* 8, no. 1 (30 Juni 2021): 17–25, https://doi.org/10.54576/annahl.v8i1.25.

[12] Normatively the Qur'an is famous for its very thick balaghah or linguistics, this is evidenced by the efforts of the classical Mufassirs in interpreting the Qur'an which requires adequate balaghah discipline. Pierce's semiotic theory offers a comprehensive and relevant framework when dealing with linguistic contexts, taking into account the complexity and depth of the meaning of the text… See Dadan Suherdiana, "Konsep Dasar Semiotika dalam Komunikasi Massa menurut Charles Sanders Pierce," *Ilmu Dakwah: Academic Journal for Homiletic Studies* 4, no. 12 (2008): 381–82, https://doi.org/10.15575/idajhs.v4i12.399. Through triadic theory is able to provide a comprehensive framework in understanding the meaning of the Qur'an which is formed and interpreted through signs, and allows for various levels of interpretation because texts often have different layers of meaning, both literal and metaphorical. Pierce's theory emphasizes that semiosis is a continuous meaning, which is relevant to the Qur'an where the meaning can change over time and various different conditions.

in assessing the concept of Istighfar. Thus, various interpretations that are not fixated on begging for forgiveness alone, but as an alternative variant that can be applied in the contemporary era become an important point that underlies the search for data obtained and analyzed in the result section.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research is categorized as a type of *library research*, namely research that focuses on tracing written sources[13] in accordance with the theme under study. The data sources that will be used in this research are data related to Istighfar and data on Charles Sanders Pierce's Semiotics. The data collection is divided into two, namely primary data, which will refer to the Istighfar sign in the Qur'an and secondary data, by referring to written sources, such as books, journals and research reports related to the theme raised. Related to data collection techniques in this study using document studies by tracing various existing literature both books, archives and the work of a person[14], and also involves a content analysis model with the intention of digging deeper and detailed in understanding the content of the product objectively, systematically and generalistically.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Definition of Istighfar

Etymologically, Istighfar comes from the Arabic derivative *Ghafara-Yaghfiru-Ghafran-Ghufranan-Maghfiratan*, which means to hide. The word *Ghafara* means *al-Sitr which* means veil or covering and blocking, and comes from the same word *al-Ghafru* and *Ghufran which means* the same thing, namely forgiveness. There is a term that says *Ghafara ash-Shafi'ra is* called white hair that is polished until it is covered with white, and the word *Ghifarah* means a piece of cloth that blocks the veil so that it is not stained by hair oil.[15] Ibn Taymiyyah said that Istighfar also means *Maghfirah, which means* protection from the evil of sin, and has an additional meaning, namely *al-Satr,* which means closure due to protection from the evil of sin so that a servant is no longer tortured. With a note that the forgiven sin will not have the potential for punishment, but if the sin is covered then it still has the potential to be punished outwardly.[16]

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[13] Mestika Zed, *Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan* (Jakarta: Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2008), 1.

[14] Ardiansyah, Risnita, dan M. Syahran Jailani, "Teknik Pengumpulan Data dan Instrumen Penelitian Ilmiah Pendidikan Pada Pendekatan Kualitatif Dan Kuantitatif," *IHSAN: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 1, no. 2 (1 Juli 2023): 4, https://doi.org/10.61104/ihsan.v1i2.57.

[15] Quraish Shihab, *Wawasan al-Qur'an: Tafsir Tematik Atas Pelbagai Persoalan Umat*, 1 ed. (Bandung: Mizan, 2014), 332.

[16] M. Syahar Ma'arif, "Ketumanaan Istighfar: Kandungan Makna Istighfar Terhadap Hadits Riwayat Ibn Majah," *Al-Adabiya: Jurnal Kebudayaan Dan Keagamaan* 14, no. 02 (2019): 249, https://doi.org/10.37680/adabiya.v14i02.212.

The word *Ghafara* transformed into Istighfar is a *Mashdar* form of *Fi'il Madhi Tsulathi Mazid, Istaghfara-Yastaghfiru* which is derived from the wazan *Istaf'ala. The* word *Ghafara* has the addition of letters such as *Alif, Sin* and *Ta* at the beginning of the word so that it becomes *Istaghfara-Yastaghfiru-Istighfaaran* which means asking Him for forgiveness.[17] In the Indonesian language, Istighfar is a request for forgiveness to Allah by reciting prayers to Him, in the idealism of society, Istighfar contains the words *Astaghfirulah al-'Adzim* which means I ask forgiveness to Allah, the Most Great, from all major sins.[18] In the sentence of Istighfar there are two requests at once, namely covering sins and being forgiven.[19] In terminology, Istighfar is a request for forgiveness that comes from a servant to Allah so that all sins are covered, kept away from His torment, and protected from all forms of punishment (punishment).

Historically, Istighfar was first told in the story of Prophet Ibrahim who invited his father to believe in monotheism, and received an unfavorable response as described in surah Maryam: 46. The verse shows the unpleasant response from the father, but Prophet Ibrahim did not necessarily retaliate the same thing but rather prayed and Istighfar the father, as explained in the next verse, Maryam: 47. The word Istighfar was the first thing that came to Prophet Ibrahim's mind, assuming a tremendous influence with the descent of guidance from Allah. Hence in surah at-Taubah: 114, is the answer that there is no Istighfar for the polytheists, but for the believers.[20]

Istighfar, whether in the form of saying *Astaghfirullah al-Adzim* or *Allahumma ighfir li,* does not only mean asking for forgiveness or improving the situation because of the nature of Allah which is *al-Ghaffar*, al-Ghazali emphasized that it means seeing beauty and covering ugliness. The meaning of covering up ugliness, namely *First, the* physical side that is less pleasing by revealing outward beauty. *Second, a* dirty mind, if you think of doing something despicable it will have an effect on the difficulty of life. *Third,* sins that have the potential to be published, there is the term *Don't Judge a Book by its Cover* that things that are seen as good but also have the potential to harbor bad things that are not published.[21]

## Biography of Charles Sanders Pierce

Charles Sanders Pierce was born on September 10, 1839 in Cambridge, Massachusetts, United States. His father named Benjamin Pierce was a professor at

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[17] Imam Pamungkas, *The Miracle of Istighfar*, 1 ed. (Jakarta: Al-Maghfirah, 2014), 7.

[18] Syamsul Kurniawan, "Masjid dalam Lintasan Sejarah Umat Islam," *Jurnal Khatulistiwa: Journal of Islamic Studies* 4, no. 2 (2014): 179.

[19] Annafi, "Makna Tasbih Dan Istighfar Dalam Q.S an-Nasr Menurut Ibnu Asyur," 97.

[20] Muhammad Tajudin, *The Power Of Istighfar* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Marwa, 2010), 25–27.

[21] Quraish Shihab, *Kosakata Keagamaan: Makna dan Penggunaannya*, 1 ed. (Tangerang Selatan: Lentera Hati, 2020), 88–89.

Harvard University in the field of mathematics and one of the founders of the U.S. Coast and Geodetic.[22] Charles Sanders Pierce is an expert in philosophy so he is known as an American philosopher, besides philosophy Pierce is also an expert in mathematics, philosopher, semiotics, chemist, astronomer, logician, engineer, geodesist, surveyor, cartographer, spectroscopist, metrologist, psychologist, economist, historian of science, inventor, dictionary expert, actor, playwright, and short story writer.[23]

In 1855, Pierce attended Harvard and obtained his BA degree in 1859. Continuing in 1862, he obtained an M.A (Master of Arts) degree in chemistry by receiving a Bachelor of Science award with a *Summa Cumlaude* degree, and in the following year 1863 obtained a B.Sc degree at the same university, namely Harvard University.[24] Pierce began his career by teaching logic and philosophy at John Hopkins University and Harvard University for thirty-two years between 1859-1891, during which time Pierce met prominent logicians such as William James, Josiah Royce, John Dewey, and Ernst Schroder[25]. Charles Sanders Pierce died on April 19, 1914 in Milford, Pennsylvania.

Pierce's multidisciplinarity made him known as a child prodigy, as well as the founder of semiotics and the founder of pragmatism with the view that hypotheses are always connected to practice. Pierce produced many works both in the form of manuscripts and written works, such as Illustrations of the Logic of Science, How to Make Our Thoughts on Science, The Fixation of Belief and others[26]. In addition, other works are contained in the annual reports of the US Coast and Geodetic Survey in six volumes.[27]

**Charles Sanders Pierce Semiotics**

Semiotics comes from the Greek word *Semion*, which means sign. Broadly speaking, semiotics means a branch of science that studies signs and everything related to signs such as sign systems and processes that apply in the use of signs. The figures in the semiotic hypothesis, namely Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913)

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[22] Mustaqim Mustaqim, "Pragmatisme Dalam Filsafat Kontemporer: Analisa Atas Pemikiran Charles S. Peirce," *Al-Mabsut : Jurnal Studi Islam Dan Sosial* 3, no. 1 (1 September 2012): 77–78, https://doi.org/10.56997/almabsut.v3i1.40.

[23] Kery A. Jean, "A Biography of Charles S. Peirce," *Spanning the Gap The newsletter of Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area* 22, no. 3 (2000): 1.

[24] Fera Andriani, "Pragmatisme: Menepis Keraguan, Memantapkan Keyakinan," *Syaikhuna: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pranata Islam* 8, no. 2 (2017): 244, https://doi.org/10.58223/syaikhuna.v8i2.3163.

[25] Nathan Houser, ed., *The Essential Peirce: Selected Philosophical Writings (1893-1913)* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1998).

[26] Cheryl Misak, *The Cambridge Companion to Peirce* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1.

[27] Houser, *The Essential Peirce*, xi.

in Europe and Charles Sanders Pierce (1839-1914) in America, each developed semiotic studies personally where de Saussure linked semiotics with semantics called semiology, while Pierce built a foundation on a theory called semiotics. Each concept can be used in understanding the study of signs.[28]

Signs were first introduced by Pierce in his article, *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy in* 1868. According to Pierce, the performance of thinking ability is obtained through signs. The form of experience that can be obtained comes from external facts, in obtaining it the way of thinking that can be obtained is thinking with signs.[29] Semiotics according to Pierce is the study of signs, which is a representation that shows something else, either in the form, amount or capacity of a sign and when a sign means showing another representation. Pierce discusses the sign with the term *Representamen* as the physical form of the sign, *Interpretant* is the interpretation produced in seeing the *Representamen*, and the *Object* is the form that is marked, the three elements are interconnected to form a sign triangle, namely Triadic or Trichotomy.

Pierce explains the Triadic theory of semiotics, as follows: *"There would be a general division of symbols, common to all these science: namely into (1) Symbols which directly determine only their grounds or imputed qualities, and are thus but sums of marks or terms. (2) Symbols which also independently determine their objects by means of other term of terms, and thus, expressing their own objective validity, become capable of truth or falsehood, that is, are propositions, and (3) Symbols which also independently determine their interpretants, and thus the minds to which they appeal, by premising a propo-sition or propositions which such a mind is to admit. These are arguments."*[30]

The three elements in the Triadic or Trichotomy theory that includes the representamen, object, and interpretant are described as follows:

Figure 1: Triadic Circuit.

Object

Representamen        Interpretant
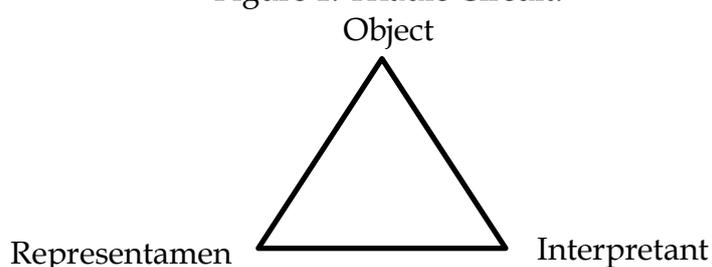
Pierce has his own characteristics in classifying signs, as an advanced category in dividing sign types, namely firstness, secondness, thirdness. Pierce

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[28] Suherdiana, "Konsep Dasar Semiotika dalam Komunikasi Massa menurut Charles Sanders Pierce," 376. Yuviandze Bafri Zulliandi, "Makna Pengkhususan Pada QS. Al-Baqarah Ayat 256: Analisis Semiotika Charles Sanders", *Jurnal Semiotika-Q: Kajian Ilmu al-Quran dan Tafsir* 4, no. 1 (2024): 353.

[29] Misak, *The Cambridge Companion to Peirce*, 241.

[30] Charles Sanders Peirce, *Peirce on Signs: Writings on Semiotic by Charles Sanders Peirce* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 33.

classifies objects into icons, indexes, and symbols as the relationship between representamen and interpretant. Then classifying the representamen into qualisign, sinsign, and legisign, the same thing also happens in classifying the interpretant into rheme, dicent, and argument[31]. According to Pierce, the process of significance in his theory can produce a continuous series of relationships.

**Istighfar in the Qur'an Semiotika Pierce Analysis**

The application of semiotic studies in exploring the meaning of the Qur'an is inseparable from linguistic analysis, which is divided into micro linguistics by focusing on aspects of the language from within the language and macro linguistics by focusing on aspects of the language from outside the language.[32] The first step in examining the linguistics of Istighfar in the Qur'an by collecting all the signs of Istighfar in which there is a lafadz with a combination of letters *Alif, Sin, Ta, Gha/Ghin, Fa,* and *Ra*, using the book Mu'jam al-Mufahras li al-Fazh al-Qur'an with the literal word *Gha-Fa-Ra*, in which the word contains 41 times in several verses that include the word Istighfar, namely at-Taubah: 80 (mentioned 3 times), 113 and 114, al-Baqarah: 199, Al-'Imran: 135 and 159, an-Nisa': 64 (mentioned twice), 106, and 110, al-Maidah: 74, al-Anfal: 33, Hud: 3, 52, 61, and 90, Yusuf: 29, 97, and 98, al-Kahf: 55, Maryam: 47, an-Nur: 62, an-Naml: 46, Shad: 24, Ghafir: 7, and 55, Fusshilat: 6, ash-Shura': 5, Muhammad: 19, al-Fath: 11, adh-Dzariyat: 18, al-Mumtahanah: 4, and 12, al-Munafiqun: 5, and 6 (mentioned twice), Noah: 10, al-Muzzammil: 20, and an-Nashr: 3.[33]

The word Istighfar in terms of phonology comes from the letter *Gha* which has a *Fathah character,* the letter *Fa* which has a *Fathah character* and the letter *Ra* which has a *Fathah character.* In terms of morphology, it becomes *Ghafara* which is the origin of the base word which functions as *Fi'il Madhi* then forms *Yaghfiru* as *Fi'il Mudhari'* and continues to become *Ghafran* which functions as *Fi'il 'Amr.* So the word Istighfar is formed from *Ghafara-Yaghfiru-Ghafran-Ghufranan-Maghfiratan* which means covering or hiding. The word Istighfar itself is a *Mashdar* form of *Fi'il Madhi Tsulathi Mazid, Istaghfara-Yastaghfiru,* which is derived from the wazan *Istaf'ala. The* word *Ghafara* has the addition of letters such as *Alif, Sin* and *Ta* at the beginning of the word so that it becomes *Istaghfara-Yastaghfiru-Istighfaaran* which means asking Him for forgiveness.[34]

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[31] Suherdiana, "Konsep Dasar Semiotika dalam Komunikasi Massa menurut Charles Sanders Pierce," 378–79.

[32] Muhammad Azhar, "Pengantar Linguistik Modern," *JURNAL AL MA'ANY* 1, no. 2 (20 Desember 2022): 27.

[33] Muhammad Fuad 'Abd al-Baqi, *Al Mu'jam Al Mufahras Li Alfazh Al Quran* (Beirut: Dar Al Kutub Al Mishriyyah, 1992), 500–501.

[34] Pamungkas, *The Miracle of Istighfar*, 7.

In the idealism of Indonesian society, Istighfar is interpreted as an act of asking forgiveness to the Almighty Creator and the action is accompanied by saying *Astaghfirullah al-Adzim.* Istighfar as the context of a sign in the Qur'an when viewed through the semiotic lens of Charles Sanders Pierce, Istighfar is used as a representamen to lead to an understood interpretant, namely asking for forgiveness. As the word of Allah SWT, in QS. al-Baqarah: 199, namely:

ثُمَّ اَفِيْضُوْا مِنْ حَيْثُ اَفَاضَ النَّاسُ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا اللّٰهَ ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ

*"Then, depart from the place from which the people departed (Arafat) and seek forgiveness from Allah. Verily, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful"* (QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 199)

The syntactic structure of *Wastaghfiruu* from the above verse is *Fi'il Amr* (verb) which means "and ask for forgiveness", the *Fa'il* of the word is *Dhamir Mustatir Taqdiruhu Antum* (hidden subject that returns to you / male plural). The word after it is *Allaha* when combined means "and ask Allah for forgiveness". Thus, it is a *Fi'il* with a hidden *Fa'il* which is a command to the believers to ask Allah for forgiveness.

Ibn Kathir in his tafsir elaborates on the Hadith of Abdullah ibn Umar quoted from the Sahihain that Abu Bakr asked the Prophet to be taught a prayer in his prayer, and the Prophet said: O Allah, indeed I have wronged myself with many wrongdoings, while there is no one who can provide forgiveness from Your side and have mercy on me. Indeed, You are the Most Receptive to repentance, the Most Merciful[35]. Ibn al-'Arabi said that when saying *Allahummaghfirli, it* means that he is asking Allah, the Almighty, to improve his situation so that it is better, so that by saying these words it is like he is praying; "O Allah, improve this (situation) of mine"[36].

The above explanation of *Wastaghfiruu* in the context of the verse will normatively be considered as asking for forgiveness. If applied in Charles Sanders Pierce's semiotics, it can be categorized as Istighfar as the representamen, asking for forgiveness by using the word *Wastaghfiruu* as the object and the form of asking for forgiveness as the interpretation.

Figure 2: Triadic sequence with the meaning of asking for forgiveness.

Object
(Asking for forgiveness/*Wastaghfiruu*)

Representamen
(Istighfar)

Interpretant (asking for *forgiveness*)

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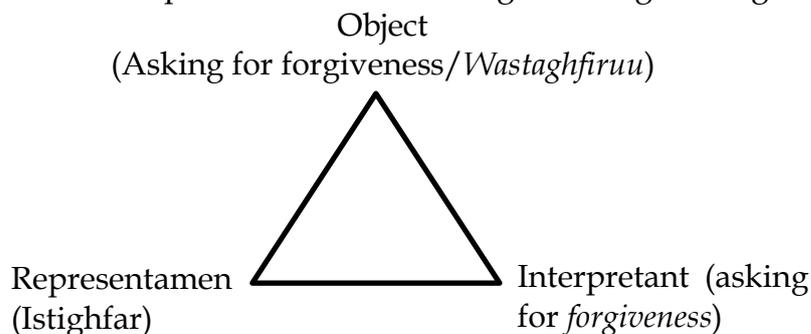
[35] Ibnu Katsir, *Tafsir Ibnu Katsir*, vol. 1 (Jakarta: Pustaka Imam asy-Syafi 'i, 2005), 394.
[36] Ma'arif, "Keutamaan Istigfar," 256.

The same thing is also explained in surah at-Taubah: 80, surah Al-'Imran: 135, surah an-Nisa': 64, etc. In Charles Sanders Pierce's semiotics, it does not stop at one interpretant, but also emphasizes other interpretants of a sign that is absorbed and interpreted by someone or something, therefore attention to the word Istighfar in the Qur'an and Hadith is important to explore to interpret it. Here are some interpretations obtained in interpreting the word Istighfar, including:

1. **Istighfar as *Fath al-Rizq* (opening the door to sustenance)**

As found in surah Nuh: 10-12, namely:

فَقُلْتُ اسْتَغْفِرُوْا رَبَّكُمْ اِنَّه كَانَ غَفَّارًا ١٠ يُّرْسِلِ السَّمَآءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِّدْرَارًا ١١ وَّيُمْدِدْكُمْ بِاَمْوَالٍ وَّبَنِيْنَ وَيَجْعَلْ لَّكُمْ جَنّٰتٍ وَّيَجْعَلْ لَّكُمْ اَنْهٰرًا ١٢

*"Then, I said (to them), "Ask forgiveness of your Lord. Verily, He is Oft-Forgiving. (If you seek forgiveness,) He will surely send down upon you from the sky abundant rain, and multiply your wealth and children, and make gardens and rivers for you."* (QS. Nuh [71]: 10-12)

*Istaghfiruu* syntactic structure of the verse above is *Fi'il Amr* (verb) which means "ask for forgiveness", *Fa'il* of the word is *Dhamir Mustatir Taqdiruhu Antum* (hidden subject that returns to you / male plural). In the context of the verse (verse 10) shows a direct command from Prophet Noah inviting his people to ask for forgiveness from Allah, with a hidden *Fa'il that* shows the people he is talking to, namely his people.

Quraish Shihab in his interpretation says by quoting Sayyid Quth's statement that the above verse essentially links the plea for forgiveness with the abundance of sustenance and is a rule that has been found in the Qur'an and has been proven throughout the ages, it's just that the rule here applies to the general public rather than personal. As Allah sends down heavy rain to those who repent, this can be understood as a sign of the general occupation of the people at that time, namely farming or can be understood in the sense that Allah pours out various kinds of sustenance for them, either through agriculture or livestock and so on. So it is very clear that the verse above shows the connection between faith and piety with the outpouring of sustenance and the avoidance of difficulties in all circumstances[37].

The above explanation of *Istaghfiruu* in the context of the verse will normatively be considered as asking for forgiveness. If applied in Charles Sanders Pierce's semiotics, it can be categorized as Istighfar as the representamen, asking for forgiveness by using the word *Istaghfiruu* as the object and the form of *Fath al-Rizq* (opening the door of sustenance) as the interpretation.

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[37] Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan dan Keserasian al-Qur'an*, 14:463.

Figure 3: Triadic sequence with the meaning of *Fath al-Rizq*.

Object
(Asking for forgiveness/ *Istaghfiruu*)

Representamen          Interpretant  (*Fath   al-Rizq/*
(Istighfar)            opening the door to sustenance)
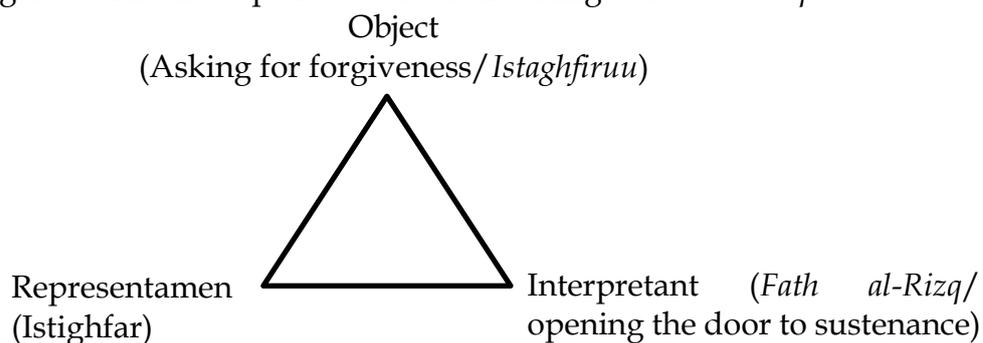
The same is also explained in surah Hud: 3, etc.

### 2. Istighfar as *al-Ijabah* (answered prayer)

As found in surah Hud: 61, namely:

وَاِلٰى ثَمُوْدَ اَخَاهُمْ صٰلِحًا ۘ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ اِلٰهٍ غَيْرُهٗ ۗ هُوَ اَنْشَاَكُمْ مِّنَ الْاَرْضِ وَاسْتَعْمَرَكُمْ فِيْهَا فَاسْتَغْفِرُوْهُ ثُمَّ تُوْبُوْٓا اِلَيْهِ ۗ اِنَّ رَبِّيْ قَرِيْبٌ مُّجِيْبٌ

*"To the Samud (people) We sent their brother Saleh. He said, "O my people, worship Allah; there is no god for you but Him. He has created you from the earth (land) and made you its caretakers. Therefore, seek forgiveness from Him, then repent to Him. Verily, my Lord is very near, and He is Oft-Forgiving (of His servant's prayer)." (QS. Hud [11] :61)*
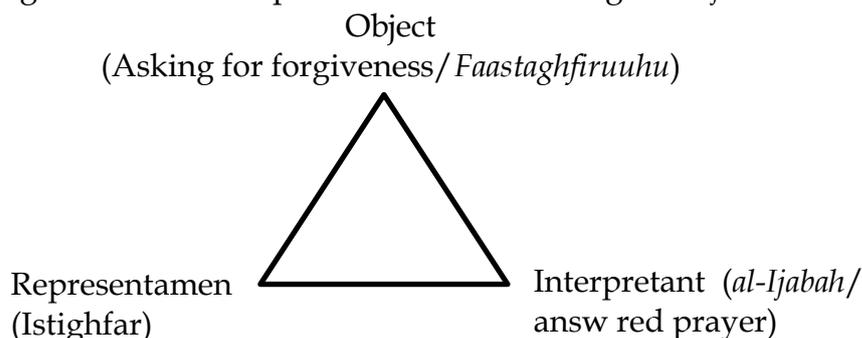
The syntactic structure of *Faastaghfiruuhu* in the verse above is *Fi'il Amr* (verb) which means "ask Him for forgiveness", and there is the letter *Fa'* in the previous word which is a connecting word to show the connection to the previous sentence. The *Fa'il* of the word is *Dhamir Mustatir Taqdiruhu Antum* (the hidden subject that returns to you/the plural male). And *Maf'ul Bih in the* form of *Ha' Dhamir* is a third person singular male pronoun that refers to Allah as the object of the request for forgiveness. In the context of the surah, it is a command from Prophet Shalih to his people to ask Allah for forgiveness, with a hidden *Fa'il that* indicates the people being spoken to, namely his people and a clear *Maf'ul Bih,* namely Allah Swt.

Buya Hamka in his tafsir explains that after self-awareness of mistakes, one should ask Allah for forgiveness. There are two levels of self-awareness of mistakes, namely *First,* aware of wrongdoing and asking for forgiveness, but asking for forgiveness is only for branch mistakes and is a futile thing. *Second, there* are various kinds of mistakes, because they have violated serious things, so the form of forgiveness is repentance, like the Malay proverb "astray at the end of the rope, back to the base of the rope." It is likely that the request for repentance will be granted forgiveness and love, because Allah is very close to His servants and listens to all

requests that arise from a sincere heart and regrets the actions that have been done, so there is the potential for the request or prayer to be answered[38].

The above explanation of *Faastaghfiruuhu* in the context of the verse would normatively be considered as asking for forgiveness. If applied in Charles Sanders Pierce's semiotics, it can be categorized as Istighfar as the representamen, asking for forgiveness by using the word *Faastaghfiruuhu* as the object and the form of *al-Ijabah* (answered prayer) as the interpretation.

Figure 4: Triadic sequence with the meaning of *al-Ijabah*.

Object
(Asking for forgiveness/*Faastaghfiruuhu*)

Representamen                    Interpretant  (*al-Ijabah*/
(Istighfar)                              answ red prayer)

The same is also explained in surah Fussilat: 6, etc. In addition, Istighfar in another interpretant is also explained in a Hadith, namely:

## 3. Istighfar as *Takziyat al-Qalb* (cleansing the heart)

As contained in a Hadith narrated by Ibn Majah no 4234, in the book of zuhud and the chapter of sins, namely:

حَدَّثَنَا هِشَامُ بْنُ عَمَّارٍ حَدَّثَنَا حَاتِمُ بْنُ إِسْمَعِيلَ وَالْوَلِيدُ بْنُ مُسْلِمٍ قَالَا حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَجْلَانَ عَنْ الْقَعْقَاعِ بْنِ حَكِيمٍ عَنْ أَبِي صَالِحٍ عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ إِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنَ إِذَا أَذْنَبَ كَانَتْ نُكْتَةٌ سَوْدَاءُ فِي قَلْبِهِ فَإِنْ تَابَ وَنَزَعَ وَاسْتَغْفَرَ صُقِلَ قَلْبُهُ فَإِنْ زَادَ زَادَتْ فَذَلِكَ الرَّانُ الَّذِي ذَكَرَهُ اللَّهُ فِي كِتَابِهِ كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

"*Hisham ibn 'Ammar told us, Hatim ibn Isma'il and Walid ibn Muslim both said, Muhammad ibn 'Ajlan told us from al-Qa'qa' ibn Hakim from Abu Shalih from Abu Hurairah that the Rasulullah (Saw) said, said: "Verily, when a believer commits a sin, there will be a black spot in his heart; if he repents, renounces it and asks for forgiveness, his heart will be white again, but if he increases (his sins), there will be an increase (in the black spot), so that is the covering (of the heart) mentioned in the word of Allah in His book: "It is not so; in fact, what they always try to cover their hearts."* (QS. al-Muthafifin: 14) (HR. Ibnu Majah, 4234)

The syntactic structure of *Wastaghfara* from the Hadith above is a form of Fi'il which means asking for forgiveness, in the Hadith the word *Wastaghfara* has a function as a verb that indicates the action performed by the subject, namely al-Mu'min which means believers in the context of asking forgiveness to Allah Swt. Ibn

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[38] Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar*, 5:3500.

al-Qayyim explains that the black spots that cover the heart are personal actions that sin and delay to clean it, if the deferral of sin then the sin increases because of the deferral until the sin that accumulates results in covering the heart. Cleaning these black spots by saying sorry and not repeating the same sin, as well as multiplying goodness and repentance, the black spots will slowly disappear or be forgiven by Allah Swt. [39]

The above explanation of *Wastaghfara* in the context of the verse will normatively be considered as asking for forgiveness. If applied in Charles Sanders Pierce's semiotics, it can be categorized as Istighfar as the representamen, asking for forgiveness by using the word *Wastaghfara* as the object and the form of *Takziyat al-Qalb* (cleansing the heart) as the interpretation.

Figure 5: Triadic sequence with the meaning of *Takziyat al-Qalb*.

Object
(Asking for forgiveness/*Wastaghfara*)

Representamen                 Interpretant (*Takziyat al-Qalb*/
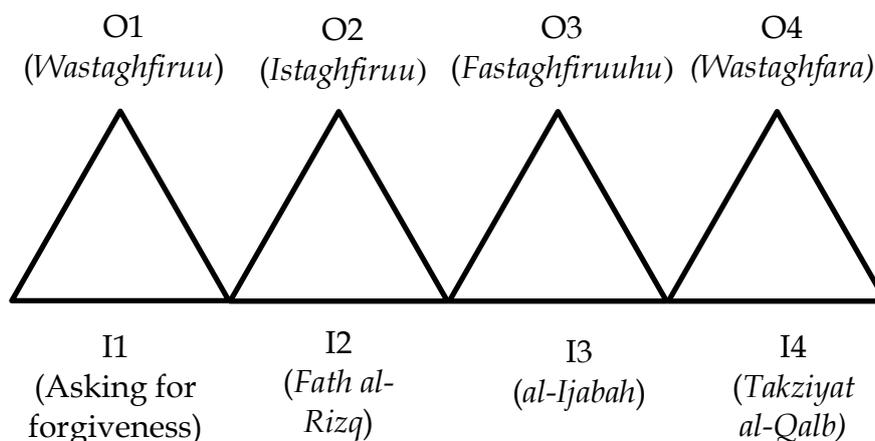(Istighfar)                      asking for forgiveness)
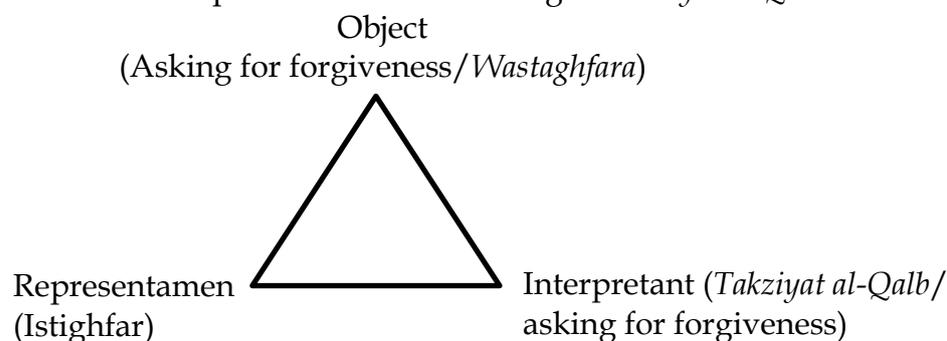
From the explanation above, it can be seen that Istighfar in the Qur'an and in addition contained in Hadith have various interpretants. As explained that in Pierce's Triadic theory is a process of significance with the product of a continuous series of relationships. The following is a comprehensive reading of the Istighfar sign, namely:

The word Istighfar becomes the representamen (R1) with the object in the word *Wastaghfiruu* (O1) found in surah al-Baqarah: 199 is interpreted as asking for forgiveness (I1). Then Istighfar becomes the representamen (R2) with the object *Istaghfiruu* (O2) found in surah Nuh: 10-12 is interpreted into *Fath al-Rizq* or opening the door of sustenance (I2). Istighfar becomes the representamen (R3) with the object *Fastaghfiruuhu* (O3) found in surah Hud: 61 is interpreted into *al-Ijabah* or the granting of prayers (I3). Istighfar becomes the representamen (R4) with the object *Wastaghfara* (O4) found in a Hadith narrated by Ibn Majah no. 4234 interpreted into *Takziyat al-Qalb* or cleaning the Heart (I4).

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[39] Hilman Rizky Hasibuan dan Ratna Wati Panjaitan, "Pemikiran Ibnu Qoyyim Tentang Proteksi Minat Dan Motivasi Belajar Dalam Kitab Ad-Daa' Wa Ad-Dawaa'," *Fitrah: Journal of Islamic Education* 1, no. 1 (30 Juni 2020): 66, https://doi.org/10.53802/fitrah.v1i1.8.

Figure 6: Overall Triadic Sequence with the meaning of Istighfar in various interpretant variants.

O1
(*Wastaghfiruu*)   O2
(*Istaghfiruu*)   O3
(*Fastaghfiruuhu*)   O4
(*Wastaghfara*)

I1
(Asking for forgiveness)   I2
(*Fath al-Rizq*)   I3
(*al-Ijabah*)   I4
(*Takziyat al-Qalb*)

The explanation of several interpretants of Istighfar found in the Qur'an and Hadith above, in my opinion, can be compiled as a whole by making other interpretants, namely:

## 4. Istighfar as meditation of the heart

Normatively, meditation can be understood as an activity of continuous concentration on one object until it enters deep contemplation. The essence is how to purify the mind towards the path of morality of life. One of the techniques in meditation is Mindfulness and Loving Kindness meditation which is the control of negative emotions and increasing positive emotions, so that it will have an impact in the form of emotional changes[40]. The real purpose of meditation is not only to control emotions, but also to improve moral behavior, increase mental calmness, body health, and even spiritual awareness in the form of self-approach to God[41].

In the various interpretants of the meaning of Istighfar with Charles Sanders Pierce's semiotic analysis and correlated with the concept of meditation, a common thread can be drawn in the meaning of Istighfar with a new interpretant as meditation of the heart. Where when doing Istighfar activities normatively motivated by the occurrence of something negative, either in the form of having committed sinful acts, or remembering previous sins. The form of activities carried out when Istighfar is normatively done post-prayer or in any situation and position in a relative duration by contemplating while reading *Astaghfirullah al-Adzim* by focusing all the burden of thoughts on the sins committed and asking for forgiveness

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[40] Made Adi Nugraha Tristaningrat, "Meditasi Mindfulness dalam Menjaga Emotional Stability," *Haridracarya: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Hindu* 1, no. 1 (25 Juli 2020): 55–57, https://doi.org/10.55115/haridracarya.v1i1.625.

[41] Made G. Juniartha dan Ni Ketut Anjani, "Hening dalam Meditasi Sebagai Seni Kontemplasi Pikiran Harmonis," *Maha Widya Duta : Jurnal Penerangan Agama, Pariwisata Budaya, dan Ilmu Komunikasi* 5, no. 1 (26 April 2021): 45, https://doi.org/10.55115/duta.v5i1.1248.

to Allah Swt, is a process of removing negative energy. Post-Istighfar, the mind becomes clear again and positive energies come out as well as the hope that the sins in contemplation will be forgiven by Allah Swt.

Istighfar activities are in line with the benefits of doing meditation in general, because it is a process of removing negative energies in the form of a burden of thoughts about the sins committed and bringing up positive energies due to the spaciousness of the heart and mind having spiritual interaction with the Creator. The process is in line with the interpretant of *Takzib al-Qalb* by cleaning the heart that is dirty with sin and is a form of approach to God because a dirty person still needs and returns to complain to Allah Swt. In addition to the practice of asking for forgiveness, saying Istighfar is also often applied in reducing emotions when in an angry situation, then saying Istighfar can also reduce negative emotions[42] and bring up positive emotions in the form of patience, so that it does not become a prolonged conflict and increases mental calmness.

Peace of mind, a clean heart and mind, as well as leaving or not repeating the sins that have been committed -leaving negative emotions/energy- and establishing a good approach with God in the form of the act of beristighfar as if always needing the role of God wherever and whenever -*Hablum mina Allah*-[43] then in life becomes safer, peaceful, free of burden of mind, become more focused in activities, the sustenance will become more sufficient or smooth sustenance in line with the interpretant *Fath al-Rizq* and potentially what is desired (prayer) will be granted in line with the interpretant *al-Ijabah*. With the relationship between Istighfar and meditation and correlations in various semiotic interpretants of Charles Sanders Pierce, it can be underlined that Istighfar is a meditation of the heart and the heart is the source of all human behavior[44], if the heart is clean it reflects good behavior and vice versa if the heart is dirty it reflects dirty behavior as well.

## CONCLUSIONS

Normatively in social practice when interpreting Istighfar with various previous studies, it is not only limited to the actions and utterances of *Astaghfirulah al-Adzim* or *Allahummaghfirli* with the interpretant of asking for forgiveness alone, but if a meaning analysis is carried out with Charles Sanders Pierce's semiotic

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[42] Olivia Dwi Kumala, Yogi Kusprayogi, dan Fuad Nashori, "Efektivitas Pelatihan Dzikir dalam Meningkatkan Ketenangan Jiwa pada Lansia Penderita Hipertensi," *Psympathic : Jurnal Ilmiah Psikologi* 4, no. 1 (30 Juni 2017): 59, https://doi.org/10.15575/psy.v4i1.1260.

[43] Siti Rodiah, "Keseimbangan Relasi Vertikal Dan Horizontal Dalam Manuskrip Adab Ibadah," *JALADRI : Jurnal Ilmiah Program Studi Bahasa Sunda* 9, no. 1 (7 Mei 2023): 12, https://doi.org/10.33222/jaladri.v9i1.2495.

[44] Maturidi Maturidi, "Zikir Sebagai Terapi Penyakit Hati Dalam Perspektif Bimbingan Dan Konseling Islam," *At-Taujih : Bimbingan Dan Konseling Islam* 3, no. 1 (30 Juni 2020): 74, https://doi.org/10.22373/taujih.v3i1.6954.

approach, the product is a continuous meaning. His Triadic or Trichotomy theory is the star in the foundation of semiotics, the theory adheres to three elements of the sign, namely Representamen, Object, and Interpretant. The three elements are interconnected to form a triangle and will continuously produce meaning to a sign. The application of Charles Sanders Pierce's semiotics approach, namely Triadic or Trichotomy used in analyzing the meaning of Istighfar in the Qur'an.

Charles Sanders Pierce's semiotic analysis, namely Triadic in interpreting Istighfar can be categorized that normatively Istighfar as Representamen, the word asking for forgiveness or the term used in one of the verses, namely Wastaghfiruu as an object, with its interpretant as asking for forgiveness. However, Triadic theory produces continuous Interpretant, so that some objects found in the form of *Istaghfiruu* produce Interpretant *Fath al-Rizq* (opening the door of sustenance), then on the *Fastaghfiruuhu* object produces Interpretant *al-Ijabah* (granted prayer), on the Wastaghfara object produces Interpretant *Takziyat al-Qalb* (cleansing the heart). In some Interpretant products produced, according to the author's opinion, it can be compiled as a whole by producing another Interpretant, namely Heart Meditation.

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