

INTEGRATION OF TEXT AND CONTEXT IN ASBĀB AL-NUZŪL; an Analysis of the Scriptural Arguments Used by Terrorism Perpetrators

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Abstract

This paper examines the role of asbāb al-nuzūl in understanding the Qur'an within its historical context. Using a qualitative descriptive-analytical approach, it analyzes scriptural arguments frequently cited by terrorism perpetrators, namely QS. al-Baqarah (2): 190–193 and QS. al-Mā'idah (5): 44. The study applies Abū Ishāq al-Syātībī's concepts of asbāb al-nuzūl khaṣṣah and asbāb al-nuzūl 'ammah to interpret these verses. The findings show that the cited verses are inseparable from specific historical contexts, including the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah and disputes among the Companions concerning the implementation of rajm. Moreover, Indonesia's context as an independent nation does not support the interpretations advanced by terrorism perpetrators. This study underscores the importance of contextual interpretation based on asbāb al-nuzūl to prevent the misuse of Qur'anic verses in legitimizing terrorism.

Keywords: terrorism, verses, text, context, asbāb al-nuzūl

Abstrak

Tulisan ini membahas peran penting *asbāb al-nuzūl* dalam memahami Al-Qur'an, terutama dalam konteks sejarah di mana Al-Qur'an diturunkan. Penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif-analitis digunakan untuk memahami dalil yang sering digunakan oleh pelaku terorisme, yaitu rangkaian ayat dari QS. al-Baqarah (2): 190-193 dan QS. al-Mā'idah (5): 44. Konteks *asbāb al-nuzūl khaṣṣah* dan *asbāb al-nuzūl 'ammah*, seperti yang dijelaskan oleh Imām Syātībī, digunakan untuk menginterpretasikan dan menerapkan ayat-ayat tersebut. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa dalil tersebut memiliki peristiwa sejarah di baliknya, seperti peristiwa Hudaibiyah dan ketidaksetujuan sahabat terhadap hukum rajam. Konteks Indonesia sebagai negara merdeka juga tidak sesuai dengan tafsir pelaku terorisme yang mencoba memaksakan aksi mereka. Penelitian ini memberikan pemahaman lebih lanjut tentang *asbāb al-nuzūl* dan pentingnya memahami konteks untuk menghindari penyalahgunaan ayat Al-Qur'an dalam aksi terorisme.

Kata Kunci: terorisme, ayat, teks, konteks, asbāb al-nuzūl

INTRODUCTION

Terrorist acts that frequently occur in Indonesia are not a new phenomenon. Various media reports¹ often reveal that suicide bombers are former terrorism convicts affiliated with Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD). Acts of terror not only cause physical harm to victims but also create widespread fear and a sense of insecurity in society. For this reason, the government continues to make efforts to prevent terrorism,² even though the threat can still emerge unpredictably.

Most perpetrators of terrorist attacks in Indonesia come from radical Islamic groups and are often linked to global terrorist organizations. They are frequently identified as jihadist groups because they are inspired by an ideology of *jihād*. Religious arguments play an important role in planning various forms of terrorist activities. These movements consistently advocate *jihād fī sabīlillāh* (struggle in the path of God), promote what they claim as truth, and promise the reward of paradise. For example, terrorist networks may create so-called “brides” (*pengantin*) and conduct brainwashing processes to prepare them for carrying out suicide bombing attacks.³

Terrorism clearly does not represent the true face of Islam, which teaches compassion for all creation. Such visible and brutal acts of violence do not reflect the peaceful teachings of Islam. As Muslims, it is easy to state that terrorism arises

¹ The suicide bombing at Astana Anyar Police Station in Bandung occurred on 7 December 2022.

² In addition to the implementation of deradicalization programs for former terrorism convicts, Indonesian law also regulates criminal penalties for perpetrators of terrorism. Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 5 of 2018, Article 6, states: “Any person who intentionally uses violence or threats of violence that create an atmosphere of terror or widespread fear among the public, causing mass casualties by depriving others of liberty or resulting in the loss of life and property, or causing damage or destruction to strategic vital objects, the environment, public facilities, or international facilities, shall be punished with imprisonment for a minimum of five (5) years and a maximum of twenty (20) years, life imprisonment, or the death penalty.” This provision can be found in Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 5 of 2018 concerning the enactment of Government Regulation instead of Law No. 1 of 2002 on the Eradication of Terrorism as law, specifically Article 6. Jaringan Dokumentasi dan Informasi Hukum (JDIH), ‘Undang-Undang (UU) Nomor 15 Tahun 2003 Tentang Penetapan Peraturan Pemerintah Pengganti Undang-Undang Nomor 1 Tahun 2002 Tentang Pemberantasan Tindak Pidana Terorisme, Menjadi Undang-Undang’, *Jakarta, 04 Maret, 2003* <https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Details/43015/uu-no-15-tahun-2003>.

³ Khamami Zada, *et.al.*, *Meluruskan Pandangan Keagamaan Kaum Jihadis* (Jakarta: Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Islam Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2018), h.211.

from a misunderstanding of *jihād* and a misinterpretation of religious teachings. It is important to acknowledge that a correct understanding of the Qur'an is crucial. For a Muslim—often referred to as a *true believer*—faith in and reverence for the Qur'an are fundamental. The Qur'an is regarded as the primary text for Muslims and serves as the principal guide in shaping Islamic identity.⁴ However, it must also be remembered that understanding the Qur'an should never lead to distorted or erroneous interpretations.

The thinking of terrorism perpetrators is also closely related to the concept of *ṭāgūt*,⁵ interpreted through a highly extreme perspective. They believe that *ṭāgūt* must be eliminated, including individuals considered to oppress their group or obstruct their efforts to uphold what they perceive as truth. Rulers who do not implement Islamic law, police officers, military personnel, members of parliament, and even politicians within Islamic political parties are often labeled as *ṭāgūt*. Their understanding also suggests that anyone who does not share their views is categorized as *ṭāgūt*. However, it should be noted that the targets of contemporary terrorist attacks are usually directed toward individuals or facilities associated with the West, law enforcement institutions, and non-Muslims in churches.⁶

One of the causes of misunderstanding Islamic teachings stems from interpreting Qur'anic verses in a purely literal and textual manner. To understand Islam more deeply, it is important to examine its substantive dimensions. For example, verses that discuss *jihād* are often narrowly interpreted as acts of warfare, leading some to regard bombings as a form of *jihād* against the enemies of Islam. In reality, the concept of *jihād* cannot be limited to such a narrow meaning; rather, it encompasses a broader struggle to uphold Islamic teachings in a comprehensive sense. Both *jihād* and warfare are addressed in numerous Qur'anic verses, and these

⁴ Fahrudin Faiz, *Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an: Tema-Tema Kontroversial*, Cet. 1 (Yogyakarta: Kalimedia, 2015), h. 113.

⁵ Al-Rāḡib Al-Aṣḡahānī, *Mu'jam Mufradāt li Alfāz Al-Qur'an*, Tahqīq: Nadim Mar'asyli, (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr), h. 314. Another understanding interprets it as placing a particular subject as an object of worship.

⁶ Zada, *et.al.*, h. 229.

passages should be understood by considering the context surrounding each verse. Therefore, efforts are needed to interpret Qur'anic verses in ways that go beyond purely literal and textual readings.

Perpetrators of terrorism frequently refer to Qur'anic verses, particularly those related to the concepts of *jihād* and *qitāl* (armed combat). In principle, these terms carry significant meanings within the framework of human relations, especially concerning self-defense. Unfortunately, these concepts have often been negatively distorted due to violent actions that cannot be justified, particularly when directed against civilians who should be protected in situations of conflict, such as non-combatant citizens, children, women, and the elderly. The concept of *jihād* has undergone a negative transformation alongside the emergence of radical movements in the modern era,⁷ including in Indonesia. Many Qur'anic verses are frequently cited to justify acts of terrorism, particularly those related to *jihād*, *qitāl*, and warfare. Two verses often used to justify terrorist actions are QS. al-Baqarah (2): 190–193 and QS. al-Mā'idah (5): 44, which discusses the permissibility of warfare and the rejection of laws other than the law of God, described as an act of disbelief.

This research is qualitative in nature and employs a descriptive–analytical approach. The study relies primarily on library research. Its focus is to examine how the text and context of *asbāb al-nuzūl* (occasions of revelation) for the verses cited by terrorism perpetrators can be properly understood. The analysis is based on the concepts of *asbāb al-nuzūl khaṣṣah* (specific occasions of revelation) and *asbāb al-nuzūl 'ammah* (general occasions of revelation), as explained by Shah Waliullah al-Dihlawi. It also considers categories such as *asbāb al-nuzūl juz'ī* (partial causes) and *asbāb al-nuzūl haqīqī* (actual causes), as well as the micro and macro contexts discussed by Fazlur Rahman.

⁷ Lies Marcoes, *Seperti Memakai Kacamata Yang Salah Membaca Perempuan Dalam Gerakan Radikal* (Bandung: Afkaruna, 2022), h. 21

It is also important to consider the historical background in which the Qur'an was revealed. Therefore, this paper briefly addresses that historical setting. Furthermore, the discussion examines how the scriptural arguments used by terrorism perpetrators should be interpreted by paying attention to both the text and the context of the verses. This is crucial for situating frequently misunderstood Qur'anic verses—especially those used to justify terrorism—within their proper context.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The Historicity of The Qur'an and The Role of *Asbāb al-Nuzūl*

Everything has a cause or reason, and the same applies to certain parts of the Qur'an that were revealed; each is connected to particular events. The Qur'an, as a religious text, requires a deep understanding that includes attention to its context. In hermeneutics, this idea suggests that a text cannot be separated from its context. Therefore, understanding the context becomes essential and serves as one of the key ways to comprehend the messages contained in the Qur'an. Furthermore, discussions about *asbāb al-nuzūl*—the occasions or causes of the revelation of verses—cannot be separated from the historical background in which the Qur'an was revealed. This includes the role of Prophet Muhammad as the recipient of revelation, as well as the social and historical environment that influenced the context of the revelation. Understanding this background helps provide a clearer perspective on the Qur'anic verses and the messages they contain.

Discussions regarding the socio-historical context of the Qur'an demonstrate the complex relationship between the Qur'anic text and the environment in which it emerged. The statement by Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd that the Qur'an was not revealed in a vacuum is indeed accurate. At that time, the environment already possessed its own culture, spiritual climate, and various elements connected to its recipients. The Qur'an was revealed in accordance with the intellectual and cultural framework of its first audience, which consisted of

Prophet Muhammad and the Arab society with all its traditions and cultural practices.

Within this context, these aspects provide deeper insight and describe the circumstances surrounding the revelation of the Qur'an. In essence, every intellectual discourse is a reflection of the problems and realities that develop within its historical period. By understanding this socio-historical context, we can gain a better understanding of the meaning and purpose of each Qur'anic verse.

The socio-historical context of the Qur'an therefore, plays an important role in understanding the scripture. Nevertheless, some Muslims today remain suspicious of this concept. The reason is that the socio-historical context of revelation is sometimes perceived as a threat to the fundamental belief in the divine originality of the Qur'an.⁸ However, it must be acknowledged that a basic understanding of the context in which Qur'anic verses were revealed is crucial for properly interpreting their meaning. The socio-historical approach not only facilitates comprehension but also helps identify key figures who played roles in carrying out the religious mission, transmitting the Qur'an, and illuminating the historical background surrounding it. By understanding this socio-historical context, we can see how the Qur'an responded to the social and historical conditions at the time of revelation, thereby providing a clearer context for the messages contained within it.

To understand the context of the Qur'anic revelation, it is necessary to know the events surrounding it and the life of the Prophet Muhammad. As is well known, the Qur'an contains many references related to the cultural and material world of the Hijaz.⁹ This region includes Mecca, Medina, and more broadly the Arabian Peninsula.¹⁰ In this area, Prophet Muhammad emerged in the seventh

⁸ Abdullah Saeed, *Pengantar Studi Al-Qur'an*, Terj. Shulkhah, *et.al.* (Yogyakarta: Baitul Hikmah Press, 2016), h. 2.

⁹ In the past, the Arabian Peninsula consisted of five main regions: Hijaz, Tahamah, Yemen, Najd, and 'Arud. All of these regions had arid climates, with Hijaz being the most barren among them. Aksin Wijaya, *Sejarah Kenabian dalam Perspektif Tafsir Nuzuli Muhammad Izzat Darwazah* (Bandung: Penerbit Mizan, 2106), h. 132.

¹⁰ Saeed, h. 3.

century CE.¹¹ to convey divine revelation to Arab society. Various aspects of Arab social life at that time are considered to have inspired the teachings of Islam. Therefore, understanding the cultural, social, and political conditions of the Hijaz during that period becomes essential for uncovering the deeper meanings of Qur'anic verses in that context.

When discussing Arab society, it is necessary to revisit the claim often attached to them as a people of *jāhiliyyah*. It is important to understand the meaning of the word “*jāhiliyyah*” without imposing a subjective negative judgment. Muhammad Said, as cited by Aksin Wijaya, explains that *jāhiliyyah* has multiple meanings and does not necessarily imply ignorance in every aspect. Among its meanings are not knowing something, being quick to anger, and committing injustice. In a religious context, *jāhiliyyah* may refer to ignorance of God, denial of Him, and the practice of idol worship. Other views suggest that Arab society during the *jāhiliyyah* period was ignorant only in matters of religion, while possessing extensive knowledge in other fields. Some scholars even argue that Arab society at that time had a considerable level of knowledge and civilization. Therefore, the concept of *jāhiliyyah* should not be interpreted as total incapacity or ignorance, but rather as a condition of religious unawareness and certain problematic social behaviors.¹²

When discussing Arab society during the *jāhiliyyah* era, it is important to avoid reductive generalizations that portray most Arabs as “ignorant people” lacking culture and living in oppressive traditions far removed from humanitarian values. Such views may oversimplify the objective conditions of Arab society at that time. Moreover, this type of judgment can create a negative impression of Islam itself, considering that the Prophet and his companions were part of that society. Several researchers emphasize that many aspects of Arab culture were later adopted by Islam and even served as sources of inspiration for Islamic

¹¹Taufik Adnan Amal, *Rekonstruksi Sejarah Al-Qur'an* (Jakarta: Yayasan Abad Demokratis, 2011), h. 11.

¹²Wijaya, h. 135.

teachings. Therefore, it is important to understand and interpret the culture of the *jāhiliyyah* period in a more nuanced way, without resorting to demeaning generalizations. In this way, we can better understand the relationship between Islam and Arab culture in the past.¹³

In such circumstances, Prophet Muhammad was born around the year 570 in the city of Mecca within the Banu Hashim clan. From an early age he became an orphan, and the course of his life increasingly reflected that he was a chosen individual. Prophet Muhammad later became a prophet, preaching the teachings of God, calling people to embrace Islam, being appointed as a messenger, and ultimately becoming the leader of the Muslim community. Moreover, he received revelation from God, and as recorded in history,¹⁴ The Qur'an was revealed to him through the intermediary of the angel Gabriel.

The life of Prophet Muhammad is closely associated with two major cities: Mecca and Medina. Over time, these two cities became the primary basis for categorizing Qur'anic verses, commonly known among Muslims as *Makkiyah* (Meccan) and *Madaniyyah* (Medinan). It is important to note that there is no explicit normative command in the Qur'an or in prophetic traditions that obligates this categorization. Rather, it is the result of scholarly reasoning (*ijtihād*) intended to facilitate the understanding of Qur'anic verses by identifying the place and circumstances surrounding their revelation. The choice of Mecca and Medina as reference points for this classification is also a product of scholarly judgment. Islamic history developed from these two cities, both of which hold sacred value for Muslims and are considered the birthplace of Islam. The strength of Islam grew between Mecca and Medina, and this categorization helps Muslims understand the

¹³ Faiz, h. 37.

¹⁴ The Qur'an was revealed in the month of Ramadan on the Night of Decree (*Lailah al-Qadr*). It was sent down all at once from the Preserved Tablet (*Laūh al-Mahfūz*) to the lowest heaven and placed in *Bait al-'Izzah*. After that, the angel Gabriel revealed it gradually to Prophet Muhammad over a period of twenty-three years, according to Ibn Abbās. Imām Muḥammad Al-Qurṭūbī, *The Secret of The Qur'an*, Terj. Muhammad Syafi'i (Yogyakarta: Mitra Pustaka, 2013), h. 36.

context of the Qur'anic revelations in relation to the historical journey of Prophet Muhammad.¹⁵

Among classical works, the book *Al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūfī serves as an important reference in the study of the chronology of the Qur'an, where the criteria for categorization are discussed with consideration of geographical background.¹⁶ Two main assumptions distinguish between Meccan and Medinan chapters. First, traditional sources such as prophetic biographies (*sīrah*) are used as references to determine certain chapters according to the causes and locations of their revelation. Therefore, revelations received by Prophet Muhammad during his prophetic mission in Mecca are known as Makkiyah verses, while revelations received after the migration (*hijrah*) to Medina are referred to as Madaniyyah verses. Second, this classification focuses on chapters (*sūrah*) rather than individual verses. This indicates that the classification emphasizes the unity of the Qur'anic chapter, which helps provide a more comprehensive understanding of the context and progression of revelation.¹⁷

When related to the Qur'an, according to Muḥammad Izzah Darwazah, there are at least four elements that demonstrate the logical and factual relationship between the Qur'an and pre-prophetic Arab society. First, the element of climate and patterns of community life; second, the social structure of society; third, the rational outlook of Arab society; and fourth, the beliefs and religious traditions practiced by the community.¹⁸

Regarding religious matters, pre-prophetic Arab society generally practiced polytheism. Although most of them acknowledged and accepted the idea that Allah was the creator and ruler of all events in the universe, in their actual acts of worship they directed their devotion to other deities. These gods were

¹⁵ Aksin Wijaya, *Arah Baru Studi Ulum Al-Qur'an Memburu Pesan Tuhan di Balik Fenomena Budaya* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2009), h. 120.

¹⁶ Jalaluddin Al-Suyuti, *Al-Itqan fi Ulum Al-Qur'an*, Volume 1 (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1979).

¹⁷ Mun'im Sirry, *Kemunculan Islam dalam Kesarjanaan Revisionis* (Yogyakarta: Suka Press, 2017), h. 162.

¹⁸ Wijaya, *Sejarah Kenabian dalam Perspektif Tafsir Nuzuli Muhammad Izzat Darwazah*, h. 137.

viewed as intermediaries to Allah. Such forms of paganism are frequently mentioned in the Qur'an, which highlights and rejects practices of worship that contradict the doctrine of monotheism (*tawḥīd*).¹⁹

Asbāb al-nuzūl, or the occasions of revelation, refers to the reasons behind the revelation given to Prophet Muhammad and the circumstances surrounding the revelation of particular Qur'anic verses. From early on, Muslim scholars sought to understand the Qur'an by paying attention to the context in which certain verses were revealed, a method known as the study of *asbāb al-nuzūl*. Narratives about *asbāb al-nuzūl* are commonly found in Qur'anic commentaries (*tafsīr*), where scholars explain the specific circumstances behind the revelation of certain verses. These narratives are also often found in prophetic biographies, such as the works of Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Hisyām. Such accounts are frequently drawn from biographical literature about the Prophet and later used as a basis for interpreting verses that might otherwise be difficult to understand without considering their particular context of revelation.²⁰

Information regarding the circumstances of revelation provides an important pathway for understanding the meaning and intent contained within the Qur'an. This view is consistent with the opinion of Ibn Taymiyyah, who emphasized that knowing the background of a verse's revelation greatly assists in understanding its meaning.²¹ By understanding the events that led to a verse's revelation, one gains a foundation for grasping the reasons behind it. In this context, discussion of the causes of revelation may involve situations in which a verse was revealed directly after a particular event or later as a form of divine wisdom related to that event. By understanding the context and circumstances of

¹⁹ Amal, h. 28.

²⁰ Sirry, h. 123.

²¹ A. Mudjab Mahali, *Asbabun-Nuzul: Studi Pendalaman Al-Qur'an* (Jakarta: Rajawali, 1989), h. 4.

revelation, comprehension of the meaning and message conveyed by the verse can become more comprehensive.²²

Asbāb al-nuzūl explains the events behind the revelation of a Qur'anic verse and can simply be understood as the cause or reason for the revelation of that verse. The study of *asbāb al-nuzūl* has developed into an independent discipline, although it was previously included within the broader study of '*Ulūm al-Qur'ān*' (the sciences of the Qur'an). The main purpose of using *asbāb al-nuzūl* is to connect certain Qur'anic verses with historical events involving Prophet Muhammad.

Among scholars, *asbāb al-nuzūl* serves different functions. For mufasssir (Qur'anic exegetes) and fuqahā (Islamic jurists), its use has different objectives. For mufasssir, *asbāb al-nuzūl* is primarily intended to assist in understanding and interpreting certain verses whose meanings or contexts may not be immediately clear. Meanwhile, for fuqaha, *asbāb al-nuzūl* is used to determine the chronological order of verses, which may have legal implications or consequences in Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*).²³

Asbāb al-nuzūl can be divided into two types. The first relates to specific events that occurred, after which a verse was revealed reflecting that incident. For example, in a narration reported by Al-Ša'labi, there is an account in which Christians from Najran and Jews from Medina asked Muhammad to perform prayer facing their respective *qiblah*. In response, Allah commanded that the direction of prayer be changed toward the Ka'bah. However, they objected and attempted to persuade the Prophet to face the direction according to their religious traditions. As a result, the verse of the QS. al-Baqarah/2:120, was revealed.

وَلَنْ تَرْضَىٰ عَنْكَ الْيَهُودُ وَلَا النَّصَارَىٰ حَتَّىٰ تَتَّبِعَ مِلَّتَهُمْ ۚ قُلْ إِنَّ هُدَىٰ اللَّهِ هُوَ الْهُدَىٰ ۚ وَلَئِنَّ
أَتَّبَعْتُمْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ بَعْدَ الَّذِي جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِن وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ

²² Jalaluddin Abdul Rahman Suyuthi, *Asbabun Nuzul: Sebab-Sebab Turun Ayat Al-Qur'an* (Semarang: Wicaksana, 1986), h. 56.

²³ Sirry, h. 173.

“The Jews and the Christians will never be pleased with you until you follow their religion. Say: ‘Indeed, the guidance of Allah is the true guidance.’ And if you were to follow their desires after the knowledge has come to you, then you would have neither a protector nor a helper from Allah.”²⁴

The verse emphasizes that even if the Prophet were to follow their wishes, the Jews and Christians would still not be pleased with Muhammad. Another form of *asbāb al-nuzūl* appears as a response to a question that was asked. For example, according to a narration reported by Muḥammad al-Bukhārī, one day the Prophet Muhammad was walking with Abdullāh ibn Mas’ūd and passed by a group of Jews. One of them asked about the spirit (*rūh*). The Prophet paused for a moment, raised his head toward the sky as if receiving revelation, and then recited QS. al-Isrā’/17:85.

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

“And they ask you about the Spirit. Say: ‘The Spirit is of the affair of my Lord, and you have not been given knowledge except a little.’”²⁵

The verse explains that matters concerning the spirit are the prerogative of God and that the Prophet was not given knowledge except a small portion.^{26,27}

According to Fazlur Rahman, in its development the Qur’an can be divided into two parts in relation to the causes of revelation. This division involves causes of revelation that are closely related to specific events or situations (micro *asbāb al-nuzūl*) and causes of revelation that are not related to particular events (macro *asbāb al-nuzūl*). Micro *asbāb al-nuzūl* is connected to specific events or incidents that become the reason for the revelation of a verse. For example, in the case when the Jews and Christians asked the Prophet Muhammad to face their *qiblah* in

²⁴ Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur’an, ‘Qur’an Kemenag’, Jakarta: LPMQ, 2022. <https://quran.kemenag.go.id/> [accessed 23 January 2026]. [Qur’an Kemenag](https://quran.kemenag.go.id/quran/per-ayat/surah/17?from=85&to=85)

²⁵ Al-Qur’an. <https://quran.kemenag.go.id/quran/per-ayat/surah/17?from=85&to=85>

²⁶ Jalāluddīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Suyūṭī, *Asbāb al-Nuzūl: Sebāb-sebāb Turun Ayat al-Qur’an*, h. 57.

²⁷ Suyūṭī, h. 57.

prayer, which was then responded to by the revelation of verse 120 of Surah Al-Baqarah. Meanwhile, macro *asbāb al-nuzūl* includes causes of revelation that are not related to specific events but are more general or macro in nature. Verses in this category were revealed without a particular incident triggering them; rather, they were revealed to provide guidance, laws, or general principles.²⁸

Both of these concepts—micro and macro *asbāb al-nuzūl*—highlight the importance of context and situation in the revelation of Qur’anic verses. This shows that the teachings and reforms brought by the Qur’an were always aligned with the needs and conditions of the Muslim community at that time, so that they did not create excessive conflict or disagreement within the newly developing Muslim society.²⁹

The concepts of micro and macro in the context of *asbāb al-nuzūl* have indeed been recognized and proposed by several Muslim scholars, including Syāh Waliyyullāh al-Dahlāwī. This idea provides a framework for understanding the context in which Qur’anic verses were revealed. According to al-Dahlāwī, *asbāb al-nuzūl juz’ī* (micro) refers to the causes of revelation related to specific events or situations. It involves a direct response to particular incidents that occurred during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad. Meanwhile, *asbāb al-nuzūl haqīqī* (macro) refers to the causes of revelation that are general or macro in nature and are not connected to specific incidents. Verses in this category were revealed to provide guidance, laws, or general principles that can be applied in various contexts.³⁰

This approach helps us understand that the Qur’an not only provided answers to specific situations at that time, but also established principles that can

²⁸ A. Athaillah, *Sejarah Al-Qur’an Verifikasi Tentang Otentisitas Al-Qur’an* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2010), h. 168.

²⁹ Muhammad Rafiyy Rahim, *et.al.*, ‘Da’wah and Conflict Resolution in Palu City : Religious Authorities and Habib Ratan Agency (Sunnah Living Perspective)’, *Pappasang: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur’an-Hadis dan Pemikiran Islam*, 7.2 (2025), 354–88 <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.46870/jiat.v7i2.2110>.

³⁰ Waliyyullāh Al-Dahlāwī, *Al-Fawz Al-Kabīr fī Uṣūl Al-Tafsīr* (Suriah: Dār al-Ghauzanī li al-Dirāsah al-Qur’āniyyah, 1429), h. 19.

be applied across different circumstances and eras. This understanding is also consistent with the idea that the Qur'an is a divine revelation that responded to the social and moral conditions of society at that time through the understanding and thought of the Prophet Muhammad. Such an approach helps us see the micro and macro contexts in the Qur'an, enabling us to understand its verses more comprehensively.³¹

In the context of Qur'anic verses that have specific causes of revelation, many of them are related to laws and norms of life. Most of these legal verses were preceded by a particular cause, which could be a concrete event or a question directed to the Prophet. This shows that the Qur'an provides legal guidance according to the needs and situations faced by the Muslim community at that time.

Although the majority of legal verses have specific causes, there are also verses that are not accompanied by a particular cause. Some of these contain stories of earlier peoples, descriptions of the blessings of paradise, the punishment of hell, and prophecies about events that will occur in the future. Even though these verses do not have a specific cause attached to them, the principle of macro *asbāb al-nuzūl* helps explain that their revelation is related to general principles, morality, and the universal wisdom and will of God.

The emphasis on the concept of macro *asbāb al-nuzūl* is not intended to force a particular interpretation on verses without specific causes. Rather, it highlights that the revelation of the Qur'an is always connected to the broader context and circumstances surrounding it. This understanding acknowledges the wisdom behind every event related to the revelation of verses and ultimately helps in finding balance and appropriateness in applying the teachings of the Qur'an in different contexts.

The lack of clarity regarding the causes of revelation for some Qur'anic verses may be due to several possibilities that should be considered. First, not all

³¹ Sahiron Syamsuddin, *Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an dan Hadis* (Yogyakarta: eLSAQ, 2010), h.75.

aspects related to the process of the Qur'an's revelation were documented in detail by the Prophet's companions. Although they were direct witnesses to the revelation, not all of their records could capture every detail of the process. Second, not all experiences and events related to the revelation were recorded by the companions. Their documentation may have been selective, focusing on information considered more important or relevant. As a result, some parts of the context surrounding the revelation of certain verses may not have been fully documented. The third possibility is that some verses were indeed revealed without a specific recorded cause. In such cases, the clarity of *asbāb al-nuzūl* may vary depending on the specific context of the verse.³²

Despite the lack of clarity in the recorded causes of revelation for some verses, it is important to remember that every verse in the Qur'an still contains wisdom and relevance in various contexts of life. Understanding *asbāb al-nuzūl*, when possible, can serve as a valuable addition in understanding the historical context surrounding the revelation of the verses.

Although the concept of *asbāb al-nuzūl* has certain weaknesses, particularly regarding the inaccuracy of some historical data, it is still considered an important foundation in interpreting the Qur'an. Both Muslim and Western scholars frequently refer to traditional sources, even though the historical reliability of some of these materials is acknowledged to be imperfect. A comparison between the Meccan and Medinan periods shows a significant difference in the accuracy of historical data, with the Medinan period generally regarded as more historically reliable than the Meccan period. Nevertheless, the understanding of *asbāb al-nuzūl* remains an essential element in Qur'anic interpretation.³³

³² Ahmad Zaini, 'Asbab An-Nuzul dan Urgensinya dalam Memahami Al-Quran', *Hermeneutik: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir*, 8.1 (2014): 1–20
<https://journal.iainkudus.ac.id/index.php/Hermeneutik/article/view/902>.

³³ Amal, h. 98.

It is also important to understand the differences in approach between Muslim scholars and Western scholarship regarding the Qur'an. For Muslims, the Qur'an is not only a source of moral and religious guidance but also a guide for daily life. It contains theological doctrines and legal principles and is recited for religious purposes. In contrast, Western scholarship tends to study the Qur'an with a stronger emphasis on historical research.³⁴ One example of a Western scholar who studied the chronology of the Qur'an is Theodor Nöldeke.³⁵ However, this does not mean that Muslim scholars do not engage in textual research on the Qur'an. Any effort to understand the meaning of the Qur'an must involve textual analysis, and within this context, *asbāb al-nuzūl* plays a key role in understanding the meanings and messages contained in the Qur'an.

Therefore, it is important to understand Qur'anic verses by considering the causes of their revelation in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding. Whether the *asbāb al-nuzūl* is specific or general, micro or macro, *juz'* or *ḥaqīqī*, all of them contribute to both direct and indirect readings of the text. Including the historical background and the conditions at the time of revelation becomes an important factor in interpretation. Contextual events, such as the wars fought by the Prophet Muhammad and his companions, also form an integral part of this understanding.³⁶

³⁴ Sirry, h. 136.

³⁵ The chronology of the revelation of the Qur'an has attracted the attention of Western scholarship since the nineteenth century. One of the scholars who received wide recognition in this field was Theodor Nöldeke. In principle, Nöldeke accepted the classification of Meccan and Medinan surahs as presented in traditional Islamic sources. However, he further divided the Meccan surahs into three categories. As a result, the chronological classification of the Qur'an according to its framework consists of Early Meccan, Middle Meccan, Late Meccan, and Medinan periods. Nöldeke's work gained broad recognition because he employed a philological approach, a method that reached its peak prominence in the nineteenth century. Through linguistic and textual analysis, he attempted to reconstruct the chronological order of Qur'anic revelation, contributing significantly to modern academic discussions on the historical development of the Qur'an. Sirry.

³⁶ For example, the legitimacy of warfare as stated in the Qur'an does not merely contain an element of command. Rather, it is always accompanied by a human dimension, indicating that there are reasons behind why such commands were given. Warfare in Islam is understood as a form of self-protection—primarily a response of self-defense rather than an initiation of aggression—along with several other underlying considerations. Syahidin, 'Teks dan Konteks Perang dalam Al-Qur'an (Sebuah Pendekatan Sirah Nabawiyah dan Hadis)', *El-Afkar: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman*

Arguments for Terrorism: Between Text and Context

1. QS. al-Baqarah/2: 190-193

The verses from QS. al-Baqarah/2: 190–193 are, in fact, often used as arguments by certain groups involved in acts of terrorism.

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقْتُلُونَكُم وَلَا تَعَدُّوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ (190) وَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ
حَيْثُ تَقِفْتُمُوهُمْ وَأَخْرِجُوهُمْ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَخْرَجُوكُمْ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ وَلَا تُقَاتِلُوهُمْ عِنْدَ
الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ حَتَّى يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِيهِ فَإِنْ قَاتَلُوكُمْ فَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ كَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكُفْرِينَ (191) فَإِنْ
أَنْتَهَوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (192) وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ لِلَّهِ
فَإِنْ أَنْتَهَوْا فَلَا عُدُونِ إِلَّا عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ (193)

“And fight in the way of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like those who transgress. (190) And kill them wherever you encounter them and expel them from where they expelled you (Mecca); and persecution (*fitnah*) is worse than killing. But do not fight them at the Sacred Mosque unless they fight you there. If they fight you (there), then kill them. Such is the recompense of the disbelievers. (191) But if they cease (hostility), then indeed Allah is Forgiving and Merciful. (192) And fight them until there is no more persecution and religion is devoted only to Allah. But if they cease, then there is to be no hostility except against the wrongdoers. (193)”³⁷

These verses are often associated with the event of the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah and the peace agreement established between Muhammad and the Quraisy. The Hudaibiyyah peace agreement represents one of the most important episodes in Islamic history. It is important to understand that these verses, within that context of peace, provide guidance for Muslims in responding to situations of warfare and in defending their rights. The verses affirm the right of Muslims to defend themselves, while at the same time establishing limits and principles of justice in the use of force. In the historical context, war was not desired by the Muslim community, and the peace agreement at Hudaibiyyah was considered a strategic victory. Although these verses discuss warfare, they must be interpreted

³⁷ Al-Qur'an. *Dan Tafsir Hadis*, 4.2 (2015): 138
<https://ejournal.iainbengkulu.ac.id/index.php/elafkar/article/view/1581>.

³⁷ Al-Qur'an. <https://quran.kemenag.go.id/quran/per-ayat/surah/2?from=190&to=193>

with wisdom and in accordance with the principles of peace and justice in Islam. It is crucial not to misuse or misinterpret these verses to justify terrorism or acts of violence. Context and a deep understanding of the historical situation and Islamic principles are essential for correctly interpreting the verses of the Qur'an.³⁸

The scholar Wahbah al-Zuhayfī interprets QS. al-Baqarah/2:191, particularly in relation to the rules of fighting in the path of God, as indicating that in situations of attack, responding with force can be considered a necessary reaction. Al-Zuhayfī emphasizes the importance of self-defense and the use of force as a measure to protect the rights of Muslims who are under attack. In his understanding, the concept of *musyākalah* (reciprocal combat or mutual fighting) together with the principle of responding to wrongdoing with an equivalent response is regarded as part of a defensive strategy and self-protection during conflict. References to other Qur'anic verses, such as QS. al-Syūrā/42:40 and QS. al-Anfāl/8:30, are also used to provide a legal foundation for this understanding.³⁹

However, it should be noted that this interpretation must be viewed within a broader context and should not be taken in isolation from the principles of justice, peace, and the laws of warfare as regulated in Islamic teachings. Understanding Qur'anic verses related to warfare must remain consistent with humanitarian values and the ethical principles of war recognized in Islam. These verses must not be misused to justify violence or aggression that contradicts the principles of peace and justice.

In his interpretation, Wahbah al-Zuhayfī explains that in situations of war, resistance against polytheists who transgress the limits is permitted, especially when they commit aggression against Muslims. He provides a concrete example from Islamic history, namely the expulsion of the polytheists from Mecca, because they had attempted to expel the Muslims. Al-Zuhayfī highlights the concept of

³⁸ Dahlan, M. Zaka alfarizi (ed.), *Asbabun Nuzul Latar Belakang Historis Turunnya Ayat-Ayat AlQur'an*, 2nd edn (Bandung: Penerbit Diponegoro, 2000), h.58.

³⁹ Wahbah Al-Zuhayfī, *Tafsīr Al-Munīr fī Al-Aqīdah Wa Al-Syarī'ah Wa Al-Manhaj*, Volume 6 (Suriah: Dar al-Fikr, 1411), h. 175.

fitnah in the context of the verse, interpreting it as actions that include falsehood and attempts to lead believers into disbelief. In his view, such *fitnah* is considered more severe than killing. Furthermore, he provides guidelines that warfare must not exceed certain limits, especially in sacred places such as Masjid al-Ḥarām. He emphasizes that resistance is only permitted as a response when the polytheists initiate fighting in that place. Al-Zuhaylī's understanding reflects the principles of war ethics and justice that must be upheld in Islam, stressing that resistance is only allowed as a response to clear aggression.⁴⁰

This verse highlights the permissibility of fighting wherever Muslims encounter those who seek to wage war against them. The command to expel them from Mecca is given in the context of the event of Conquest of Mecca, when Muslims regained control of the city. The *fitnah* mentioned in this verse refers to the actions of the polytheists, including harassment and persecution at Masjid al-Ḥarām, as well as their attempts to expel Muslims. *Fitnah* is also interpreted as polytheism, which is considered a greater wrongdoing than killing, especially when it occurs in a sacred place and during the state of *ihrām*. In the context of the pilgrimage (*ḥajj*), acts of aggression in Masjid al-Ḥarām are regarded as serious violations of the sanctity of the place. Therefore, the command to expel them serves as a response to these actions and as an effort to preserve the honor and sanctity of the sacred mosque.

The verse also emphasizes that fighting during the sacred months is not considered sinful if the purpose is to defend the religion, discipline those who disturb the peace, and confront those who violate agreements. This implies that in certain circumstances, warfare during the sacred months can be justified as a response to actions that threaten security, religion, and established treaties. The importance of intention is also emphasized: warfare must not be driven by personal desire or passion, but rather carried out based on religious principles and justice.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Wahbah Al-Zuhaylī, *Tafsīr Al-Wajīz*, Volume 2 (Sūriah: Dār al-Fikr, 1415), h. 30.

⁴¹ Wahbah Al-Zuhaylī, *Tafsīr Al-Munīr fī Al-Aqīdah Wa Al-Syarī'ah Wa Al-Manhaj*, h. 177.

The verse contains a command to fight in the path of Allah as a form of support for the religion and to uphold the dignity of the word of God. Permission is given to fight polytheists who commit acts of aggression, such as expelling Muslims from their homes, waging war, and breaking their promises. In this context, *jihād* is understood as a struggle to uphold the religion of Allah and to oppose those who threaten the security and faith of Muslims. The interpretation further emphasizes the prohibition of violating the ethics of warfare, such as initiating battle without a clear reason, killing innocent people—including women, children, and the elderly—and destroying the environment, such as cutting down trees, burning crops, and damaging property. These prohibitions apply especially during the state of *iḥrām* in the sacred land and during the sacred months. In the context of battle, Muslims are commanded to fight the enemy wherever they are encountered—even in the sacred land—and to expel them from the places from which they expelled Muslims, as happened in Mecca. This command was given as a response to the enemy's aggressive actions, such as expulsion, confiscation of property, and oppression against the religion. *Fitnah*, or incitement against religion, is considered a wrongdoing that is heavier for believers than killing, because faith is regarded as the most sacred, valuable, and noble possession. Disturbing a person's faith is therefore seen as a disaster greater than physical injury.⁴²

Based on the explanation of Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, the ruling regarding the legitimacy of war and the wisdom behind the command of *jihād* can be understood as follows: *jihād* in the path of Allah has a broad meaning and is not limited only to warfare. Rather, it also refers to efforts to prevent aggression, protect oneself, and safeguard religious freedom. It is important to note that *jihād* is not merely interpreted as war intended to force others to embrace Islam.⁴³

⁴² Al-Zuhaylī, h. 179.

⁴³ Wahbah Al-Zuhaylī, *Asaru Al-Ḥarbi fī Al-Fiqh Al-Islāmī* (Damaskus: Dār al-Fikr, 1998), h. 33.

In the context of warfare, *jihād* is characterized by principles of justice and rights, involving self-defense and the preservation of religious freedom. War must not involve attacking without clear justification, exceeding the prescribed limits, or aiming at destruction or acts of terrorism. *Jihād* is not intended to coerce others into accepting Islam; instead, it serves as a response to aggression and as a means to uphold the values of justice. Al-Zuhayfī emphasizes that Islamic history reflects teachings that are just and compassionate toward the weak in worldly affairs. Therefore, the claim that Islam was established solely by the sword is considered a historical falsehood and a distortion of facts. This demonstrates that Islam emphasizes principles of justice, compassion, and the protection of rights—not only in the context of war but in all aspects of life.⁴⁴

The explanation of warfare within the context of the Qur'an indeed shows that instructions changed depending on context and time. Before the migration (*Hijrah*) of Muhammad from Mecca to Medina, verses emphasized values such as tolerance, kindness, and peace. For example, QS. Fuṣṣilat/41: 34, QS. al-Mā'idah/5: 13, QS. al-Naḥl/16: 125, QS. al-Naḥl/16: 82, QS. al-Furqān/25: 63, QS. al-Gāsyiyah/88: 22, QS. Qaf/50: 45, dan QS. al-Jāsiyah/45: 14 convey messages of peace, patience, and good conduct toward others. However, after the *Hijrah* to Medina, when the Muslim community faced different challenges, the instructions regarding warfare changed. Verses permitting warfare— QS. al-Taubah/9: 5 dan QS. al-Taubah/9: 29—granted permission to fight polytheists who fought against Muslims or opposed their faith. This shows that divine instructions were revealed in accordance with particular contexts and circumstances in order to protect the community and the religion.⁴⁵

It is therefore important to understand that the historical and chronological context of the revelation of the verses plays a crucial role in interpreting the Qur'an. Consequently, these verses are not necessarily viewed as abrogating one

⁴⁴ Al-Zuhayfī, *Tafsīr Al-Munīr fī Al-Aqīdah Wa Al-Syarī'ah Wa Al-Manhaj*, h. 183.

⁴⁵ Al-Zuhayfī, h. 178.

another, but rather as reflecting changes in instruction that correspond to changing circumstances.

This explanation shows that the revelation of the verse is closely related to the historical context and the particular circumstances faced by Muslims at that time. During the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah, when an agreement was established between the Muslim community and the Quraysy, the companions of Muhammad were concerned that the Quraysy might not honor the treaty and could violate its terms. This verse provides a solution by granting permission to fight if Muslims are attacked first, even during the sacred months in which warfare is normally prohibited, but under certain conditions. It is important to note that the war referred to in this verse is defensive in nature, meaning that it aims to defend Muslims from attacks or aggression directed against them. With this exception, the verse highlights the aspects of self-defense and the protection of religious freedom for Muslims.

Furthermore, the verse emphasizes the importance of not transgressing limits in warfare. This indicates that although fighting may be permitted under certain conditions, Muslims are still reminded to conduct war ethically and not exceed the prescribed boundaries, such as harming women, children, or those who are not involved in combat. Therefore, this interpretation offers a contextual and comprehensive understanding of the warfare permitted in the verse.

The interpretation of Wahbah al-Zuhayli, which highlights the difference between verses revealed in Mecca and those revealed in Medina, reflects the changing contexts and social conditions of the Muslim community at that time. In certain contexts, these verses provided guidance and regulations that corresponded to the particular situations and conditions faced by Muslims. However, it is important to remember that understanding and interpreting these verses must be carried out carefully and contextually. Misinterpretation or interpretation that ignores the historical context may lead to distorted conclusions.

Nevertheless, regarding the use of these verses as a basis for acts of terrorism, it must be emphasized that the majority of Islamic scholars strongly reject the use of violence without clear justification and without legitimate religious authority. Acts of terrorism that cause suffering among civilians and violate humanitarian principles cannot be justified in Islam. In the context of Indonesia, a state founded upon the principles of Pancasila, the use of violence or acts of terrorism contradicts the fundamental values of the nation and cannot be recognized as a legitimate form of struggle. Therefore, preventing and taking action against acts of terrorism is essential to maintain the security and stability of the state.

2. QS. al-Mā'idah/5: 44

Furthermore, another verse often cited by perpetrators of terrorism is a passage from QS. al-Mā'idah/5: 44.

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا التَّوْرَةَ فِيهَا هُدًى وَنُورٌ ۖ يَحْكُمُ بِهَا النَّبِيُّونَ الَّذِينَ أَسْلَمُوا لِلَّذِينَ هَادُوا
وَالرَّبَّيُّونَ وَالْأَحْبَارُ بِمَا اسْتُحْفِظُوا مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ وَكَانُوا عَلَيْهِ شُهَدَاءَ ۚ فَلَا تَخْشَوُا النَّاسَ
وَأَحْشَوْنِي وَلَا تَشْتَرُوا بِإِيَّتِي ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا ۚ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ
الْكَافِرُونَ

“Indeed, We sent down the Torah, in which there is guidance and light. By it the prophets who submitted themselves to God judged the matters of the Jews, as did their scholars and rabbis, because they were entrusted with the protection of the Book of God and were witnesses to it. Therefore, do not fear people, but fear Me. And do not exchange My verses for a small price. Whoever does not judge according to what God has revealed—then they are indeed the disbelievers.”⁴⁶

The occasion of revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*) of Qur'an 5:44 is related to two groups of Jews in the pre-Islamic period who were involved in acts of adultery. At

⁴⁶ A person who does not judge according to the law of Allah swt. is classified into three types: (a) due to hatred and denial of Allah's law, such a person is considered a disbeliever (Qur'an, Surah al-Mā'idah/5: 44); (b) due to following personal desires and causing harm to others, such a person is described as unjust (Qur'an, Surah al-Mā'idah/5: 45); and (c) due to transgression (fisq), as stated in verse 47 of the same surah. Al-Qur'an. <https://quran.kemenag.go.id/quran/per-ayat/surah/5?from=44&to=44>

one point, some of the companions of Muhammad asked about the appropriate punishment that should be applied to the adulterers from these groups. The Prophet then instructed that the punishment should be implemented according to the law of God. In another incident, a group of Jews sent representatives to seek a legal judgment from the Prophet. However, they set a condition: if the Prophet's ruling ordered that the adulterers be punished by public humiliation and flogging according to their interpretation of the law, they would accept it. But if the Prophet ruled that the adulterers should be punished by stoning, they would reject the ruling. In response to this situation, the verse was revealed as a warning to always uphold the laws revealed by God. The verse emphasizes the importance of following divine law and rejecting human manipulation of legal rulings that contradict God's commandments.⁴⁷

Another narration states that a man from the tribe of Fadak committed adultery. The people of Fadak wrote a letter to the Jews in Medina, asking them to consult the Prophet about the punishment for the adulterer. They instructed that if the Prophet ordered flogging, the ruling should be accepted; but if he ordered stoning, it should be rejected. The Jews of Medina then asked the Prophet about the case. The Prophet responded as mentioned in the well-known hadith and ordered that the adulterer be punished by stoning. Subsequently, the verse was revealed as a command that the Prophet judge according to the law revealed by God. Another narration concerning the revelation of this series of verses relates to two Jewish groups during the pre-Islamic era who committed adultery but applied

fabricated and unjust legal practices among themselves. It was reported that their leaders received leniency when they violated the law, while weaker members of society were punished strictly according to the written law. This inconsistency demonstrated a form of injustice in the application of legal rulings. The revelation of this verse therefore served as a reminder for Muslims to remain committed to the just laws established by God. The verse stresses that all

⁴⁷ Dahlan, M. Zaka alfarizi (ed.), h. 195.

individuals—regardless of their social or economic status—must be subject to the same legal rulings established by Islamic law. No distinction should be made between the powerful and the weak. Thus, the verse emphasizes the importance of justice and equality in the application of law within an Islamic society.⁴⁸

The interpretation of this verse states that whoever does not judge according to what God has prescribed is described as *fāsiq* (rebellious or sinful), one who transgresses the limits and deviates from God's authority and His law. The verse portrays those who do not submit to the law of God as disbelievers, wrongdoers, and transgressors. A specific interpretation by Ibn Abbas explains that the verse was directed toward the People of the Book, namely the Jews and Christians. Those among them who denied and rejected God's law were considered disbelievers because they refused to judge according to the law revealed by God; therefore, they were regarded as transgressors, sinful, and unjust.⁴⁹

Based on the circumstances of the revelation of QS. al-Mā'idah/5: 44, which relates to the choice between applying the punishment of stoning as prescribed by God or implementing a lighter punishment, it is clear that the context does not discuss the entirety of God's law in a general sense. Rather, the verse addresses a specific legal decision in a particular case. Certain jihadist groups often use selected verses to justify their actions, even though the context of those verses may differ from the meaning they intend to impose. It is important to emphasize that the use of Qur'anic verses to justify acts of terrorism cannot be accepted. Acts of terrorism not only contradict the teachings of Islam but also violate legal principles and humanitarian norms. Understanding sacred verses should therefore be grounded in their proper context and interpreted wisely, in harmony with humanitarian values and applicable laws. Likewise, it is essential to

⁴⁸ Misbah Hudri, 'Pembacaan Kontekstual Ayat "Berhukum dengan Hukum Allah" (Narasi Kontra NKRI Bersyariah)', *Nun: Jurnal Studi Alquran dan Tafsir di Nusantara*, 6.2 (2020): 163–84 <https://doi.org/10.32495/nun.v6i2.161>.

⁴⁹ Al-Zuhaylī, *Tafsīr Al-Munīr fī Al-Aqīdah Wa Al-Syarī'ah Wa Al-Manhaj*, h. 211.

foster better understanding and dialogue within society in order to prevent the misuse of religious teachings for extremist or terrorist purposes.⁵⁰

The term often associated with terrorism in Arabic is *irhāb*, which means to intimidate, terrorize, or spread fear and panic. In the context of Jihad or warfare, acts intended to intimidate the enemy were sometimes understood as strategies to achieve victory in battle. Such an understanding may have been relevant within the context of warfare in certain historical periods, where efforts to win battles were considered necessary. However, it is important to note that this historical context differs significantly from present conditions. Modern terrorism frequently involves acts of violence or threats directed at civilians or particular groups and often occurs outside the context of formal warfare.

Moreover, contemporary terrorism can also arise from misunderstandings of religious texts, where incorrect or manipulative interpretations are used to legitimize acts of violence. Therefore, it is crucial to develop careful and contextual understandings of religious teachings and to promote interfaith dialogue in order to prevent the misuse of sacred texts for the purposes of extremism or terrorism.

In the Indonesian context, the use of these two verses as justification by radical groups has appeared in a number of terrorist incidents. One example is suicide bombing, which, by its characteristics, can be classified as a planned act of self-destruction. Such acts not only take the life of the perpetrator but also cause the deaths of innocent people and create fear within society. This action reflects desperation and the inability to seek alternative solutions to social or political problems. Moreover, suicide bombings often pursue unclear objectives and are driven largely by subjective considerations in their execution.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Roland Gunawan, Lies Marcoes-Natsir (ed.), *Inspirasi Jihad Kaum Jihadis Telaah atas Kitab-Kitab Jihad* (Jakarta: Rumah Kitab, 2017), h. 13.

⁵¹ Tim Penanggulangan Terorisme Melalui Pendekatan Ajaran Islam, *Meluruskan Makna Jihad Mencegah Terorisme Dilengkapi Dengan Fatwa MUI Tentang Terorisme* (Jakarta: Departemen Agama RI, 2009), h. 34.

According to the Majelis Ulama Indonesia, through MUI Fatwa No. 3/2004 on Terrorism, acts of terrorism—whether committed by individuals, groups, or even states—are declared haram (forbidden). This ruling applies both in peaceful countries and in Muslim-majority nations such as Indonesia. The principles of Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of Indonesia bind all citizens, including Muslims and non-Muslims, to maintain peace and national unity.⁵² The fatwa also stresses that followers of all religions have the freedom to practice their faith peacefully. In addition, it clearly distinguishes between suicide bombings associated with terrorism and the Islamic concept of Jihad.⁵³

In his work, Muhammad Rofiq Muzakkir refers to the view of Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, who argues that the state should not adopt a religious character, even if the majority of its population is Muslim. According to An-Na'im, the state must remain neutral toward religious doctrines and religious issues in general. Within a democratic system of citizenship, equality among all citizens must be

⁵² In determining the ruling on suicide bombing, the Fatwa Commission of the Indonesian Council of Ulama elaborates on the issue and considers the underlying *'illah* (legal cause). In a situation of war, where there is no capability or other means to resist the enemies of Islam, suicide bombing is considered permissible and may even be regarded as *'amaliyyah al-istisyhād* (an act of martyrdom). Conversely, if the *'illah* of war no longer exists—for example, when it is carried out in a peaceful country, *dār al-sulh*—the Council views suicide bombing as *'amaliyyat al-irhāb* (terrorist acts), which are strongly condemned by religion. Acts of terrorism in their various forms that have occurred recently in several countries, including Indonesia, have caused loss of property and life and have created a sense of insecurity among the public. Concerning terrorism, several perceptions have emerged: some people consider it to be part of the teachings of Islam and therefore believe that Islamic teachings and Muslims should be viewed with suspicion, while others regard it as a form of jihad that is taught, even if it involves risking one's own property and life as well as those of others. Majelis Ulama Indonesia, *Fatwa Ulama Indonesia Tentang Terorisme* (Jakarta: Pimpinan Majelis Ulama, 2005), h. 9.

⁵³ Terrorism is a criminal act against humanity and civilization that poses a serious threat to state sovereignty, endangers security and world peace, and harms public welfare. Terrorism is a form of crime that is well organized, transnational in nature, and classified as an extraordinary crime because it targets victims indiscriminately. Jihad contains two meanings: first, every effort and exertion of one's utmost ability, along with the willingness to endure hardship in fighting and resisting enemy aggression in all its forms. In this sense, jihad is also referred to as *al-qitāl* or *al-harb*. Second, it refers to all sincere and continuous efforts to preserve and uphold the religion of Allah. The difference between terrorism and jihad is as follows: Terrorism is destructive (*ifsād*) and anarchic in nature; it aims to create fear and/or destroy others, and it is carried out without rules and with unlimited targets. Jihad, on the other hand, is characterized by efforts toward improvement (*iṣlāḥ*), even when conducted through warfare; it aims to uphold the religion of Allah and/or defend the rights of the oppressed, and it is carried out by following the rules determined by Islamic law with clearly identified enemies as its targets. Majelis and Indonesia, h. 10-11.

preserved, and the public sphere should remain inclusive for all elements of society while preventing the dominance of a single religion. This concept reflects an effort to avoid the institutional implementation of Sharia by the state. Such an approach is considered not only consistent with democratic principles but also compatible with the ethical objectives of Sharia itself. An-Na'im argues that the formal enforcement of Sharia by the state in Muslim-majority societies can conflict with the logic of democracy and modern citizenship systems, which are open, inclusive, and non-bureaucratic. Instead of strengthening pluralism, state enforcement of religious law may actually narrow the space for diversity within society.⁵⁴

Acts of terrorism that are sometimes framed as jihad by radical groups in Indonesia can be understood as forms of resistance by certain jihadist movements. These groups, which represent strands of radical Islam, pursue particular political aspirations, including the establishment of an Islamic state. However, although the majority of Indonesians are Muslim, the aspiration to establish a state based solely on one religion appears largely unrealistic. Indonesia is a pluralistic nation with diverse cultures and religions, and such an idea does not receive universal support. The existing state system and its regulations already reflect the broader aspirations of the nation. Laws that accommodate religious values while emphasizing justice and collective welfare have become the foundation for diversity and harmony within Indonesian society.

CONCLUSION

The Qur'an was revealed in accordance with the socio-historical context of the society of the Prophet Muhammad, particularly in Mecca and Medina. *Asbāb al-nuzūl*, the concept referring to the background of the revelation of verses, helps in understanding their meaning by identifying the specific events or situations to which the verses responded. In this writing, the focus is on two arguments often

⁵⁴ Muhammad Rofiq Muzakkir, *Dekolonisasi Metodologi Kritis Dalam Studi Humaniora Dan Studi Islam* (Yogyakarta: Yayasan Bentala, 2022), h. 263-264.

used by perpetrators of terrorism, namely QS. al-Baqarah/2: 190–193 and QS. al-Mā'idah/5: 44, which discusses the permissibility of warfare and judging according to the law of God. However, it should be noted that the context of the event of Ḥudaibiyah and the companions' desire to apply the punishment of stoning were relevant only to particular conditions and situations at that time. The use of these verses as a basis for acts of terrorism in Indonesia, especially in the form of suicide bombings, is inappropriate and cannot be forced into the Indonesian context, which has a different legal system and set of regulations. Moreover, it is important to understand that the Qur'an was revealed as guidance and direction for Muslims. However, incorrect interpretation and application in an unsuitable context can lead to immoral actions that harm society. Therefore, a proper understanding of the socio-historical context and the *asbāb al-nuzūl* is essential to grasp the true meaning and intent of the verses of the Qur'an.

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