Integrating Classical and Contemporary Views on Asbāb al-Nuzūl: Implications for Qur'anic Interpretation and Social Issues

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Abstract

*Previous studies on asbāb al-nuzūl primarily focus on hermeneutical approaches, legal derivation, and classical or contemporary exegetical perspectives. However, a significant research gap remains, as these studies rarely connect the occasions of revelation to modern socio-political challenges such as misinformation, negative media exposure, and their psychological impact on society. This study seeks to address this **gap** by integrating classical and contemporary frameworks of asbāb al-nuzūl with current societal issues. The objective of this research is to explain the methods used to determine authentic asbāb al-nuzūl, to examine the conceptual understanding of classical and modern scholars, to explore the functions of asbāb al-nuzūl, and to analyze its implications for Islamic legal rulings (fiqh) and contemporary social concerns. Using a qualitative library-based **method**, this study examines Qur'anic verses alongside authoritative classical and modern texts. Data were analyzed inductively through classification of methodological approaches, comparison of scholarly perspectives, and exploration of legal and social implications supported by relevant textual evidence. The **findings** show four major methods for determining asbāb al-nuzūl: selecting the most authentic narration, preferring the stronger (rājiḥ) narration, reconciling complementary reports, and acknowledging double revelation when reports cannot be combined. Classical scholars emphasize the indispensability of asbāb al-nuzūl for accurate interpretation, while contemporary scholars highlight its role in contextualizing Qur'anic teachings for modern realities. The **implications** of this study affirm that asbāb al-nuzūl is crucial for deriving legal rulings — such as the phased prohibition of alcohol and the legal reasoning behind ẓihār — and for strengthening the relevance of Qur'anic interpretation in addressing modern issues like misinformation, ethical criticism, and responsible public discourse. This demonstrates that the Qur'an's contextual wisdom remains essential for guiding contemporary society.*

Keywords: *Reason for Revelation; Social Issue; Classical Views; Asbāb al-Nuzūl.*

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Introduction

Reason for revelation is an *Idhafah* term (a combination of two words), namely Asbab and Nuzul. Asbab linguistically means cause, while nuzul means descent or revelation. However, in its technical sense, Asbabun Nuzul refers to the events that serve as the background for the revelation of a verse. Aside events, answers to questions asked by the companions of the Prophet can also be categorized as reason for revelation [1]. The scholars have different opinions regarding the meaning of reason for revelation. Muhammad Abdul Azim Al-Zarqani argues that reason for revelation refers to the event of the revelation of a verse that serves as the basis for the establishment of a law [2]. Meanwhile, Nurcholis Majid explains that the meaning of reason for revelation is the concept, theory, or news about the cause of the revelation of a verse or several verses. Based on these definitions, it can be said that reason for revelation has two main meanings: answering the companions questions, as in Surah Al-Nazi'at; verse 42, or the event that serves as the background for a verse, such as the *Isra' Mi'raj* in Surah Al-Isra'.

To facilitate the study of the science of reason for revelation, scholars have written special books that discuss it. Among these scholars are Ibn Hajar, Al-Wahidi, Al-Ja'bari, and Al-Suyuti. Research on reason for revelation has been widely conducted, such as the urgency of reason for revelation in Paul Ricoeur's Hermeneutics [3], legal deduction [4], scientific exegesis [5], and the interpretation of the double movement hermeneutics [6]. Besides that, many researches used double movement hermeneutics to contextualize reasons for revelation in many issues, such as gender equality [7], inheritance rights [8], and family studies [9]. Unfortunately, previous studies have rarely linked reasons for revelation to political issues or negative news that affect a person's psychology. Therefore, in this study, the author seeks to emphasize a different example, namely the importance of maintaining a positive mindset and good attitude in responding to the current widespread phenomenon. In this regard, this paper not only seeks to answer how does reason for revelation function in the interpretation of Islamic legal rulings (*fiqh*), but also to answer how can reasons for revelation strengthen the relevance of Qur'anic interpretation in the modern era, especially in societal issues.

Method

In this study, the researcher uses a qualitative method, which is applied to study natural, non-experimental objects. The researcher is the key instrument, with data analysis being inductive/qualitative in nature. The subjects of this research are the verses in the Qur'an along with classical texts that discuss the background of the revelation of those verses. This study aims to describe in more detail the existence and urgency of reason for revelation. The sources and types of data for this research are library research, consisting of primary sources. The data collection techniques used are observation and literature review. The data analysis in this study was carried out through different stages for each discussion point. In the first discussion, regarding the method of reasons for revelation, several verses with multiple reasons for revelation were examined. Then, the strongest reason for revelation was selected according to the *naskh-mansukh* method. Second, in the discussion on the definition of reasons for revelation, the scholars were divided into two groups—classical and contemporary—and the differences in their opinions were explained in detail. Third, the discussion of the urgency of reasons for revelation included its implications. In the following chapter, two main implications were highlighted: for the field of *fiqh* and for the modern world. Each discussion point was supported with relevant verses, interpretations, and trustworthy classical sources.

Results and Discussion

Method of Reason for Revelation

In determining which reason for revelation is most accurate, there is a method that resembles the *tarjih* method used in hadith. The first step taken by the reader when there are two different narrations regarding the same verse is to choose the one that is most authentic.

An example of this is found in Surah Al-Duha, verse 1:

$$\text{وَٱلضُّحَىٰ ١}$$

In a narration from Sahih Bukhari, it is mentioned that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was ill and missed his night prayers. For several days, he received no revelation. Then, a woman came and said, "O Muhammad, indeed Allah has abandoned you." On the other hand, a narration from Al-Tabari mentions that the reason for the withholding of revelation was due to a dead dog under the Prophet's bed. This second narration was considered strange

(*shadh*) by Ibn Hajar, who preferred the Bukhari narration, which he deemed more authentic [10].

The second method is that if both narrations are equally authentic, the more *rajih* (superior) one should be chosen. An example of this can be found in Surah Al-Isra, verse 85:

$$وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ ٱلرُّوحِ ۖ قُلِ ٱلرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَآ أُوتِيتُم مِّنَ ٱلْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا$$

This verse means: "They ask you (O Muhammad) about the spirit. Say, 'The spirit is of the affair of my Lord, and you have not been given of knowledge except a little.'"

In the narration from Sahih Bukhari, Ibn Mas'ud explains that the background of this verse's revelation occurred when a group of Jews came to Prophet Muhammad—who was resting under a date palm tree—to ask him about the spirit. Then, this verse was revealed. However, in the narration from Imam Tirmidhi, reported by Ibn Abbas, it is explained that the Quraysh had sent the Jews to ask the Prophet about the spirit [11]. Then the Jews came to the Prophet, and the verse was revealed. In this case, the preferred narration can be determined by analyzing which version aligns better with the context or provides more clarity, as both are considered authentic. Both of these narrations are equally authentic (Sahih), but the narration from Bukhari is considered more *rajih* (superior) because Ibn Mas'ud directly witnessed the event, whereas Ibn Abbas only heard about it.

The third method applies when both narrations are Sahih and *rajih*, but can be reconciled. In this case, the rule for determining the reason for revelation is to combine both narrations. This happened in the case of Surah Ali Imran, verse 37:

$$فَتَقَبَّلَهَا رَبُّهَا بِقَبُولٍ حَسَنٍ وَأَنْبَتَهَا نَبَاتًا حَسَنًا وَكَفَّلَهَا زَكَرِيَّا ۖ كُلَّمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا زَكَرِيَّا ٱلْمِحْرَابَ وَجَدَ عِندَهَا$$
$$رِزْقًا ۖ قَالَ يَٰمَرْيَمُ أَنَّىٰ لَكِ هَٰذَا ۖ قَالَتْ هُوَ مِنْ عِندِ ٱللَّهِ ۖ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَرْزُقُ مَن يَشَآءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ٣٧$$

This verse means: "He (Allah) accepted her (Maryam) with a good acceptance, and made her grow in a good manner, and entrusted her care to Zakaria. Every time Zakaria entered upon her in the prayer chamber, he found with her provision. He said, 'O Maryam, from where is this (food) for you?' She said, 'It is from Allah. Indeed, Allah provides for whom He wills without account.'"

The first narration, from Bukhari and Muslim, mentions that Asy'as had a dispute with a Jew over a piece of land. The Prophet asked, "Do you have proof?" Asy'as replied, "No." The Prophet then instructed the Jew to swear an oath, but Asy'as prevented him, fearing that the Jew might swear falsely. Then, this verse was revealed. On the other hand, there is a narration from Bukhari by Abdullah bin Abi Auf, which tells of someone who falsely claimed to have received something from a Muslim, with the intention to harm the Muslims. Then, this verse was revealed. According to Ibn Hajar, both narrations are equally Sahih and *rajih*, and they can be combined. This means that the verse was revealed due to both of these events.

The final case is when two narrations are both Sahih and *rajih*, but it is impossible to combine them. The solution in this case is that the verse was revealed twice, each for different events. An example of this is Surah Al-Nahl, verse 126:

وَإِنْ عَاقَبْتُمْ فَعَاقِبُواْ بِمِثْلِ مَا عُوقِبْتُم بِهِۦۖ وَلَئِن صَبَرْتُمْ لَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لِّلصَّٰبِرِينَ ١٢٦

This verse says: "If you retaliate, then retaliate with what is similar to that with which you were harmed. But if you are patient, it is better for those who are patient."

In a narration from Hakim, it is explained that when the Prophet saw Hamzah killed in the Battle of Uhud, he swore to kill seventy disbelievers. Then, this verse was revealed [12]. On the other hand, in a narration from Tirmidhi, it is mentioned that the companions wanted to take revenge on the disbelievers after seventy Muslims were killed in the Battle of Uhud. Then, this verse was revealed during the conquest of Makkah.

Both narrations are Sahih and *rajih*, but there is a significant time gap between them. Therefore, it is impossible to combine them. As a solution, this verse was revealed twice: once after the Battle of Uhud and again during the conquest of Makkah [4].

Table 1 : Asbab al Nuzul Methods, **Source:** Author's Own

Method	Rule	Example	Reasoning
1. Tarjih by Authenticity	Choose the most authentic narration when two narrations differ.	Surah Al-Duha (93):1. Bukhari: Prophet was ill and missed prayer; Al-Tabari: dead dog under bed.	Ibn Hajar judged the Bukhari report stronger; the other is shadh (strange).
2. Tarjih when Both Are Authentic	If both narrations are sahih, choose the one that is more rajih	Surah Al-Isra (17):85. Jews asked about the soul (Bukhari) vs.	Bukhari is preferred because Ibn Mas'ud witnessed the event

		(stronger).	Quraysh sent Jews (Tirmidhi).	directly; Ibn Abbas only heard it.
3. Combining Narrations		If both narrations are sahih and can be reconciled, combine them.	Surah Ali Imran (3):37. Dispute over land (Bukhari & Muslim) and false claim against Muslim (Bukhari).	Ibn Hajar: both events occurred, so the verse came down due to both incidents.
4. Double Revelation		If both narrations are sahih and rajih but cannot be combined, then the verse was revealed twice.	Surah Al-Nahl (16):126. After Uhud (Hakim) and during Conquest of Makkah (Tirmidhi).	Events happened far apart in time, so the verse was revealed two times.

The Concept of Reason for Revelation According to Scholars

Scholars have different opinions regarding the concept of reason for revelation. This relates to the definition and the growing significance of reason for revelation among scholars. Classical scholars such as Al-Tabari, Ibn Kathir, and Al-Qurtubi considered reason for revelation to be an essential element in understanding the verses of the Qur'an [13]. Imam Al-Tabari stated that by studying reason for revelation, one can avoid misunderstandings when interpreting the Qur'an [14].

Meanwhile, Ibn Kathir believed that reason for revelation provides guidance on the historical and social contexts at the time the verses of the Qur'an were revealed, which could potentially be applied in the present day. By understanding reason for revelation, one can categorize whether a verse is general or specific. If the verse is general, the legal rulings contained within it can be implemented in contemporary times [15]. Now, let us turn to the views of contemporary scholars. Here, they focus on the development of reason for revelation (the causes of revelation) so that it can be applied in the modern era [16]. For example, Sayyid Qutb said that although the verses of the Qur'an are tied to a specific historical context, the teachings within those verses are eternal and can be utilized throughout the ages [17]. Therefore, in order to practice what is contained in the Qur'an, Muslims need to understand its historical context [18].

Another contemporary scholar, Muhammad Abduh, said that reason for revelation can help translate the implicit messages in the Qur'an. According to him, the wisdom of a ruling can be understood through the context in which the verse was revealed. As a result, scholars will not be trapped by the textual meaning of the verse alone, but also its contextual meaning [19]. Meanwhile, Fazlur Rahman understands reason for revelation as being the same as the concept of double movement [20]. This concept is a branch of the Hermeneutics theory, which means to say, to translate, and to explain. Although this theory

originated from the West and has sparked much controversy, there are still some scholars who have developed it, and its existence has been recognized by other scholars.

The concept of double movement itself is a combination of two movements. The first is to examine the historical context of a verse's revelation. At this stage, the reader is asked to understand the socio-historical conditions of the Arab people at that time. Then, in the second stage, a conclusion is drawn regarding whether the laws that applied in the past can be implemented in the present and are dynamic. If this is the case, then the law of the verse is general and no longer limited to the Prophet, the Companions, or those who lived at the time the Qur'an was revealed [6]. From this, it can be understood that reason for revelation plays an important role in the interpretation of the double movement hermeneutics. This is different from Bintu Shati', who prioritizes the textual structure of the verse and rejects reason for revelation as an intermediary in the Tafsir of the Qur'an. He argues that reason for revelation obstructs a comprehensive interpretation of the Qur'an [21].

For example, in interpreting Surah Ali-Imran, verse 173:

ٱلَّذِينَ قَالَ لَهُمُ ٱلنَّاسُ إِنَّ ٱلنَّاسَ قَدْ جَمَعُواْ لَكُمْ فَٱخْشَوْهُمْ فَزَادَهُمْ إِيمَٰنًا وَقَالُواْ حَسْبُنَا ٱللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ ٱلْوَكِيلُ ١٧٣

This verse says: *When a group of people (Quraish) said to another group of people (Moslem) : 'Behold, a host has gathered around you and you should fear them', it only increased their faith and they answered: 'Allah is Sufficient for us; and what an excellent Guardian He is!'*

In this verse, there are two words that are repeated, but with different meanings, namely "people." If we only observe the linguistic structure, there is no difference between the two, because the meaning is, "everyone said to everyone." However, when we delve deeper into the reason for revelation of this verse, it is found that the first "people" refers to the disbelievers, while the second "people" refers to the believers. Of course, the meaning of the two is vastly different. Similarly, regarding the ruling on the permissibility or prohibition of alcohol, to determine whether alcohol is considered forbidden or merely disliked in today's time, it is necessary to look into when alcohol was prohibited, disliked, or allowed. As it is known, the verse that permits alcohol came during a time before Islam arrived, when people were not punished for drinking alcohol. This is in accordance with the verse in Surah Al-Maidah, verse 93:

لَيْسَ عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَعَمِلُوا۟ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ جُنَاحٌ فِيمَا طَعِمُوٓا۟ إِذَا مَا ٱتَّقَوا۟ وَّءَامَنُوا۟ وَعَمِلُوا۟ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ ثُمَّ ٱتَّقَوا۟ وَّءَامَنُوا۟ ثُمَّ ٱتَّقَوا۟ وَّأَحْسَنُوا۟ۗ وَٱللَّهُ يُحِبُّ ٱلْمُحْسِنِينَ ٩٣

Meaning: "There is no blame on those who believe and do good for what they had consumed before the prohibition, as long as they fear Allah, have faith, and do what is good, they believe and act virtuously, then become fully mindful of Allah and do righteous deeds. For Allah loves the good-doers."

The prohibition of drinking alcohol began only during prayer, starting with the revelation of Surah An-Nisa, verse 43:

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ لَا تَقْرَبُوا۟ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَأَنتُمْ سُكَٰرَىٰ حَتَّىٰ تَعْلَمُوا۟ مَا تَقُولُونَ وَلَا جُنُبًا إِلَّا عَابِرِى سَبِيلٍ حَتَّىٰ تَغْتَسِلُوا۟ۚ وَإِن كُنتُم مَّرْضَىٰٓ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَآءَ أَحَدٌ مِّنكُم مِّنَ ٱلْغَآئِطِ أَوْ لَٰمَسْتُمُ ٱلنِّسَآءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا۟ مَآءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا۟ صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا فَٱمْسَحُوا۟ بِوُجُوهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ كَانَ عَفُوًّا غَفُورًا ٤٣

Meaning: "O you who have believed, do not approach prayer while you are intoxicated until you know what you are saying... nor when you are in a state of janabah (sexual impurity), except when traveling on the road. And if you are ill, or on a journey, or one of you comes from relieving himself, or you have touched women and do not find any water, then perform tayammum with clean soil. Wipe your faces and your hands. Indeed, Allah is Pardoning and Forgiving."

This illustrates that the prohibition of alcohol was gradually introduced and not absolute at first, thus requiring an understanding of the context and the stages of its prohibition over time. Then, alcohol was truly made completely forbidden under all circumstances with the revelation of Surah Al-Maidah, verse 90,

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓا۟ إِنَّمَا ٱلْخَمْرُ وَٱلْمَيْسِرُ وَٱلْأَنصَابُ وَٱلْأَزْلَٰمُ رِجْسٌ مِّنْ عَمَلِ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنِ فَٱجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ٩٠

This verse says: *"O you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, (sacrificing on) altars to other than Allah, and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful."*

Without understanding the sequence of these verses, someone might be misled into thinking that alcohol is permissible to consume outside of prayer.

However, by recognizing that Surah Al-Maidah, verse 90, was revealed later than Surah An-Nisa, verse 43, the reader can understand that the general prohibition of alcohol is stronger than just the prohibition during prayer. This highlights the importance of understanding the context and progression of the rulings to avoid misinterpretations.

Table 2: Islamic Schoolar's Opinion on Asbab Al Nuzul

Category	Scholar	Key Points
CLASSICAL SCHOLARS	Al-Tabari	Asbāb al-nuzūl prevents misunderstanding of Qur'anic meanings
	Ibn Kathir	Provides historical and social context of revelation Helps classify verses: general vs. specific General rulings can apply in modern times
	Al-Qurtubi	Considers Asbāb al-nuzūl essential for understanding verses
CONTEMPORARY SCHOLARS	Sayyid Qutb	Qur'anic verses tied to historical context Teachings are eternal and timeless Understanding context helps apply Qur'an today
	Muhammad Abduh	Asbāb al-nuzūl explains implicit meanings Reveals the *wisdom* behind rulings Prevents narrow literal interpretations; supports contextual reading
	Fazlur Rahman	Asbāb al-nuzūl is part of the Double Movement method Step 1: Understand historical socio-cultural context Step 2: Derive dynamic principles for modern application A verse's law can be universal if its principle is universal
	Bintu Shati'	Rejects Asbāb al-nuzūl as an interpretive intermediary Prefers structural-textual analysis Believes Asbāb can obstruct full, holistic Qur'anic comprehension

The Urgency of Reason for Revelation:

The experts of Tafsir explain in detail the function of studying reason for revelation through the books they each authored. One of them, Ibn Daqiq Al-Id, stated that in order to understand a verse, knowledge of the reason behind its revelation is necessary. Ibn Taymiyyah also mentioned that reason for revelation can assist in analyzing a verse. If someone knows the cause of a verse's revelation, they will understand the implications of that verse. Meanwhile, Al-Wahidi emphasized that it is impossible to interpret a verse of the Qur'an without studying the reason for its revelation. Similarly, Sheikh Abu Fath Al-Qusyairi and Ahmad Amin also regarded reason for revelation as a method for understanding the verses of the Qur'an [22].

Table 2: Explanation islamic Schoolar about Asbab Al Nuzul

Category	Scholar	Explanation
Scholars Who Emphasize the Function of Asbāb al-Nuzūl	Ibn Daqiq al-'Id	Understanding a verse requires knowing the cause of its revelation.
	Ibn Taymiyyah	Knowing the reason for revelation clarifies the implications of a verse.
	Al-Wahidi	Impossible to interpret any verse correctly without studying its cause of revelation.
	Sheikh Abu Fath al-Qusyairi	Asbāb al-nuzūl is a method to understand Qur'anic verses.
	Ahmad Amin	Supports Asbāb al-nuzūl as an interpretive tool.

In addition to the points mentioned above, there are other benefits to understanding reason for revelation. One of them is to clarify the meaning of a verse. For example, in the law of *Sai* between Safa and Marwah, Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 158,

﴿ إِنَّ ٱلصَّفَا وَٱلْمَرْوَةَ مِن شَعَآئِرِ ٱللَّهِۖ فَمَنْ حَجَّ ٱلْبَيْتَ أَوِ ٱعْتَمَرَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِ أَن يَطَّوَّفَ بِهِمَا ۚ وَمَن تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ شَاكِرٌ عَلِيمٌ ١٥٨

This verse states: "*Indeed, Safa and Marwah are among the rites of Allah. So whoever performs Hajj or Umrah, there is no blame upon him for walking between them. And whoever does good voluntarily – indeed, Allah is Appreciative and Knowing.*"

Without understanding the reason behind the revelation of this verse, people might easily assume that Sai is merely a pre-Islamic Arab tradition that was adopted. This assumption arises because, in the time of the Prophet, the polytheists used to walk between the hills of Safa and Marwah, where statues named Isaf and Na'ilah were placed. However, when one understands the cause of the revelation, they realize that the difference between the Hajj practiced by Muslims and the pre-Islamic tradition lies in the statues. In Islam, a person performing Hajj simply walks around the two hills seven times, while in the pre-Islamic tradition, they would kiss the statues every time they passed by Safa and Marwah. Furthermore, another benefit is that it helps to define laws more specifically [23]. For example, in Surah Al-Mujadalah, verse 3;

﴿ إِنَّ ٱلصَّفَا وَٱلْمَرْوَةَ مِن شَعَآئِرِ ٱللَّهِۖ فَمَنْ حَجَّ ٱلْبَيْتَ أَوِ ٱعْتَمَرَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِ أَن يَطَّوَّفَ بِهِمَا ۚ وَمَن تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ شَاكِرٌ عَلِيمٌ ١٥٨

This verse says: "*Those who pronounce Zihar from their wives and then retract what they said must free a slave before the two can touch each other. This is what you are instructed to do. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do.*"

The reason for revelation of this verse is that a woman came to the Prophet complaining about a dispute with her husband. During the argument, her husband pronounced *Zihar*, which means he likened his wife to his mother, implying that they were not allowed to be intimate. The Prophet responded by declaring that they could not reconcile. However, the woman, *Khaula*, kept praying to Allah for an alternative solution because she had young children and could not bear to leave them, nor could she raise them on her own. Allah then commanded *Khaula* to either free a slave, fast for two months, or feed 60 needy people. All these options were very difficult for *Khaula*, so she asked the Prophet for a lighter punishment. The Prophet then gave Aus (Khaula's husband) wheat to distribute to 60 poor people, but there were no poorer people than Aus himself, so the Prophet told him to keep the wheat for himself.

Without understanding the reason for revelation, a poor person might not find a way out when they have committed *Zihar* against their wife. Alternatively, a wealthy person might take the law of Zihar too lightly and refuse to feed the poor. However, the verse specifies that for someone like Aus, who was unable to afford to feed 60 poor people, it was permissible for him to keep the wheat. On the other hand, a wealthy person still has to follow the law, which requires them to feed 60 poor people or face another penalty.

Table 3: Benefit of Asbab al Nuzul Explanation

Benefit	Example	Explanation
Clarifying Meaning of a Verse	Sai between Safa–Marwah (Surah Al-Baqarah 2:158)	• Without Asbāb, people may assume Sai is a pre-Islamic ritual. • Polytheists used to walk between Safa–Marwah and kiss idols Isaf & Na'ilah. • With Asbāb, the difference becomes clear: Islam keeps the walking ritual but removes idol worship.
Helping Define Legal Rulings	Zihar Law (Surah Al-Mujadalah 58:3)	• A woman (Khaula) complained about her husband Aus declaring Zihar. • Allah revealed options: free a slave, fast 2 months, or feed 60 poor people. • Aus was too poor; Prophet allowed him to keep the wheat meant for charity. • Shows flexibility: poor people may receive leniency; wealthy people must fulfill full penalty.
Legal Clarification	Zihar Scenario	• Without Asbāb, the poor might panic or see

		no solution.
		• The wealthy might misuse the ruling or refuse obligations.
		• Asbāb demonstrates how rulings adapt to individual circumstances.

The Relevance of Asbabun Nuzul in the Modern Era

In the book *Al-Itqan*, it is mentioned that there are no more than 400 verses whose reasons for revelation (asbabun nuzul) are known [24]. This number is very small compared to the total verses in the Qur'an, which amount to approximately 6,236 verses. One verse that has a well-known asbabun nuzul is Surah Al-Hujurat verse 6.

يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ إِن جَآءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌۢ بِنَبَإٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوٓاْ أَن تُصِيبُواْ قَوْمًۢا بِجَهَـٰلَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُواْ عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَـٰدِمِينَ ٦

This verse means, *"O you who have believed! If there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful,"* [25].

This verse was revealed concerning al-Walid bin 'Uqbah bin Abi Mu'ith. It has been reported to us by al-Hakim Abu 'Abdillah asy-Syadziahki, from Muhammad bin 'Abdillah bin Zakariyya asy-Shaibani, from Muhammad bin 'Abdirrahman ad-Da'uli, from Sa'id bin Mas'ud, from Muhammad bin Sabiq, from 'Isa bin Dinar, from al-Harith bin Dirar, who said: "I came to meet the Messenger of Allah, then he invited me to embrace Islam. I accepted Islam and confirmed it. Then he asked me to pay zakat, and I agreed. I said, 'O Messenger of Allah, allow me to return to my people so I can invite them to Islam and pay the zakat together. Whoever follows me, I will collect their zakat, and you send your envoy at the appointed time so I can deliver the zakat I have collected.'"

Then al-Harith bin Dirar collected zakat from his people. When the appointed time came—when the Messenger was supposed to send an envoy—the envoy did not come. Al-Harith then thought that Allah and His Messenger were angry with him. He called the leaders of his people and said, "Indeed, the Messenger of Allah set a time to send someone to collect the zakat I gathered. The Messenger of Allah cannot break a promise. I suspect that the Messenger is angry with me. Let us go to the Messenger of Allah."

Meanwhile, the Messenger sent al-Walid bin 'Uqbah to al-Harith to collect zakat from him and his companions. However, when al-Walid had traveled part of the way, he became afraid, returned, and said, "O Messenger of Allah, al-Harith refuses to give zakat and intends to kill me." Then the Messenger ordered the troops to fight al-Harith.
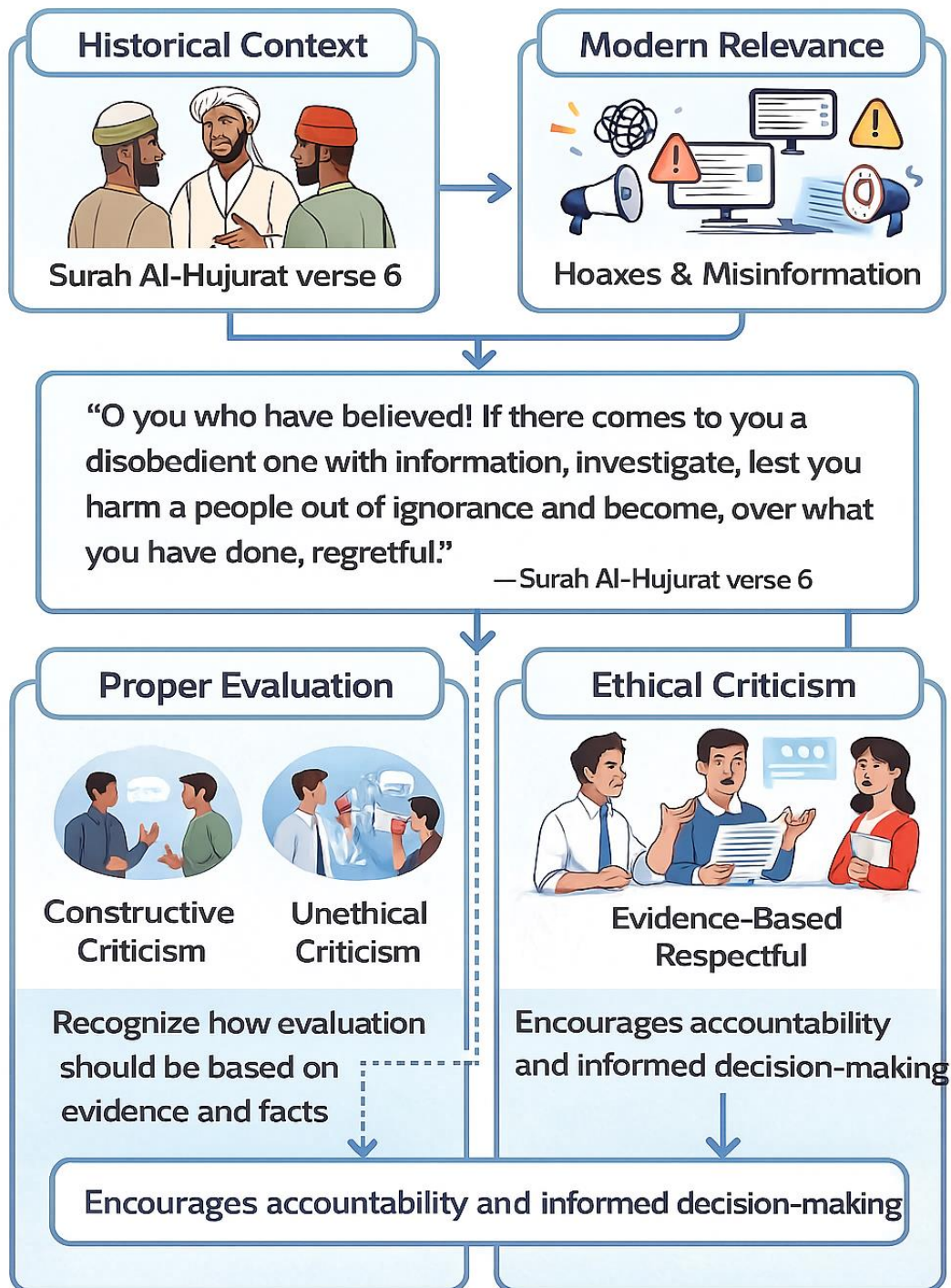
When al-Harith came with his people to meet the Messenger, he met the Messenger's troops who were about to fight him. The troops said, "Here is al-Harith." Al-Harith asked, "To whom are you sent?" They replied, "To you." "Why?" he asked. They answered, "Indeed, the Messenger of Allah sent al-Walid bin 'Uqbah to you, but he returned claiming you refused to pay zakat and intended to kill him."

Al-Harith said, "By the One who sent Muhammad with the truth, I never saw him, nor did he come to me." Then al-Harith met the Messenger, who asked, "Did you refuse to give zakat and intend to kill my envoy?" Al-Harith replied, "No, I never saw your envoy, and he never came to me. I only came here fearing that you would be angry due to the envoy's delay." Then Allah revealed verses in Surah Al-Hujurat verses 6 to 8 [26].

The wisdom behind the revelation of this verse is that people should not immediately believe news, particularly when it comes from unreliable or dishonest sources. In the modern context, this principle is relevant to the prevalence of hoaxes, misinformation, and slander on social media. For example, reports about economic indicators, such as unemployment rates [27], may be accurate but can be misinterpreted if the broader context is ignored, such as regional economic conditions[28] or population size [29].

This phenomenon highlights the importance of evaluating information carefully and critically. Constructive criticism plays a vital role in guiding societal and governmental progress. However, the effectiveness of criticism depends on how it is delivered [30]. Disrespectful or unverified criticism, such as personal attacks on social media or disorderly protests, may fail to produce positive outcomes and could contribute to social polarization. Society benefits from assessments based on evidence, facts, and contextual understanding rather than assumptions or incomplete information. Evaluations of leaders, policies, or institutions should rely on verified data and a thorough understanding of the relevant circumstances. As a society governed by law and structured processes, maintaining ethical standards in delivering criticism is essential. Criticism that is factual, respectful, and well-informed contributes to accountability and informed decision-making without undermining social cohesion or stability. Therefore, promoting a culture of evidence-based and ethical criticism is crucial for responsible civic engagement.

The Relevance of Asbabun Nuzul in the Modern Era

Historical Context

Surah Al-Hujurat verse 6

Modern Relevance

Hoaxes & Misinformation

"O you who have believed! If there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful."

—Surah Al-Hujurat verse 6

Proper Evaluation

Constructive Criticism

Unethical Criticism

Recognize how evaluation should be based on evidence and facts

Ethical Criticism

Evidence-Based Respectful

Encourages accountability and informed decision-making

Encourages accountability and informed decision-making

Conclusion

There are several ways to determine reason for revelation (the occasions or reasons for the revelation of a verse). First, by choosing the most authentic narration. For example, in Surah Al-Dhuha verse 1, the narration from Bukhari is chosen because it is considered *Sahih* (authentic), compared to the narration from al-Thabbari which is considered *Hasan* (good). Second, by selecting the narration that is more plausible (*rajih*), such as in Surah Al-Isra' verse 85, where the narration from Ibn Mas'ud is preferred because he met the Prophet directly, unlike Ibn Abbas who only heard from a Companion. Third, by combining narrations, as in Surah Ali Imran verse 37, which has two transmission chains that complement each other. Lastly, by compromising, as in Surah An-Nahl verse 126, which is believed to have been revealed three times due to different occasions of revelation.

From the conceptual perspective, reason for revelation has various impacts. According to classical scholars like Ibn Kathir, the ruling of a verse can be applied in the modern era if the verse was revealed for the general public, not just for specific Companions or the Prophet himself. Meanwhile, contemporary scholars like Sayyid Qutb state that the teachings of the Qur'an are eternal, so all its verses can be contextualized.

Furthermore, studying reason for revelation enables you to determine a fiqh (Islamic legal) ruling. For example, regarding the ruling on drinking alcohol, if one only reads Surah Al-Ma'idah verse 93, one might conclude that drinking alcohol is permissible, whereas the context of that revelation was for the Jahiliyyah (pre-Islamic ignorance) period. However, in the subsequent period, Surah An-Nisa verse 43 was revealed, forbidding being intoxicated before prayer. Then the prohibition on drinking alcohol was fully established with the revelation of Surah Al-Ma'idah verse 90.

The way to relate Qur'anic verses to the modern era is by understanding the wisdom behind their revelation. For instance, Surah Al-Hujurat verse 6 advises caution in forming judgments about others based solely on circulating information. In a contemporary context, this principle applies to evaluating news or reports critically, such as data on economic indicators like unemployment rates. While such reports may be accurate, they should be interpreted in context, taking into account relevant factors such as population size or regional circumstances. Additionally, in societies governed by law, it is important to maintain ethical standards and follow proper procedures when expressing criticism or opinions.

Based on the discussion above, this study provides a clearer understanding of the methods, urgency, and functions of reasons for revelation

in relation to Islamic law as well as issues in the modern era. The limitation of this research is that it only addresses economic and political issues in contemporary times, while many other important matters could also be explored through the wisdom implied in the reasons for revelation of Qur'anic verses, such as issues in geography, physics, chemistry, biology, and other modern sciences. It is hoped that future researchers can explore more current phenomena and relate them to the study of reasons for revelation.

Author Contributions

Ardelia Nihlah Ilahi: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Supervision, Project administration. **Dr. Sanuri**: Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Investigation. **Muhammad Zendy Zainuddin:** Proof reading, editor, and checking for grammar.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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