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The Construction of Non-Naskh Reasoning in Tafsir At-Tanwir: Methodological Shifts and Juridical Challenges

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Abstract

Purpose–The debate on intra-Qur’anic naskh has long been central to Qur’anic studies. While Muhammadiyah’s Manhaj Tarjih formally acknowledges naskh as a hierarchical legal principle for resolving conflicting evidences (ta’aruf), Tafsir At-Tanwir appears to adopt a different interpretive orientation. This study examines the construction of non-naskh reasoning within Tafsir At-Tanwir and evaluates the consistency of its application across different thematic verses such as theological, historical, and legal verses. **Design/methodology/approach**– This study employs a qualitative library-based research design using content analysis and critical-comparative methods. Primary data are drawn from two Muhammadiyah institutional works – Tafsir At-Tanwir and Manhaj Tarjih Muhammadiyah – while classical works on naskh, and Qur’anic interpretation literature serve as supporting sources. The analysis compares interpretive strategies employed in different thematic contexts to identify underlying methodological patterns. **Findings** – The findings reveal a significant methodological dualism in Tafsir At-Tanwir. In theological and historical discussions, the commentary adopts a modernist-rationalist approach influenced by Muhammad ‘Abduh and Rasyid Ridā, consistently rejecting intra-Qur’anic naskh through various approaches ranging from semantic deconstruction and the logic of revelatory chronology to linguistic analysis. However, this methodological consistency weakens when addressing practical jurisprudential issues, particularly in verses concerning family law and social relations, such as bequests to relatives, the waiting period for widows, and instructions regarding the Ahlulkitab. In these instances, the commentary tends to accommodate classical scholarly consensus or adopt a silent stance. **Research implications/limitations**– This study is limited to the first two published volumes of Tafsir At-Tanwir. Future research should examine subsequent volumes upon their release to determine whether this methodological inconsistency persists as the commentary progresses. Comparative studies with other contemporary institutional commentaries are also recommended to broaden understanding of non-naskh reasoning. **Originality/value**– This study contributes to contemporary Qur’anic studies by demonstrating that the rejection of intra-Qur’anic naskh in Tafsir At-Tanwir is neither absolute nor methodologically uniform. It introduces the concept of methodological dualism to explain the tension between Muhammadiyah’s purification-oriented interpretative ideals and its pragmatic engagement with classical Islamic jurisprudence, thereby enriching discussions on methodological consistency in modern Qur’anic interpretation.

Keywords: Tafsir At-Tanwir; nāsikh-mansūkh; Muhammadiyah.

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Introduction

The discourse on the existence of intra-Qur'anic *naskh* has been a long-standing debate within Qur'anic studies. Hermeneutically, this polemic stems from the diversity of interpretations regarding the lexicology of the root words *naskh* and *āyah*, particularly in QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 106. Mannā' bin Khalīl al-Qaṭṭān (1420 H), for example, positions this verse as the primary evidence that *naskh* is a factual reality in the Quran [1]. In a similar vein, Mūsā Ibrāhīm argues that this verse, along with QS. al-Naḥl [16]: 101, serves as clear evidence of the occurrence of *naskh*, to the extent that it requires no further interpretation [2]. This view also represents the position of the majority of interpreters, including al-Ṭabarī (310 H) and al-Qurṭubī (671 H), who consistently affirm the existence of *naskh* in their Qur'anic commentary works [3].

On the other hand, Abū Muslim Muḥammad bin Baḥr al-Isfahānī (934 CE) argued that *naskh* does not occur within the Quran, offering three possible meanings when explaining QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 106. First, *naskh* only applies to the laws of previous scriptures such as the Torah and the Gospel; second, it denotes the transmission of texts from the *Lauh Maḥfūz* to the books of the prophets; and third, the verse merely indicates a possibility without any factual realization. Furthermore, he classified cases considered to be *naskh*, such as the alteration of the *iddah* (waiting period) and the obligation of the secret counsel alms, as forms of legal specification or the expiration of a ruling's validity due to the disappearance of its underlying cause. For him, acknowledging the existence of *naskh* would undermine the nature of the Quran as a book that is impervious to falsehood or the abrogation of laws [4].

In addition, reformist-modernist figures such as Muḥammad 'Abduh and Rasyīd Riḍā also rejected the existence of *naskh* within the Quran by interpreting the word "*āyah*" in QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 106 as a miracle or proof of prophethood, rather than a legal verse. This argument is built upon a contextual analysis that compares the attribute of power at the end of the verse with the attribute of knowledge in QS. al-Naḥl [16]: 101. According to 'Abduh, power is more relevant to the substitution of physical miracles to answer the demands of the Jews than to the revision of sharia law. He asserted that the threat of "exchanging faith for disbelief" in the sequence of these verses is only logical if associated with the rejection of miracles. Furthermore, 'Abduh strongly rejected the assumption that the Prophet could forget the revelation because it contradicts the principle of the Prophet's infallibility [5].

In the Indonesian Islamic landscape, the reception of 'Abduh's modernist thought found its institutional articulation through Muhammadiyah [6]. However, in responding to the *nāsikh-mansūkh* discourse, this organization did

not necessarily follow in 'Abduh's footsteps of rejecting *naskh* absolutely. On a normative level, *Manhaj Tarjih Muhammadiyah* actually continues to position *naskh* as one of the valid methods for resolving apparent contradictions between textual evidences (*ta'āruḍ al-adillah*) [7]. Nevertheless, this methodological construction underwent a shift when implemented in *Tafsir At-Tanwir*, which is claimed to be Muhammadiyah's institutional Qur'anic commentary product.

In this commentary, the drafting team tends to re-affiliate with the theological views of 'Abduh, who negates the existence of *naskh* within the Quran by asserting that the *naskh* intended in QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 106 relates to the laws of previous prophets, rather than the abrogation of verse texts or rulings that are no longer applicable [8]. However, a critical reading of *Tafsir At-Tanwir* reveals an inconsistency in the drafting team's stance towards *naskh*. On the one hand, the book consistently rejects *naskh* in theological verses, such as those concerning the change of the *qibla* direction and fasting. On the other hand, this rejectionist stance appears to soften when dealing with family law verses, such as in the cases of bequests (wills) and the waiting period (*iddah*) for widows, where *Tafsir At-Tanwir* implicitly accommodates the view of the majority of scholars who accept *naskh*.

In the recent international discourse on contemporary Qur'anic interpretations, the study of institutional interpretation has begun to gain widespread attention. Various recent literature highlights that contemporary and institutional interpretive projects often face complex methodological tensions; such as the struggle to negotiate between the enduring authority of established interpretation traditions and the necessity to adapt to modern socio-political contexts [9]. In Indonesia, Muhammadiyah's *Tafsir At-Tanwir* represents a prime example of such an institutional project. While several previous studies have examined this commentary from various thematic perspectives [10], specific investigations into how classical doctrines like *nāsikh-mansūkh* are managed within Muhammadiyah's authoritative works remain an underexplored area.

The phenomenon of inconsistency between the normative foundation in *Manhaj Tarjih* and its application in *Tafsir At-Tanwir* demands further analysis to uncover how this phenomenon occurs. To date, this study has not found any research that critically examines the stance of *Tafsir At-Tanwir* regarding intra-Qur'anic *naskh*. This gap sparks the question: How is the non-*naskh* reasoning constructed within *Tafsir At-Tanwir*, and what methodological shifts and juridical challenges emerge from its application across different thematic verses?

This article aims to analyze the construction of non-*naskh* reasoning in *Tafsir At-Tanwir* and examine the resulting methodological shifts when confronting the pragmatic-juridical realities of Islamic law. Through a

comparative analysis of the interpretations concerning *naskh* in *Tafsir At-Tanwir* volumes 1 and 2 [11], this article argues that this inconsistency reflects the intellectual dynamics between the influence of 'Abduh's modernist idealism, which rejects the concept of intra-Qur'anic *nāsikh-mansūkh*, and the reality of the *Tafsir At-Tanwir*'s failure to consistently maintain its methodological idealism.

Method

This research is a qualitative library-based study. The primary data sources in this study encompass two Muhammadiyah institutional works, namely *Tafsir At-Tanwir* volumes 1 and 2 as a representation of its interpretative product, and *Manhaj Tarjih Muhammadiyah* as a representation of the organization's normative-methodological foundation in approaching the concept of *naskh*. Meanwhile, secondary sources include supporting literature such as other Qur'anic interpretation works, both produced within Muhammadiyah and elsewhere, as well as various scholarly literature related to the study of *nāsikh-mansūkh* and the broader dynamics of Islamic thought.

Data collection was conducted through documentation techniques by tracing and compiling the interpretations of the verses that serve as the objects of study. Data analysis was performed using a content analysis approach combined with a critical-comparative method. This analytical process was carried out in three stages: first, dissecting the theoretical construction of *naskh* and mapping its application within *Manhaj Tarjih Muhammadiyah* and *Tafsir At-Tanwir*; second, juxtaposing the normative level (theory) with the practical level (application) to uncover the inconsistencies that occurred; and third, examining the context of these interpretations and comparing them with other *nāsikh-mansūkh* discourses outside of *Tafsir At-Tanwir*.

To maintain objectivity and methodological transparency, this study establishes two primary analytical criteria for identifying 'nāsikh-mansūkh inconsistency' within *Tafsir At-Tanwir*. First, a contradiction between the normative-theoretical principle that rejects *naskh* and the actual interpretive practice that instead accommodates or allows such *naskh* claims to operate. Second, a shift in textual treatment; namely, when the semantic and historical deconstruction approach applied to certain verses appears to be softened or abandoned in others.

Result and Discussion

A. The Position of *Naskh* in Muhammadiyah's Legal Epistemology

In Muhammadiyah, the task of formulating religious guidelines is entrusted to the Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid [12], the institution that also compiled *Manhaj Tarjih Muhammadiyah* and *Tafsir At-Tanwir*. However, unlike *tarjih* as understood in the disciplines of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) and hadith, within Muhammadiyah, *tarjih* is interpreted as an intellectual activity synonymous with *ijtihad* (independent reasoning). Through the Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid, this concept is no longer limited to the selection of existing legal opinions, but rather actively responds to various new social and humanitarian issues that remain unanswered in classical *fiqh* literature [13].

Despite promoting a progressive spirit of *ijtihad*, in its practice of legal deduction (*istinbāt*), the Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid remains bound by established jurisprudential (*uṣūliyyah*) principles. Regarding the *naskh* discourse, *Manhaj Tarjih Muhammadiyah* functionally positions it as an instrument for resolving apparent contradictions between textual evidences (*ta'āruḍ al-adillah*). Based on the specific operational definitions formulated by the Majelis Tarjih, if *ta'āruḍ* occurs, the resolution steps are executed hierarchically: beginning with *al-jam'u wa al-taufiq* (defined as accepting all seemingly conflicting evidences while allowing freedom of choice or *takhyir* in their practical implementation), followed by *al-tarjih* (selecting the stronger evidence and discarding the weaker one), then *al-naskh* (applying the textual evidence that emerged chronologically later) as the third method, before finally resorting to the option of *al-tawaqquf* (suspending judgment on the conflicting texts by seeking out new evidences) [14].

The inclusion of *naskh* within this hierarchical structure of resolving *ta'āruḍ* affirms that, *de jure*, Muhammadiyah does not close the door to the existence of the *nāsikh-mansūkh* concept; rather, it makes it a valid tool for legal deduction (*istinbāt*). For instance, in the 2013 Fatwa Tarjih on the Ruling of Grave Visitation, the Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid utilized the hadith "*kuntu nahaitukum 'an ziyāratil-qubūr fazūrūhā...*" to demonstrate a functional shift in legal rulings [15]. By relying on this textually explicit statement of abrogation (*naṣṣ ṣarīḥ*), the fatwa directly operationalizes the mechanism of *naskh* by abrogating the initial prohibition of grave visitation—once enacted due to the proximity of the Jahiliyah era—and replacing it with absolute permissibility once the faith of the community had strengthened [16].

This reality indicates that the logic of *naskh* is practiced pragmatically as a valid instrument for establishing Islamic law. However, this juridical pragmatism, in turn, exhibits a contrasting pattern when Muhammadiyah shifts towards producing *Tafsir At-Tanwir*.

B. The Construction of *Naskh* Rejection in *Tafsir At-Tanwir*

In an effort to refute the applicability of intra-Qur'anic *naskh*, the Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid formulated a comprehensive argument by integrating various academic disciplines. To provide a holistic understanding before entering into a more detailed elaboration, the following is a map of the methodological framework they utilized to negate the theory:

Table 1. *Construction of Non-Naskh Reasoning in Tafsir At-Tanwir*

Target Verse	Context of the Issue	Anti-Naskh Approach/Argument
QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 106-108	The essence of the word <i>āyah</i> , which is considered the primary evidence for <i>naskh</i> .	Semantic & Historical: The word <i>āyah</i> means the physical miracles of previous prophets, not the legal verses of the Quran.
QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 142-144	The change of the <i>qibla</i> direction from Bait al-Maqdis (Al-Quds/Jerusalem) to the Kaaba (Mecca).	Uṣūl al-Fiqh: Utilizing the principle of <i>al-barā'ah al-aṣliyyah</i> (original state of non-obligation); this change is not an abrogation of a law, but the establishment of a new law.
QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 183-185	The obligation of Ramadan fasting and fasting on "certain days".	Linguistics: Syntactic reconstruction through the technique of <i>iḍmār</i> (implied/hidden subject) to unify the sequence of verses.
QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 219	The process of prohibiting <i>khamr</i> (intoxicants), which was implemented gradually.	Sociological-Educative: Replacing the <i>naskh</i> reasoning with the concept of <i>tadarruj tasyri'i</i> (gradual legislation) as a strategy for social education.
QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 221	The prohibition of interfaith marriage vs. the permissibility of marrying the People of the Book (<i>Ahlulkitab</i>).	Chronology (<i>Tartību al-Nuzūl</i>): It is illogical for an earlier revealed verse (al-Baqarah) to abrogate a later revealed verse (al-Ma'idah).
QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 284	Accountability for intentions and passing thoughts of the heart.	Inner Theology: Maintaining the verse to preserve the moral harmony between the outward and the inward aspects (anti-reductionism).

Source: *Author's synthesis based on Tafsir At-Tanwir and qualitative content analysis.*

Table 1 presents the principal Qur'anic passages in *Tafsir At-Tanwir* where the issue of *naskh* is discussed, together with the interpretive strategies employed to reject or reinterpret claims of *naskh*. Rather than relying on a single

methodological framework, *Tafsir At-Tanwir* demonstrates a pluralistic pattern of reasoning in which different approaches are selected according to the interpretative context of each verse. These approaches include semantic and historical analysis, principles of *Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, linguistic reconstruction, sociological-educative interpretation, chronological analysis (*Tartīb al-nuzūl*), and theological reasoning. This variation indicates that the rejection of *naskh* in *Tafsir At-Tanwir* is not based on an absolute denial of the concept itself, but on a contextual effort to reconcile apparently conflicting verses through interpretive methods that preserve their coherence and relevance. Consequently, the table illustrates that the construction of non-*naskh* reasoning in *Tafsir At-Tanwir* is characterized by methodological diversity rather than by the application of a single uniform principle.

1. Deconstruction of the Meaning of *Āyah* in QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 106

In contrast to *Manhaj Tarjih*, which still accommodates the concept of *nāsikh-mansūkh*, *Tafsir At-Tanwir*, as Muhammadiyah's official commentary product, actually exhibits a strong reformist-rationalist character in rejecting intra-Qur'anic *naskh*. This is evident when *Tafsir At-Tanwir* deconstructs the primary evidence frequently used by the majority of scholars as the foundation for the existence of *naskh*, namely QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 106.

In interpreting the verse, the *Tafsir At-Tanwir* Drafting Team firmly rejects the thesis that interprets the word *āyah* as a legal text of the Quran. Instead, *Tafsir At-Tanwir* limits the meaning of *āyah* merely to the "proof" or "miracle" of previous prophets, which was later replaced by a miracle more relevant to the time of Prophet Muhammad, namely the Quran. With this construction of meaning, *At-Tanwir* consciously invalidates the possibility of inter-verse legal abrogation within the Quran itself. Explicitly, *Tafsir At-Tanwir* adopts the rationalism of Muḥammad 'Abduh, who held the view that intra-Qur'anic *naskh* is an impossibility and contradicts the guarantee of the Quran's preservation in QS. al-Hijr [15]: 9 and QS. al-Qiyāmah [75]: 17 [17].

Historically, the anti-*naskh* stance demonstrated by *Tafsir At-Tanwir* in interpreting QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 106 is not a new phenomenon within Muhammadiyah. An examination of the *Tafsir Al-Qoerān* archives, compiled by the Ladjnah Tafsir and published by Hoofdbestuur Moehammadijah Madjlis Taman Poestaka, reveals that a similar rejection has been a deeply rooted tradition since the early era of the organization. In that book, Muhammadiyah had from the very beginning rejected the *naskh* of *sharia* by literally translating the term *āyah* in QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 106 as "proof" (*tanda boekti*) or "miracle" (*moe'djizat*), which was replaced by Allah to align with the "era of the advancement of intellect and humanity" (*zaman kemadjoean 'akal dan manoesia*)

[18]. The continuity of views between the Ladjnah Tafsir and the *Tafsir At-Tanwir* Drafting Team confirms that in the realm of Qur'anic interpretation, Muhammadiyah consistently maintains a tradition of theological purification that rejects *naskh* as the abrogation of verses or rulings within the Quran.

2. Nullifying *Naskh* through the Concept of *Al-Barā'ah Al-Aşliyyah*

The subsequent method employed by *Tafsir At-Tanwir* to reject the existence of *naskh* is through the rationalization of the historical dimension of Islamic legislation. If Muhammadiyah utilized semantic argumentation in the interpretation of QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 106, in this second method, the Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid enters the discourse of legal history (*tārīkh al-tasyrī'*) to prove that a change in law does not automatically equate to the abrogation of a text or the occurrence of *nāsikh-mansūkh*. A case study analyzed in this manner is the event of the change of the *qibla* direction from Bait al-Maqdis in the city of Al-Quds (Jerusalem) to the Masjidil Haram in the city of Mecca, as recorded in QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 142-144.

In narrating this history, by referring to the commentary of Ibn Kaşir, *Tafsir At-Tanwir* explains technically that during his time in Mecca, the Prophet performed prayers from a position south of the Kaaba so that he could simultaneously face both the Kaaba and Bait al-Maqdis, which was located to the north. *Tafsir At-Tanwir* also notes that the practice of facing Bait al-Maqdis lasted for a very long duration, approximately 15 years, from the early period of prophethood in Mecca until the second year of the Hijrah in Medina. From the inclusion of these historical details, it is evident how *Tafsir At-Tanwir* attempts to demonstrate that this practice was a long-established tradition in the religious life of the Prophet and his companions at that time [19].

Furthermore, *Tafsir At-Tanwir* asserts that the command to face Bait al-Maqdis has absolutely no basis in the revealed texts within the Quran. Therefore, *Tafsir At-Tanwir* argues that this practice was merely a continuation of the existing tradition in Medina prior to the Prophet's arrival (as well as the Prophet's previous practice in Mecca), or what in the principles of Islamic jurisprudence (*uşūl al-fiqh*) is referred to as *al-barā'ah al-aşliyyah* (the original state before the imposition of revealed legal obligations) [20]. By establishing that this former practice was not a product of revelation, the claim regarding the abrogation of a revealed law, or *naskh*, is automatically invalidated.

Based on this line of reasoning, the event that occurred at Masjid Bani Salmah, where the Prophet changed direction in the middle of the *Zuhr* prayer, is construed not as an act of *naskh*. *Tafsir At-Tanwir* explicitly rejects the view of Ibn Kaşir, who viewed this event as the abrogation of a legal ruling (*naskh*).

According to *Tafsir At-Tanwir*, the command in QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 144 to face the Masjidil Haram is the first revealed legal provision concerning the *qibla*; therefore, it does not abrogate any verse but merely replaces the non-revelatory traditional practice that had been observed up to that point.

By employing this historical rationalization, *Tafsir At-Tanwir* demonstrates its effort to reject the concept of intra-Qur'anic *naskh*. By shifting the status of the previous ruling to merely a practice prior to the revelation of the new law, they strive to maintain the premise that no single verse of the Quran is temporary in nature or can be annulled by another verse. This reinforces the endeavor of *Tafsir At-Tanwir* to position the Quran as an intact and consistent unit of revelation, free from internal contradictions from the beginning to the end of its descent.

However, although the historical rationalization built by *Tafsir At-Tanwir* appears coherent, there is a textual contradiction in QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 143 that tends to be overlooked by this anti-*naskh* reasoning. The verse states: 'And We did not make the *qibla* which you used to face except that We might make evident who would follow the Messenger...' The use of the verb *ja'alnā* (We made/established) clearly indicates a direct attribution of the legal establishment to Allah. Furthermore, the negation particle *mā* (did not) in this verse, coupled with *illā* (except), serves as an instrument of restriction (*ḥaṣr*) in Arabic grammatical rules [21].

As an interpretative methodology, ignoring this grammatical structure weakens the purification-oriented reasoning constructed by the *Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid*. This textual reality contradicts the argument of *Tafsir At-Tanwir*, which claims that the practice of facing Bait al-Maqdis was merely the adoption of a socio-cultural tradition in Medina. This is because QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 143 actually implies that the previous *qibla* was a legal scenario consciously established by revelation, rather than simply a state of absence of *sharia* (*al-barā'ah al-aṣliyyah*).

3. Negating *Naskh* through a Linguistic Approach and the Narrative Unity of the Text

The effort to reject *naskh* in *Tafsir At-Tanwir* is also demonstrated through a linguistic approach and grammatical (syntactic) reconstruction, particularly in the interpretation regarding the obligation of Ramadan fasting in QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 183-185. The debate among Qur'anic interpreters stems from the grammatical analysis of the phrase *syahrū Ramaḍān* (the month of Ramadan) in verse 185. *Tafsir At-Tanwir* outlines the first view, which posits this phrase as the subject of the sentence, a position directly predicated on the assumption that the *naskh* theory is applicable. This opinion claims that the command to fast on "certain days" in

verse 184 initially referred to the fasting of Ashura or fasting for three days each month (the white days), which was subsequently claimed to have been abrogated (subject to *naskh*) and replaced by the obligation of Ramadan fasting through the revelation of verse 185 [22].

In addressing this grammatical construction laden with the reasoning of legal abrogation, the Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid takes a critical stance by relying on the principle of Muḥammad Rasyīd Riḍā, which explicitly states that as long as the rulings within the Quran can still be understood without employing *naskh*, the abrogation approach is not to be used. *Tafsir At-Tanwir* assesses that the first opinion, which is oriented towards *naskh*, is an erroneous step because it actually severs the close connection among these fasting verses. Furthermore, by citing the critique of Abū ‘Alī through the exposition of Fakhrudīn al-Rāzī, the pro-*naskh* view is considered to have eliminated the essential impression that the month of Ramadan is the month in which fasting is obligated [23].

As a solution, *Tafsir At-Tanwir* prefers and adopts the grammatical construction of the second opinion. This opinion positions the phrase *syahru Ramaḍān* not as the subject of a new sentence, but rather as the predicate of an omitted (implied through *iḍmār*) subject, where the unmentioned subject textually refers back to the phrase “certain days” in verse 184. Through this syntactic analysis, the three verses (183, 184, and 185) are no longer positioned as mutually abrogating, but are instead linked into a single, cohesive, and mutually reinforcing narrative structure: that fasting is obligated (183), that the obligation falls on certain days (184), and that those certain days are the month of Ramadan (185) [24]. Through this linguistic approach, the integrity of the Quran’s message can be maintained without requiring the operationalization of the *naskh* theory.

Contextualized within the broader landscape of Qur’anic interpretation, *Tafsir At-Tanwir*’s effort to employ a linguistic approach to avoid *naskh* in this cluster of fasting verses is apparently not a novel phenomenon. Similar reasoning can also be found in *Tafsir al-Jalālain*. Interestingly, Jalāluddīn al-Suyūṭī, who is generally known as a scholar supportive of the *nāsikh-mansūkh* concept, also utilized grammatical analysis when dealing with this sequence of fasting verses. Although the focus of his analysis differs from that of *At-Tanwir*, namely, by implicitly inserting the particle *lā* (not) into the phrase *wa ‘alāllāzīna yuṭīqūnahū* so that its meaning shifts to “those who are *not* capable” [25], al-Suyūṭī’s objective remained the same: to ensure that this verse could still be understood and practiced (i.e., the permissibility of paying *fidyah*) without needing to be declared annulled by the rule of *naskh*.

This phenomenon indicates that *Tafsir At-Tanwir*’s approach of using grammatical analysis to reject *naskh* has a precedent in the classical tradition of

Qur'anic interpretation. The presence of a similar approach by an interpreter who generally accepts the *naskh* theory, such as al-Suyūṭī, indicates that resolving the meanings of seemingly contradictory verses through grammatical reconstruction is a common interpretation method employed when dealing with the linguistic complexity of the Quran.

4. Nullifying *Naskh* through the Concept of *Tadarruj* in the Prohibition of *Khamr*

In interpreting QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 219, *Tafsir At-Tanwir* begins its exposition by dissecting the etymological meanings of *khamr* (intoxicants) and *maysir* (gambling), while simultaneously affirming the legal position of both. Furthermore, the Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid explains that the process of prohibiting *khamr* was not carried out all at once but rather was revealed through several stages. One crucial phase during this period was the prohibition of performing prayers while in a state of intoxication (QS. al-Nisa [4]: 43). This restriction practically succeeded in minimizing the frequency of *khamr* consumption among the companions. Considering the strict consideration of prayer times, the Muslims at that time consumed *khamr* increasingly rarely, making them mentally much more prepared when they later received the absolute command of prohibition [26].

Interestingly, in expounding the overall dynamics of the revelation of the *khamr* verses, *Tafsir At-Tanwir* does not use the terminology of *naskh* at all. By including narrations affirming that the prohibition process went through four stages, from the most lenient to the most severe, the Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid implicitly negates the *naskh* reasoning proposed by the majority of Qur'anic interpreters. Instead of framing it as a process of legal abrogation, *Tafsir At-Tanwir* construes this reality as a sociological-educative method and strategy. This gradualism is positioned purely as a form of education to progressively alter bad habits deeply rooted in society, thereby making it easier for the Muslim community to abandon them completely [27].

Nevertheless, there is an epistemological gap that escapes the elaboration of *Tafsir At-Tanwir* in interpreting this verse, namely the explanation of how this gradualism (*tadarruj*) is a concept distinct from *nāsikh-mansūkh*. This is because other interpreters actually adopt the concept of *tadarruj* as a form of *naskh* that is not only carried out once in a single legal case but multiple times, with the underlying wisdom (*hikmah*) being that the ruling could be accepted by the Muslim community [28]. In fact, considering the consistency of its rejection of *naskh* in the preceding verses, *Tafsir At-Tanwir* had the room to explore this verse through a linguistic approach. For instance, by rationalizing that this verse, from the very beginning, does not contradict the absolute prohibition, but merely

highlights its harmful aspects. With such a linguistic intervention, this concept of gradualism would possess a stronger argumentative foundation and be detached from the theory of *naskh*.

5. Rejecting *Naskh* through the Logic of the Chronology of Revelation (*Tartibu al-Nuzūl*)

The critical reasoning of *Tafsir At-Tanwir* in rejecting the *naskh* theory is also demonstrated through the use of a historical-chronological approach, or the sequence of revelation (*tartibu al-nuzūl*). This argumentation can be seen when the Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid responds to the legal debate surrounding the prohibition of marrying polytheist (*musyrik*) women in QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 221, which is often contrasted with the provision permitting marriage to the Women of the Book (*Ahlulkitab*) in QS. al-Ma'idah [5]: 5. *Tafsir At-Tanwir* explains that some scholars generalize the meaning of "*musyrik*" to include *Ahlulkitab* (Jews and Christians), reasoning that these groups also associate partners with Allah (for example, by considering 'Uzair or 'Isa as the son of God). As a consequence of this generalization, this group of scholars assesses that the ruling of permissibility in Surah al-Ma'idah has the status of *mansūkh* (abrogated) by the absolute prohibition in Surah al-Baqarah.

Before dismantling the weakness of this abrogation theory from a historical perspective, the Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid first conducts a terminological deconstruction. *Tafsir At-Tanwir* asserts that the Quran consistently differentiates between the entity of the "*musyrik*" (idolaters who do not possess a scripture) and the "*ahlulkitab*" (People of the Book). This distinction is evidenced through other verses, such as QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 105 and QS. al-Bayyinah [98]: 1, where Allah uses the conjunction '*ataf*' to separate the mention of these two groups. By separating these two categories, *Tafsir At-Tanwir* begins to unravel what has long been used as the rationale by the majority of scholars to pit QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 221 against QS. al-Ma'idah [5]: 5 [29].

The rejection of the *naskh* theory in this case is then affirmed by relying on the historical logic of the verses' revelation. *Tafsir At-Tanwir* asserts that the *naskh* opinion is highly difficult to accept because it directly contradicts the chronological facts of the Quran's revelation. Historically, Surah al-Baqarah was revealed much earlier than Surah al-Ma'idah, which is even agreed upon by the majority of scholars as the last surah to be revealed. Straightforwardly, *At-Tanwir* dismantles the *naskh* claim by stating that "it is illogical for a verse revealed earlier to abrogate the ruling of a verse that comes after it" [30]. Through this chronological argumentation, the Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid appears to be attempting to demonstrate the methodological flaw of the legal abrogation

theory, which is often forced to operate without regard for the historical sequence of revelation.

6. Rejecting *Naskh* to Preserve the Inner Dimension and Universalism of *Sharia*

Another method in rejecting *naskh* utilized by *Tafsir At-Tanwir* is through theological purification aimed at maintaining the depth of inner meaning and the universality of the Quran's message. The primary concern is that the haphazard use of the abrogation theory could lead to the annulment of *sharia* principles, which ultimately reduces religion to mere outward physical practices devoid of a deep conscientious touch.

The defense of this inner dimension is evident in the discussion regarding accountability for intentions or passing thoughts of the heart in QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 284. *Tafsir At-Tanwir* points out that a large number of interpreters consider this portion of the verse to have been subjected to *naskh* (its provision annulled) by the word of Allah in verse 286. This majority view is based on the assumption that punishing humans for what they think in their hearts is something beyond the limits of human capability. However, the Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid strongly rejects this *naskh* theory by specifically citing the refutation argument from Muḥammad Rasyīd Riḍā. It is asserted that eliminating the assessment of the heart's actions is tantamount to abrogating the essence of *sharia*, resulting in the reduction of religion solely into an "outward physical religion that lacks the depth of conscientious and inner touch" [31].

Therefore, instead of abrogating the provision in verse 284, *Tafsir At-Tanwir* maintains the existence of the verse as the foundation of Islamic ethics, combining the nobility of action with the nobility of intention. By quoting Ibn Taymiyyah and several hadiths, *At-Tanwir* asserts that recognizing the functional significance of intention endows human actions with moral importance. The rejection of *naskh* in this case is rooted in the Qur'anic principle that strongly emphasizes the harmony between a person's external appearance and their inner condition. For Muhammadiyah, the ruling regarding accountability for intentions must be preserved to prevent a divergence between outward behavior and the inner state. This is because such a "split personality" can ultimately lead to disharmony with the environment [32].

C. Inconsistency of Interpretation through the Accommodation of *Naskh* in Several Cases

If, in verses with historical and theological dimensions, *Tafsir At-Tanwir* demonstrates a purification reasoning that firmly rejects the *naskh* theory, a different approach is actually seen when *At-Tanwir* deals with verses concerning family law (*al-aḥwāl al-syakhṣiyyah*) and inter-religious social dynamics. In responding to verses that have direct implications for the social order of society, the resistance of the Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid towards the concept of legal abrogation appears to soften. A methodological shift occurs, moving from a highly idealist-reformist stance to an accommodative, pragmatic, or even silent position towards the jurisprudential (*fiqh*) tradition adopted by the majority. This inconsistency in interpretation can be seen in the discussion of verses concerning the provisions of bequests (*waṣiyyah*) to relatives, the waiting period (*'iddah*) for widows, and the moral instructions regarding the apostasy of the People of the Book.

1. The Softening of Resistance towards *Naskh* regarding the Provision of Kinship-Based Bequests (*Waṣiyyah*)

QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 180 contains a provision obligating someone who feels the signs of approaching death and leaves behind substantial wealth to make a bequest (*waṣiyyah*) to their parents and close relatives in a recognized and equitable manner (*ma'ruf*). In the discourse of Qur'anic interpretation, the legal standing of this verse has sparked differing opinions among scholars because it was revealed before the verses concerning inheritance (*āyāt al-mawārīs*). *Tafsir At-Tanwir* summarizes this debate by mapping out three primary views. The first group considers this verse to be general in nature but specific in application, meaning the obligation to make a bequest applies only to parents who do not receive an inheritance share, such as due to a difference in religion. The second group asserts that this verse has been subjected to *naskh* by the inheritance verses, thus changing the legal status of making a bequest from obligatory to recommended (*sunnah*). Meanwhile, the third group argues that this verse is not abrogated, but rather merely explicated or detailed by the inheritance verses [33].

In responding to this debate, the Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid demonstrates a different stance from their staunch rejection of *naskh* in the previously discussed verses. Instead of maintaining the absolute applicability of QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 180 through grammatical arguments or rationalization, *Tafsir At-Tanwir* actually affirms the view of the majority of interpreters, which aligns with the opinion of Ibn 'Abbas. *At-Tanwir* explicitly asserts that in the early days of Islam, the verse was indeed used as the basis for legal rulings obligating bequests to parents and

relatives, until the revelation of QS. al-Nisa [4]: 7. Assertively, *Tafsir At-Tanwir* states: "That verse abrogated (annulled the ruling of) the bequest verse (QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 180)." Consequently, it is affirmed that relatives who have acquired inheritance rights can no longer receive a bequest, a provision that is also based on the hadith prohibiting bequests for heirs [34].

The explicit acknowledgment of the applicability of the *naskh* theory in this case reveals an inconsistency in the reasoning of the Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid. The purification reasoning previously utilized to reject the existence of intra-Qur'anic *naskh* appears to collapse when confronted with the established legal order within society. The acceptance of the abrogation of this mandatory bequest (*waṣiyyah*) ruling indicates that *Tafsir At-Tanwir* assumes a more pragmatic stance in accommodating the stability of inheritance laws long practiced by the majority of the Muslim community, even though this requires them to compromise with the *naskh* theory, which they systematically avoid in other sections.

Furthermore, *Tafsir At-Tanwir*'s explicit acceptance of *naskh* in the bequest verse reveals a fundamental departure from both classical interpretation alternatives and Muhammadiyah's own legal epistemological framework. As established in *Manhaj Tarjih*, the resolution of apparent textual conflicts (*ta'āruḍ al-adillah*) strictly requires a hierarchical procedure where *al-jam'u wa al-tauḥīq* must take precedence over *al-naskh*. In the case of QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 180, a viable *al-jam'u* pathway was readily available. As highlighted by al-Ṭabarī in *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 180 and the inheritance verses (*āyāt al-mawārīs*) could harmoniously coexist without declaring either abrogated [35].

This harmonizing logic is further elaborated in *al-Aṣlān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* by Muḥammad 'Abd al-Mun'im al-Qi'ī, who demonstrates that the relationship between these verses is not one of *naskh*, but of legal specification (*takhsīṣ*), wherein the bequest obligation remains active for non-heir relatives [36]. By bypassing this epistemologically mandatory first step of *al-jam'u* – which directly mirrors its own *Manhaj Tarjih* – and prematurely surrendering to the *naskh* claim, *Tafsir At-Tanwir* exhibits an internal methodological contradiction that compromises its non-*naskh* project.

2. Accommodating *Naskh* in the Case of the Waiting Period (*'iddah*) for Widows

The methodological inconsistency of *Tafsir At-Tanwir* is also evident when responding to the provision regarding the waiting period (*'iddah*) for women whose husbands have passed away. QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 234 establishes the mandatory *'iddah* period as four months and ten days. In dissecting this verse, *Tafsir At-Tanwir* presents the view of the majority of interpreters, who state that this verse has abrogated the provision found in QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 240. Verse 240 previously contained an obligation for a husband who feels his death is approaching to make a bequest (*waṣīyyah*) ensuring that his wife is provided with maintenance and a place of residence for one year. According to the majority view cited by *At-Tanwir*, this one-year *'iddah* provision was a pre-Islamic Arab custom that was subsequently annulled and absolutely replaced by the period of four months and ten days upon the revelation of verse 234 [37].

Interestingly, although *Tafsir At-Tanwir* also presents alternative opinions from Mujāhid and Abū Muslim who reject the occurrence of *naskh*, arguing that the two verses speak in different contexts (verse 234 regulates the wife's obligation to observe *'iddah*, while verse 240 regulates the husband's obligation to make a bequest), the Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid does not mount an aggressive defense of this rejection. This attitude is in stark contrast to their stance on previous verses (such as in the case of accountability for intentions in QS. 2: 284), where they utilized Rasyīd Riḍa's principle to frontally attack the *naskh* theory. In the case of the widow's *'iddah*, *At-Tanwir* actually maintains a neutral stance toward the *naskh* claim and immediately shifts the focus of its discussion to more practical, technical *fiqh* issues: namely, the debate between the majority and Ibn 'Abbas concerning the intersection of a widow's *'iddah* and the *'iddah* of a pregnant woman [38].

The attitude of allowing the *naskh* claim to stand without the kind of resistance seen in their previous stances can be viewed as an accommodative gesture by *Tafsir At-Tanwir* toward *naskh* within the Quran. The Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid appears to recognize that in the realm of family law, the *'iddah* provision of four months and ten days has become a jurisprudential (*fiqh*) consensus widely practiced by the Muslim community. Therefore, in order to maintain the stability and certainty of practical law within society, *Tafsir At-Tanwir* opts for a pragmatic approach. They prefer to soften their ideological resistance to the *naskh* theory rather than having to reconstruct the already established *fiqh* framework concerning a widow's *'iddah*.

3. *Tawaqquf* Regarding *Naskh*: Stance Toward the Apostasy of the People of the Book

The inconsistency of the *naskh* reasoning in *Tafsir At-Tanwir* is not only recorded through pragmatic acceptance of *fiqh* rulings but is also reflected through a stance of silence (*tawaqquf*) on verses that have traditionally been at the center of the *naskh* debate. This is clearly visible in the interpretation of QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 109. This verse records the socio-historical conditions of the early Islamic period, where the Muslim community, still a minority, faced threats from among the People of the Book (*Ahlulkitab*). Driven by sentiments of envy, these groups sought to turn the believers back toward apostasy. In response to this reality, the verse provides a moral instruction commanding Muslims to forgive and overlook their actions (*fa'fū waṣfahū*).

In interpreting this verse, *Tafsir At-Tanwir* conveys the *munasabah*, or the relationship between this verse and the preceding one. If in the previous verse Allah issued a prohibition to the believers against listening to what the Jews said regarding their opinions on Islam, then in this verse, Allah explains the reasons behind that prohibition. Furthermore, in the sub-section interpreting this verse and verse 110, emphasis is placed on the fact that both verses contain guidance on the Muslim stance toward such matters [39].

In the classical tradition, the command to “forgive” in this verse is consistently claimed by the majority of scholars (*jumhur*) as having the status of *mansūkh* (abrogated) following the revelation of the verses regarding warfare. Interestingly, in contrast to *Tafsir al-Manār*, which still addresses the various opinions of interpreters regarding the existence of *naskh-mansūkh* in this verse [40], *Tafsir At-Tanwir* does not discuss the matter at all in its interpretation of this verse. This further reinforces the inconsistency of *Tafsir At-Tanwir*, which on one hand positions *Tafsir al-Manār* as its primary compass in rejecting *naskh*, yet on the other hand fails to adopt a defensive stance as sharp as *al-Manār*'s to maintain the legal validity of the provision in this verse concerning apostasy.

This stands in stark contrast to the aggressiveness of the Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid when dismantling *naskh* claims in the case of fasting (QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 183-185), where the Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid dissected syntactic and grammatical details to protect the verses from a verdict of abrogation [41]. Ideally, the same linguistic sensitivity could have been applied to verse 109, ensuring that the emphasis on the Prophet's early Islamic stance toward the *Ahlulkitab* did not contradict the decisions taken during the conflict with Banū Quraizah. Moreover, *Tafsir al-Rāzī*, whose authority was directly referenced by *At-Tanwir* in the fasting case, already provides arguments rejecting *naskh* through a linguistic approach for QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 109 [42]. The disregard for this

available argumentative framework further proves that *Tafsir At-Tanwir*'s reasoning for rejecting *naskh* has not yet been applied comprehensively or exhaustively throughout all sections of its interpretation.

However, the phenomenon of inconsistency in *Tafsir At-Tanwir* by rejecting *naskh* in theological verses but accommodating classical consensus in 'iddah and another family law verse turns out to resemble the pattern of institutional Qur'anic interpretation in other contexts. The study by Achmad Yafik Mursyid and Aeni Nahdiyati shows that Turkey's official interpretation *Kur'an Yolu* and Indonesia's *Al-Qur'an dan Tafsirnya* also face a similar dilemma; striving on the one hand to uphold a theological idealism that emphasizes the consistency of revelation, while on the other hand having to adjust to the practical needs of society and the orthodoxy of law [43].

Conclusion

An examination of the non-*naskh* reasoning in *Tafsir At-Tanwir* reveals significant methodological shifts and juridical challenges. On one hand, when dealing with verses of theological and historical dimensions, the Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid adopts a purification style aligned with the modernist rationalism of Muḥammad 'Abduh to reject the existence of intra-Qur'anic *naskh*. They aggressively employ various approaches, ranging from semantic deconstruction and the logic of revelatory chronology (*tartību al-nuzūl*) to linguistic analysis, to safeguard the integrity of the Quran from accusations of internal contradiction.

However, this methodological idealism fails to be maintained consistently when the commentary confronts verses on family law (*al-aḥwāl al-syakhṣiyyah*) and social relations. In cases such as the mandatory kinship bequest – *where it prematurely bypasses its own Manhaj Tarjih hierarchy that prioritizes al-jam'u wa al-taufiq* –, the waiting period ('iddah) for widows, and the moral instructions for dealing with the apostasy efforts of the *Ahlulkitab*, *Tafsir At-Tanwir* instead demonstrates instability. Without significant resistance, they accommodate the *naskh* claims of the majority of scholars, or at the very least adopt a stance of silence (*tawwaquf*), thereby disregarding the methodological instruments they utilized elsewhere.

Ultimately, this study concludes that instead of presenting a unified structure, the construction of non-*naskh* reasoning in *Tafsir At-Tanwir* is trapped in methodological shifts and vulnerability when confronting practical realities. This phenomenon confirms a methodological flaw in formulating interpretation; the purification project of rejecting *naskh* fails to be applied comprehensively and collapses when faced with the established practical *fiqh* legal order within the community. Moreover, this research demonstrates that maintaining strict

methodological consistency in Qur'anic interpretation remains a robust challenge for modernist interpretive projects within institutional religious settings. It underscores the complex relationship between theological idealism and legal pragmatism, particularly when progressive interpretations collide with the deeply rooted practical realities of religious communities.

Building upon the findings of this study, several critical avenues for future research emerge. First, as the current analysis is confined to the first two volumes, future studies should critically examine the subsequent volumes of *Tafsir At-Tanwir* upon their release. Such longitudinal examination is vital to determine whether the methodological inconsistency persists or evolves as the commentary progresses. Second, broader investigations into institutional approaches to Qur'anic interpretation are highly recommended. Exploring the intersection between organizational ideology, socio-political dynamics, and interpretative methodology will significantly enrich the academic discourse on the complexities of contemporary institutional interpretation.

Author Contributions

A. Al Majid acted as the principal investigator and lead author, conceptualizing the study. Trisna Yudistira and Faiz Hidayatullah contributed significantly to data collection and analysis.

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- [13] Syamsul Anwar, *Manhaj Tarjih Muhammadiyah*, p. 9.
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- [16] See: Yahyā bin Syaraf al-Nawawī, *Al-Minhāj Syarḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bin al-Ḥajjāj*, (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāṣ al-'Arabī, 1392 H), vol. 7, p. 46, where he explicitly categorizes this tradition as a text that explicitly combines both *al-nāsikh* (the abrogating) and *al-mansūkh* (the abrogated) simultaneously.
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- [38] Tim Penyusun Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, *Tafsir At-Tanwir Jilid 2*, pp. 282-283.
- [39] Tim Penyusun Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, *Tafsir At-Tanwir Jilid 1*, p. 271.
- [40] In interpreting this verse, *Tafsīr al-Manār* employs a linguistic approach to the phrase *fa'fū wasfaḥū*, interpreting it more broadly as an instruction to counter the envy of others with noble character. Furthermore, this position is strengthened by citing other commentators who argue that if this command is directed toward the *Ahlulkitab*, it constitutes *tawqīt* (temporal specification) and cannot be validly classified as *mansūkh*. See: Muḥammad Rasyīd bin 'Alī Riḍā bin Muḥammad Syams al-Dīn bin Muḥammad Bahā' al-Dīn bin Munlā 'Alī Khalīfah al-Qalamūnī al-Ḥusaini, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Ḥakīm (Tafsīr al-Manār)*, (Al-Hai'ah al-Miṣriyyah al-'Āmmah li al-Kitāb, 1990), vol. 1, p. 347. Compare with: Makī bin Abī Ṭālib, *Al-izāh li Nāsikh al-Qur'ān wa Mansūkhuhu*, (Jeddah: Dār al-Manārah, 1986), p. 125.
- [41] Tim Penyusun Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, *Tafsir At-Tanwir Jilid 1*, p. 116.
- [42] Muḥammad bin 'Umar al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, vol. 3, (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turās al-'Arabī, 2000), p. 652.
- [43] Achmad Yafik Mursyid and Aeni Nahdiyati, "State-Sponsored Qur'anic

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