



QiST: Journal of Quran and Tafseer Studies

ISSN (Online): 2828-2779

Received: 15-03-2025, Revised: 13-04-2025

Accepted: 15-04-2025, Published: 24-04-2025

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.23917/qist.v4i1.9165>

The Concept of Asbabun Nuzul in the Context of Warfare: A Tafsir Ahkam Study of QS. Al-Baqarah: 190–193 Based on Tafsir Al-Qurtubi

**Muhammad Syamsul Munir¹; Regita Dyah Ramadhani²;
Masruhan³, Ibrahim Nasrullah Kholid⁴**

Abstract

The Concept of Asbabun Nuzul in the Context of Warfare: A Tafsir Ahkam Study of QS. Al-Baqarah: 190–193 Based on Tafsir Al-Qurtubi, explores the concept of asbabun nuzul and legal rulings (ahkam) within the war-related verses of the Qur'an. Focusing on Al-Qurtubi's tafsir, the research analyzes the historical and socio-political contexts surrounding the revelation of QS. Al-Baqarah: 190–193. Utilizing a library-based method and historical-contextual approach, it investigates both the background of revelation and its legal implications. Al-Qurtubi's interpretation highlights key Islamic principles in warfare, such as justice, self-defense, and the prohibition of transgression, especially toward non-combatants. The findings affirm that these verses provide ethical guidance in protecting civilians and limiting harm. The study also discusses the contemporary relevance of these principles in the framework of international law, particularly concerning the right to self-defense and civilian protection. Ultimately, this research contributes to the ongoing discourse on Islamic jurisprudence and its application in modern global contexts, emphasizing the value of classical exegesis in shaping fair international policies.

Keywords: Asbabun Nuzul; War Verses; Law; Tafsir al-Qurtubi.

¹ Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel, Surabaya, Jawa Timur, Indonesia, Corresponding Email: munirsyamsul49@gmail.com, Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-5680-6923>

² Institut Agama Islam Negeri Ponorogo, Jawa Timur, Indonesia, Email: regitaadyah29@gmail.com, Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-1494-2842>

³ Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel, Surabaya, Jawa Timur, Indonesia, Email: masruhan@uinsby.ac.id, Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-0259-1278>

⁴ Jaamia Binoria Aalamia, Pakistan, Email: nashrulkholid195@gmail.com, Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-2454-6202>

Introduction

The Qur'an was revealed in response to events or questions that occurred during the time of the Prophet Muhammad. As Al-Wahidi said, "It is impossible to understand the interpretation of a verse without knowing its story or knowing the explanation of the reason for its revelation" [1]. Therefore, the Qur'anic text has been a highly relevant subject for interpretation throughout history and has provided space for the development of schools of interpretation [2]. A correct understanding of the context of *asbabun nuzul* is very important in understanding the meaning of the verses of the Qur'an [1]. *Asbabun nuzul* in other words is the science that reveals the causes of the revelation of the verses of the Qur'an to be a tool to interpret the meaning and message contained therein, especially in the case of verses related to war.

Verses related to war in the Qur'an in QS. Al-Baqarah: 190-193, often lead to various interpretations and understandings, especially in the context of modern warfare [2]. These verses contain prohibitions against unlawful killing and overreaching in warfare, as well as giving orders for jihad in the way of Allah Swt [3]. However, the problems that arise in the context of warfare today involve various groups, such as women, children, and even religious leaders who are not involved in the conflict [4]. Therefore, an understanding of the *asbabun nuzul* is important to provide a clear context for these verses, and how the values contained in the verse can be applied in modern warfare that is increasingly complex.

Although many studies have examined the law of war in Islam from a fiqh or historical perspective, specific studies on legal interpretation (*Tafsir Ahkam*) in the context of war are still relatively limited [3]. *Tafsir Al-Qurtubi* as one of the main references in *Tafsir Ahkam* has not been studied in depth in relation to the law of war based on QS. Al-Baqarah: 190-193. Thus, providing a gap in the relevance of *al-Qurtubi's* interpretation of these verses based on the law of war can be correlated with the current law of war [4].

Seeing from the background explanation above, the author is interested in taking the title "The Concept of *Asbabun Nuzul* in the Context of Warfare: A *Tafsir Ahkam* Study of QS. Al-Baqarah: 190-193 Based on *Tafsir Al-Qurtubi*"

Tafsir Ahkam, as a branch of tafsir science that focuses on explaining the laws contained in the Qur'an, has an important role in exploring and contextualizing verses related to war [5]. In this case, the interpretation of Imam Abdillah Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Ibn Abi Bakr Al-Qurtubi, especially in his

monumental work "*Al-Jami' Ahkam Al Qur'an*" provides an in-depth view of these verses [5]. Therefore, it is very important to analyze the interpretation of al-Qurtubi in order to examine the relevance and application of the law of marriage contained in QS. Al-Baqarah: 190-193 in the context of modern warfare, as well as finding solutions to bridge the gap between Islamic teachings and the reality of warfare today.

Through the study in this discussion, it is expected to provide benefits, among others; 1). Exploring more about asbabu Nuzul in the context of war studies on Surah Al-Baqarah verses 190-193, 2). Explaining the interpretation of QS. Al-Baqarah 190-193 in the interpretation of al-Qurtubi about the verses of war 3) [6]. The relevance of the interpretation of al-Qurtubi's interpretation to Islamic law and Contemporary and add to the treasures of the study of asbabun nuzul verse and understanding of the meaning of war quoted by classical interpretations that can be a reference for research and writing scientific papers in the future [7]. Therefore, by examining the methods and approaches used, it is hoped that a more comprehensive understanding of al-Qurtubi's contribution to the interpretation of the classical period can be correlated with modern times.

There have been many studies on this character and his work. This research can be found in journals, theses, and writings in the form of papers. Before the author discusses what is meant by the concept of asbabun nuzul about the verses of war: a study of ahkam interpretation on surah QS. al-Baqarah verses 190-193 according to Tafsir al-Qurtubi [8], it is good for the author to convey here several articles that discuss the verses of war in QS. Al-Baqarah verses 190-193, so that it can be seen the difference between the author's research and previous research.

First, a scientific work written by Ahmad Murtaza MZ's scientific work entitled "*Deconstruction of the Translation of the Words Qital and Fitnah in Q.S. 2: 190-193 in Tarjamah Tafsiriyah*" (2022) discusses Muhammad Talib's criticism of the ideology of the Indonesian Mujahidin Council (MMI) regarding the translation of the words Qital and Fitnah in the Qur'an by the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia [9]. Thalib considers that Tarjamah Tafsiriyah, which is considered as an alternative to the Qur'an, contains radicalism, because it translates Qital as a war against all Muslims and Fitnah as the legitimization of the sharia of war [10]. This study is relevant to Murtaza's approach, as it provides a classical foundation of Al-Qurtubi's tafsir ahkam, and emphasizes the meaning of jihad and qital in accordance with the historical context and sharia, rather than interpretations manipulated for ideological purposes [6]. In conclusion, this

study offers an ethical and jurisprudential alternative to classical interpretation to counter the extreme and radical narratives raised by Murtaza.

Second, an article written by Kamarul Azmi Jasmi's article titled "The Code of Conduct for Warfare in Islam: Surah al-Baqarah (2:189-195)" (2021) identifies five important lessons from the interpretation of the verse: first, the moon as a guide; second, the importance of good culture and rationality in Islam; third, the laws, regulations, and ethics of war; fourth, the importance of repentance and belief in the acceptance of repentance by Allah SWT; and fifth, the recommendation to avoid being stingy, especially in times of hardship [11]. This study aims to increase people's understanding of the code of conduct for war in Islam. Its relevance to this study lies in emphasizing Islamic ethical values in the context of war, but the focus of this study is more on the legal and historical dimensions (asbabun nuzul) based on classical tafsir, and strengthening Kamarul's argument with the sharia legal framework from Al-Qurtubi's tafsir [7]. In conclusion, this research complements Kamarul's ethical approach with the foundation of Islamic law written in classical tafsir ahkam, making it more systematic in applying sharia principles in a global context.

Third, a thesis written by Fajriyaturrohman and Muhammad Alfreda Daib Insan Labib's thesis entitled "Criticism of Jacques Derrida's Application of Deconstruction to Qur'anic Verses" (2023) discusses Derrida's deconstruction as a new approach in the philosophy of language that gives freedom to the reader to interpret the text. However, this study found that the approach is less appropriate for the interpretation of Qur'anic verses [12]. The author rejects excessive freedom in interpreting revelation, emphasizes that the meaning of war verses should be returned to the context of asbabun nuzul and authoritative interpretations, and asserts the stability of meaning in classical Islamic law, as explained by Al-Qurtubi [6]. In conclusion, this study strengthens Fajriyaturrohman's argument by providing concrete examples of classical tafsir as a legitimate and balanced alternative to the Western deconstruction approach.

This research takes a position as a classic law-based an ahkam tafsir study that emphasizes the importance of understanding QS. Al-Baqarah: 190-193 through the historical context of revelation (asbabun nuzul) and the rules of Islamic law [13]. Unlike the ideological approach discussed by Ahmad Murtaza, this study restores the meaning of the verses of war in the frame of justice and self-defense outlined by Al-Qurtubi [14]. Meanwhile, the ethical values of war presented by Kamarul Azmi are strengthened by a more comprehensive normative-legal approach [15]. Finally, as a response to the challenge of the postmodern deconstruction approach discussed by Fajriyaturrohman, this study emphasizes the importance of the stability of meaning and the authority of

classical tafsir in understanding and applying Qur'anic values in a modern global context.

Method

This research adopts a qualitative method with a library research approach. The main focus of this approach is the analysis of important texts, including the Qur'an, relevant tafsir books, as well as other supporting literature, to understand the concept of Asbabun Nuzul and its application in the context of verses related to war. Primary data in this research consists of relevant Qur'anic and tafsir texts, while secondary data includes books, articles, and other related sources [8]. The data collection technique is done through an in-depth literature study of these sources.

The tafsir research method used is analytical, aiming to explore the meaning of the verse by considering its historical and linguistic context [9]. This approach is very important to understand the background of the revelation of the verse (Asbabun Nuzul) and its application in Islamic law [10]. Overall, this research integrates qualitative methods with text analysis techniques and literature studies to explore the concept of Asbabun Nuzul in legal interpretations, especially those related to the verses of war in Surah Al-Baqarah.

Result and Discussion

Definition of *Asbabun Nuzul*

Asbabun nuzul is the cause of the revelation of a verse in the Qur'an. The process of the descent of the verses of the Qur'an can be divided into 2 ways, first *by way of Ibtida*[11, p. 9]' and *secondly* the revelation of the verses of the Qur'an is caused by an event or a question [11, p. 16]. According to Suyuthi,[12, p. 4] *Asbabun Nuzul* comes from two roots, namely *asbabun*, meaning causes and *nuzul* which means down so that *asbabun nuzul* means linguistically the causes behind the occurrence of the descent of a verse of the Qur'an [16]. While the term is defined as the causes that accompanied the revelation of the verses of the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad Saw [13, p. 16]. Thus *Asbabun Nuzul* as a law that explains or answers an event or question that makes the verses of the Qur'an descend.

Knowing the *Asbabun Nuzul* of a verse of the Qur'an brings the following benefits and functions; *First*, establishing a correct meaning and avoiding an error in understanding the meaning of the verses of the Qur'an, *second*, knowing the nature of the wisdom given by Allah SWT through the revelation of Allah SWT, as a believer will increase faith in Allah SWT, *third*, making it easier to understand and memorize the verses of the Qur'an, *Fourth*, knowing the intensity

of the descent of the Qur'an, fifth, avoiding the distortion of the meaning of the verses of the Qur'an, sixth, giving a special and precise *Dalil* to a verse of the Qur'an that varies in writing and *Lafadz*, seventh, specializing a law of a verse of the Qur'an with a certain law [11, p. 9]. So that *Asbabun Nuzul* has the authenticity of the meaning contained in a variety of verses of the Qur'an, with the *Asbabun Nuzul* can be revealed in detail and precisely.

According to Al-Wahidi, there is no statement about the verses of the Qur'an about *Asbabun Nuzul* without any history and listeners who witnessed the revelation of the Qur'an, and determined the revelation and knew about the information *Asbabun Nuzul* verse [11, p. 16]. So that in narrating an *Asbabun Nuzul* those who are close to the time of the revelation of the verses of the Qur'an include the Prophet Muhammad Saw, the companions who were close to the Prophet Saw [17]. So that the valid history is the one that witnesses the revelation of the Qur'an, but that does not mean that a *Tabi'in* who has a sequence after the companions, is not classified as a valid history, according to Imam Bukhari [11, p. 17]. but ascribed to the prophet, there are some *Tabi'in* who are classified as accepted *Tabi'in* narrations including Mujahid, Ikrimah, and Sa'id ibn Jubair [14, p. xvii]. Az-Zarkasyi said in his book *al-Burhan* that if a Companion or *Taabi'een* says "This verse was revealed in this case," then this is not the reason for the verse's revelation, but the ruling of the verse [14, p. xvii], [15].

Division of *Asbabun Nuzul*

Asbabun Nuzul Sharih (Clear)[16, p. 5]

A piece of information that was explicitly stated by a Companion (r.a) as *sabab nuzul* , with the phrase

سبب نزول هذه الآية كذا

The reason for the revelation of this verse is this

فنزلت

Then it came down

ثم نزلت

Then it came down

فأوحى الله إلى نبيه

Then Allah swt revealed to His prophet...

So if there is a narration that is similar to this sentence, then the scholars agree that this narration is a *sharih* narration in *asbab an-nuzul*.

Asbabun Nuzul Ghairu Sharih (not clear)[16, p. 36]

Verses of the Qur'an whose *asbabun nuzul* is not clear, usually begin with the sentence

نزلت هذه الآية في كذا

This verse was revealed in connection with.....

So in the division of *asbabun nuzul* above, it can be seen that the first form of *Sharih* is agreed that the law is *Marfu'* which means that the *Sanad* is connected to the Prophet [18]. As for the *ghairu sharih* type, it is debated by scholars because the characteristics of the sentence used can sometimes indicate *asbabun nuzul* and sometimes indicate the interpretation of a verse [17, p. 34].

***Asbābun Nuzūl* on QS. Al-Baqarah Verses 190-193**

The word *Qital* which comes from the root form "*qatala-yaqtulu*" has three main meanings: fighting, hostility, and combat [18, p. 142]. The derivation of the word "*qital*" can be interpreted as the act of mixing, killing, cursing, rejecting ugliness, relieving hunger or thirst, and insulting or humiliating [18, p. 142]. According to the commentators, the term "*qital*" refers to the act of fighting against the enemies of Islam who are non-Muslims, with the aim of destroying, conquering, forcing, or weakening them [18, p. 142]. In the Qur'an, the word "*qital*" appears 13 times in 7 surahs, one of which is found in *Surah al-Baqarah* verse 190, which discusses the war against the polytheists [18, p. 149].

This verse was revealed in response to the event when the Prophet Muhammad and his companions planned to perform *Umrah* to Mecca [12, p. 197], but for one month they were unable to do so [19]. The polytheists then offered an agreement that allowed the Prophet to return the following year, known as *Sulh al-Hudaibiyah* (Peace of Hudaibiyah) [16, p. 345]. In the agreement, the polytheists promised to allow the Prophet and his companions to perform *Umrah* for three days without interference [19, p. 83]. The Prophet Muhammad accepted the treaty and returned to Medina [20]. However, the Companions doubted the sincerity of the polytheists in fulfilling the agreement, fearing that they would again obstruct and fight, especially since they did not want a war to take place in the revered month and in the *Haram* Land [21]. In response to these doubts, Allah revealed His words: "*And fight in the way of Allah those who fight you*" (QS. al-Baqarah: 190) [20, p. 287], [21, p. 347].

Redactionally, this verse conveys two main messages: first, Allah commands defensive warfare against the polytheists in retaliation for their actions against the believers. Secondly, such warfare is only allowed against those who are fighting the Muslims, so it is not permissible to attack people who are not involved in the warfare [22]. Some mufasirs argue that the verse Al-Baqarah 2:190 is a *muḥkâm* verse that applies continuously and is not subject to nasakh.[18, p. 148] Therefore, the command to fight for the Muslims had to be implemented in response to the attack by the polytheists [23, p. 121].

In line with this opinion, al-Jasshash argues that the verse above is an order to fight those who first attacked Muslims [24, p. 347]. He emphasized that this provision is permanent and must be adhered to by Muslims. Thus, the command to fight applies to the polytheists who have attacked the Muslims, and there is no nullification (*nasakh*) of this verse [22]. This opinion refers to the view of al-Rabi bin Anas [24, pp. 320–321].

The defensive war that the Muslims are commanded to wage must be done in compliance with the rules that have been laid down. This rule, as stated at the end of the verse, is for the Muslims not to overstep their bounds, for Allah dislikes those who do so [23]. Some *Mufasirs* argue that overstepping the limit means fighting those who do not attack the Muslims or waging warfare that is not based on religion [17, p. 187]. Meanwhile, al-Mawardi explained that exceeding the limit means attacking the polytheists who are not involved in the attack. Some scholars also argue that this verse does not undergo *Nasakh* [13, p. 89]. According to al-Mawardi, QS. Al-Baqarah 2:190 is the first verse that descends regarding the command of war [24]. After this verse was revealed, the Prophet Muhammad and his companions only fought the polytheists defensively [19, p. 89]. According to al-Razi, this command was carried out by the Prophet continuously until the revelation of the next verse....

فَإِذَا انْسَلَخَ الْأَشْهُرُ الْحَرْمُ فَاقْتُلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ وَخُذُوهُمْ وَأَخْصِرُواهُمْ وَأَقْعُدُوا لَهُمْ كُلَّ مَرْصَدٍ فَإِنْ تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ فَخَلُّوا سَبِيلَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

“When the haraam months have passed,320) kill (in battle) the polytheists (who have been persecuting you) wherever you find them! Capture and besiege them and keep watch at every lookout! If they repent and pray and pay the zakat, give them their freedom. Verily, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful”[25].

According to al-Razi, this command continued to be carried out by the Prophet until the revelation of the next verse. He argues that this verse supersedes QS. Al-Baqarah 2:190, and eventually Allah revealed the command to fight them absolutely, both in offensive and defensive contexts. The command to fight defensively in QS. Al-Baqarah 2:190 is considered reasonable, considering

that initially Muslims were a minority community. In this condition, a peaceful approach and polite communication became the main choice [20, p. 197]. However, along with the development of Islam both in terms of quality and quantity, Allah ordered the Prophet and the Muslims to carry out offensive warfare.

Al-Qurtubi agrees with this view and states that the command to fight against the polytheists is offensive in nature. This means that the war does not have to be initiated by the polytheists; Muslims can wage war even if there is no prior attack from those who worship idols. This opinion of al-Qurtubi is based on the following verse [21, p. 344]:

وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ كُلُّهُ لِلَّهِ فَإِنِ انْتَهَوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

"Fight them until there is no more fitnah (persecution or shirk) and religion is entirely for Allah. If they cease (from disbelief), surely Allah is All-Seeing of what they do".[26]

This verse instructs Muslims to fight the idolatrous polytheists in the Arabian Peninsula, with the aim of eliminating *kufir* and polytheism and ensuring the comprehensive application of the teachings of monotheism as a guide to people's lives. Based on this verse, al-Qurtubî argues that the provision in QS. Al-Baqarah 2:190 has been abrogated by QS. Al-Anfâl 9:39 [21, p. 354].

Biography of al-Qurtubi

His full name is Shaykh Al-Imam Al-Alim Al-Faqih Al-Mufasssir Abu Abdillah Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Abu Bakr bin Farh Al-Andalusi Al-Qurthubi. He was a famous exegete and was also known as a pious worshipper and writer." [27, p. 3]. His personality originated from the city of Cordova [28, p. 1], [29, p. 2].

Al-Qurthubi came from a family living in Andalusia, which is strongly associated with his homeland. His father was very attentive to his growth and development and taught him various Islamic sciences that were well known in the area. Evidence of the breadth and depth of knowledge that Imam Al-Qurthubi had mastered can be seen in his interpretation of the Quran, which required in-depth knowledge in various Islamic disciplines and the Arabic language [28, p. 1].

His works cover various fields, such as *tafsir*, *hadith*, *qira'at*, and others. One of his famous books of interpretation is *Al-Jami' li Ahkam Al-Quran wa al-Mubin five Tadammanhu min al-Sunnah wa al-Furqon*, which has a *fiqh* approach..[28, p. 2] Other works include *Al-Tadzkirah fi Ahwal al-Mauti wa Umar al-Akhirah*[28, p. 4], *Qam'u al-Hirs bi al-Zuhdi wa al-Qan'ah*,[27, p. 3] and *Al-Tidzkar*

fi Fadli al-Azkar, reviews Quran-related scholarship and was printed in 1355 CE in Cairo. Imam Al-Qurthubi died on the night of Monday, 9 Shawwal 761 AH, and was buried in the town of Bani Khusaib, Menya Al-Fuli, in the highlands of Egypt.[28, p. 4]

Characteristics of tafsir Al-Qurthubi in writing his tafsir book begins with Surah Al-Fatihah and ends with Surah An-Nas. Therefore, the systematic interpretation used follows the order of verses and letters in the Mushaf. The method applied is the tahlili method, which focuses on a thorough explanation of the aspects contained in each verse of the Quran and reveals the intended meaning.[30, p. 76] Tafsir researchers categorize Al-Qurthubi's tafsir as a tafsir that has fiqh nuances, so it is known as tafsir Ahkam.

Tafsir Ahkam QS. Al-Baqarah:190-193 in Tafsir al-Qurtubi

1. QS. Al-Baqarah: 190

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ

190. Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you and do not transgress. Verily, Allah does not like those who transgress limits[31].

In tafsir al-Qurtubî, this verse is interpreted with reference to the historical context and the prevailing law at that time, namely when Muslims were in a state of conflict with the Quraysh in Mecca and with other polytheists. The interpretation of this verse can be detailed as follows:

1. The Command to fight in Self -Defense

Al-Qurtubî explains that this verse commands Muslims to fight only in self-defense, that is, when they are attacked or threatened by the enemy. As Ibn Abbas, Umar bin Abdul Aziz, and Mujahid said:

"This verse in surah al-Baqarah is a muhkamah verse. That is, fight those who are fighting you, but do not go so far as to kill women, children, priests, and people like them."

This war must be waged in the way of Allah, meaning that it must have a legitimate purpose, which is to uphold the religion of Islam, not for the purpose of aggression or personal greed[32, pp. 787-790].

2. Direction of War: To Uphold Justice

In addition, according to Al-Qurtubi, war in Islam does not only aim to defeat the enemy, but to uphold the principles of justice.

Muslims are required to fight against oppression and to defend violated rights. Thus, war is not just a military action, but also an attempt to uphold truth and justice in society[32, p. 794] .

3. Prohibition of Exceeding the Limit

Al-Qurtubi highlights the part of this verse that forbids Muslims to “exceed the limit” in warfare. Allah Almighty says:

وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا

“(But) do not exceed the limit.”

This includes the prohibition against unnecessary violence, such as killing people who are not directly involved in the war (e.g. women, children, or people who are not fighting). This prohibition reflects Islam's moral principle of upholding the value of humanity even in the context of warfare. War must be conducted within clear limits, with respect for human rights and without causing undue damage[32, pp. 798–790].

He Qurtubi also emphasizes that Allah dislikes those who exceed limits. This means that although war is justified in certain circumstances, violence must be limited in accordance with the principles of justice and ethics. War should not lead to destruction that goes beyond its basic purpose, which is self-defense and the enforcement of justice [29, p. 794].

4. Context of *Asbabun Nuzul*

In his interpretation, al-Qurtubî also refers to *asbabun nuzul* (the causes of the verse's revelation). This verse was revealed when Muslims in Medina began to engage in battles against the Quraysh and other enemies. This verse came as a revelation regulating behavior in warfare and providing instructions for Muslims on how they should behave on the battlefield [32, p. 788].

The analysis that has been presented shows that Surat Al-Baqarah verse 190 instructs Muslims to fight in the way of Allah against those who attack them, with an emphasis on not exceeding the limit, because Allah dislikes excessive actions [33]. According to Al-Qurtubi's interpretation, this verse was revealed in the context of the *Hudaibiyah* Agreement. In the sixth year of Hijriyah, the Prophet Muhammad and his companions planned to perform Umrah to Makkah, but they were prevented by the *Quraysh*, who then agreed to enter into a peace treaty. One of the provisions in the agreement was to give Muslims the opportunity to perform Umrah the following year. When the promised year arrived, the Prophet

and his companions prepared to perform Umrah, but they were concerned that the *Quraysh* might break the agreement and obstruct them, potentially even attacking them in the holy land and during the *Haram* month. As a response to that possibility, this verse was revealed to give Muslims permission to fight in self-defense, while adhering to the limits that had been set out [34].

2. QS. Al-Baqarah: 191

وَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ تَقْعُتُمُوهُمْ وَأَخْرِجُوهُمْ مِّنْ حَيْثُ أَخْرَجُوكُمُ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ ۚ وَلَا تُفْتِلُوهُمْ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ حَتَّى يُفْتِلُوكُمْ فِيهِ فَإِنْ فُتِلُوكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوهُمْ كَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ

“Kill those (who fight you) wherever you find them and expel them from where they expel you. In fact, slander⁵³ is more cruel than murder. Then do not fight them in the Sacred Mosque, unless they fight you there. If they fight you, then fight them. Such is the recompense of the disbelievers.”[35]

Legal warfare, In tafsir al-Qurtubî, this verse is understood as a continuation of the previous verse which provides instructions on interpretation of this verse can be explained as follows:

1. The Command to Fight the Enemy

Al-Qurtubî explains that this verse commands Muslims to fight the disbelievers who are hostile to them and expel them from their homes. The context of the revelation of this verse was when Muslims were experiencing persecution and blockade in Makkah, and in order to defend themselves. Therefore, this verse gives permission to the Muslims to fight in self-defense and to stop their oppression.[32, p. 795]

Tafsir al-Qurtubî also emphasizes that although this command is to fight the enemy, it should be done in self-defense. Allah's words:

وَأَخْرِجُوهُمْ مِّنْ حَيْثُ أَخْرَجُوكُمُ

“And expel them from where they expelled you,”

i.e. Makkah, Al-Qurtubî refers to emphasizing that this war command only applies when the same enemy initiates violence or expulsion against the Muslims, which in those days was done by the Quraysh against the Prophet Muhammad and his followers [32, p. 795].

2. Fitnah is Worse than Murder

In the part of the verse that mentions “slander is worse than murder”, al-Qurtubî explains that the slander referred to here is the persecution or oppression of Muslims by the disbelievers. Fitnah, in this context, includes all forms of torture, expulsion, and obstruction of religious freedom. In the Islamic view, torture or oppression committed against innocent people is considered more severe and more terrible than murder, because it can destroy the moral and social order and destroy human rights [32, pp. 795–796].

3. Prohibition of Fighting in the Grand Mosque

The Word of Allah Almighty:

وَلَا تُقَاتِلُوهُمْ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ حَتَّى يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِيهِ

“Then do not fight them in the Sacred Mosque, unless they fight you there.” Regarding this verse, scholars are divided into two groups: this verse has been abrogated and this verse is a muhkamah verse..

Al-Qurtubî also highlights the prohibition of fighting in the Grand Mosque, unless the enemy attacks first. The Grand Mosque is a highly revered place in Islam, and war there is considered a very serious act. Therefore, although warfare is allowed in certain situations, Islam strictly restricts holy places and places of worship from being used as battlefields [32, p. 796].

4. Consequences for disbelievers

This verse also explains the punishment for the disbelievers who fight the Muslims. In tafsir al-Qurtubî, this indicates that if the enemy attacks and wages war with the intention of oppression and destruction, then the appropriate retribution for them is defeat or equal retribution. However, although this verse gives permission to act harshly against infidels fighting Muslims, the emphasis on territorial limitations (such as the prohibition of fighting in the Grand Mosque) and the underlying moral principle is maintained [32, pp. 800–801].

5. The Principle of Justice in War

The Qurtubî also reminds us that although there is permission to fight the enemy in the context of self-defense, war must always be conducted with high principles of justice. The main purpose of warfare in Islam is to uphold justice, not for violence alone. Therefore, although

killing is permitted under certain conditions, there are always clear restrictions to ensure war remains within a legitimate and just framework.

The analysis that has been presented shows that Surah Al-Baqarah verse 191 stipulates the obligation of Muslims to fight those who attack them, wherever they may be, and to expel them from the places from which they have expelled Muslims. The verse also emphasizes that fitnah, which includes disbelief and obstruction to worship, is more severe than murder. In addition, Muslims are forbidden to fight polytheists in the vicinity of the Grand Mosque, unless they initiated the warfare in that location. In this case, Muslims are allowed to defend themselves and fight them [36].

Imam Al-Qurtubi in his commentary explains that this verse was revealed after the Treaty of Hudaibiyah, which gave Muslims permission to fight the polytheists who attacked them and expelled them from their homeland. However, this command does not apply in the haram land (Mecca and its surroundings) unless the polytheists initiate warfare there. The main purpose of this command is to defend oneself and uphold the religion of Allah. Imam As-Suyuthi in Tafsirul Jalalain also asserts that this verse gives permission to Muslims to fight the polytheists who attack them and expel them from their homeland, wherever and whenever they are [37]. However, Muslims are forbidden to initiate warfare in the haram land, unless the polytheists initiate conflict there. If that happens, Muslims are allowed to defend themselves and fight them.[38]

3. QS. Al-Baqarah: 192

فَإِنْ انْتَهَوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

"But if they cease (to oppose you), surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."[39]

In al-Qurtubî's interpretation, this verse is understood as a continuation of the command to fight enemies who oppress Muslims. The following is a detailed explanation of the interpretation of this verse according to al-Qurtubî:

1. Invitation to Cease from Warfare

Al-Qurtubî explains that this verse emphasizes that although Muslims are allowed to fight in certain conditions, such as in the context of self-defense and responding to oppression, this warfare should end as soon as the enemy stops fighting Muslims. Hence, Islam emphasizes the opportunity for peace and the avoidance of unnecessary bloodshed. If the enemy ceases hostilities and returns to

peace, then Muslims should not resume warfare and should instead prioritize reconciliation and peace.[32, p. 800].

2. The Importance of Forgiveness and Forgiveness

Tafsir al-Qurtubî also highlights that in Islam, there is a great value on forgiveness. Allah, being the Most Forgiving and Merciful, gives the enemy a chance to desist from disbelief and war. If they stop and return to peace, then Allah will forgive them. This shows that in Islam, there is an opportunity for restoration and change, and Muslims are encouraged to prioritize forgiveness and forgive the wrongdoings of others, especially if the person desists from hostilities.[32, p. 801]

3. Historical Context

This verse was revealed in the context of a war between Muslims and the polytheists of Quraysh in Makkah. Although Muslims had the right to defend themselves, Allah stipulated that the war should cease if the enemy returned to peace. This shows that Islam favors ending conflicts by peaceful means rather than continuing hostilities.

The analysis that has been presented shows that Surah Al-Baqarah verse 192 emphasizes that if the enemy stops hostilities against Muslims and turns from disbelief to Islam, then Allah will forgive their sins and accept their repentance. Imam Al-Qurtubi in his commentary explains that this verse shows that Allah accepts the repentance of His servants who abandon sinful deeds and return to Him sincerely[40]. This confirms that no sin is too great to be forgiven, provided that one truly repents wholeheartedly.

4. QS. Al-Baqarah: 193

وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ لِلَّهِ فَإِنْ انْتَهَوْا فَلَا عُدْوَانَ إِلَّا عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ

"Fight them until there is no more fitnah and religion (obedience) is for Allah alone. If they cease, there will be no enmity except against the wrongdoers."[41]

In the interpretation of al-Qurtubî, this verse explains the ultimate goal of warfare ordered in the previous verses. The interpretation of this verse can be explained as follows:

1. Purpose of Warfare: Removing Fitnah and Establishing the Religion of Allah

The Qurtubî explains that this verse sets out the ultimate goal of warfare that Muslims undertake. The main purpose of warfare is to

remove fitnah, which is the oppression of Muslims and the obstruction of them from practicing their religion. "Fitnah" in this context can include all forms of torture and persecution perpetrated by the enemy against Muslims who are trying to uphold their religion. Therefore, war is not waged for power or wealth, but to uphold the religion of Allah and end all forms of oppression against the believers. [29], [32, p. 904].

2. Limitations in Warfare

The Qurtubî notes that while war is justified in this context, it should not be continued indefinitely. Warfare is only legitimate to end fitnah and oppression. If a party hostile to Muslims stops fighting and accepts peace, then war should cease. However, if there are those who continue to oppress or injustice, then Muslims are allowed to fight them. Thus, war in Islam has a clear purpose and must always end in peace and justice [32, p. 802].

Al-Qurtubî also reminds us that if the enemy stops fighting the Muslims, then there is no reason to continue the war. However, if there are individuals or groups who continue to commit injustice, then they are the ones who are still allowed to fight. This confirms that Islam is against injustice in all its forms, whether perpetrated by individuals or groups, and provides religious freedom as the main objective [32, p. 803].

3. Moral and Ethical Principles in Warfare

Al-Qurtubi reminds us that although warfare is justified under certain conditions, the moral and ethical principles of warfare must be maintained. Islam teaches to fight oppression and injustice, but war should not be waged with brutality or solely to destroy the enemy. Therefore, if the goal of peace is achieved, then war should cease. This shows that in Islam, war is only considered as a last resort and should always end with peace and justice [32, p. 803].

The analysis that has been presented shows that Surah Al-Baqarah verse 193 instructs Muslims to continue fighting the polytheists until there is no more fitnah, which is the suppression of religion, and so that religion is dedicated to Allah alone. If the enemy stops hostilities and accepts Islam, then no more hostilities are allowed, except against the unjust people who continue to oppose. Imam Al-Qurtubi in his commentary explains that this verse emphasizes that the main purpose of warfare is to uphold the religion of Allah and eliminate all forms of oppression against Muslims. If the enemy stops attacking and accepts Islam,

Muslims are not allowed to continue hostilities, except against those who continue to oppress [42].

Relevance of Al-Qurtubi's Tafsir in the Context of Current Islamic Law

The relevance of the verses in Surah Al-Baqarah (190-193) to current Islamic law is very important, especially in understanding the concepts of war, self-defense, and justice in Islam. Although the verses were revealed in a specific context during the time of the Prophet Muhammad, the values contained in them remain relevant in the application of contemporary Islamic law. Here are some points of relevance that can be drawn:

1. War as Self-Defense and Not Aggression

These verses confirm that war in Islam is only justified for self-defense and against oppression. In the current context of international law and Islamic law, this is very relevant because the concept of just war in Islam must be based on self-defense or to stop oppression, not to attack or commit aggression. This is in accordance with the principles of modern international law, where war is only justified if there is a real threat or attack that requires self-defense. This verse is relevant to Muslim-majority countries, as in the context of international law, they must ensure that their military actions remain within the corridors of self-defense, stopping oppression, or upholding justice. It is also a reminder that war must be the last in a series of peaceful settlements.

2. Prohibition of Exceeding Boundaries in Warfare

These verses explicitly prohibit Muslims from "*overstepping the bounds*" in warfare, meaning that unnecessary violence or destruction is not allowed, including against non-combatants such as women, children, and people not involved in the war.

This principle is particularly relevant to modern rules in international humanitarian law, such as the Geneva Conventions, which prohibit violence against civilians and set standards of protection for those not directly involved in the conflict. In today's world, this principle is a reminder of the importance of preserving human dignity and complying with international laws of war that prohibit violence against civilians.

3. Respect for Holy Places

Verse 191 prohibits Muslims from fighting in the Grand Mosque, a holy place that is highly respected in Islam, unless they are attacked first.

This principle indicates that there are places that must be protected from all forms of violence

This principle is relevant in the context of the protection of holy sites and places of worship in current international law, which provides for the protection of holy places in international treaties, such as *the 1954 Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Heritage in Armed Conflict*. This emphasizes the importance of protecting places of high religious and cultural value in any armed conflict [43].

4. Peace and Forgiveness

Verse 192 asserts that if the enemy stops fighting the Muslims and returns to peace, then the war should cease and end with forgiveness. This shows that Islam favors peace and reconciliation over the prolongation of conflict.

This concept is highly relevant to the peaceful approach that is favored in international relations today. Many countries and international organizations seek to promote reconciliation and peace in conflict situations. The Islamic principle of prioritizing forgiveness and stopping war when there are signs of peace can serve as a guideline in the process of negotiation and peaceful settlement.

5. Justice in Warfare

These verses also emphasize that warfare in Islam should aim to establish justice, remove oppression, and ensure religious freedom. War is only justified to stop fitnah (oppression) and restore violated rights.

This concept is in line with the principles of social justice and human rights in modern law, which emphasize the protection of religious freedom and human rights. Muslim states, both in the context of domestic and international law, can use this principle to support their foreign policies.

6. The Importance of the State's Role in Upholding Justice

The verses contain the message that war must be carried out by those who have the authority and with legitimate objectives, namely to uphold justice. This shows the importance of the state's role in implementing Islamic law, including in the context of war.

In the context of modern law, this can be interpreted as the state's obligation to act on behalf of justice and protect its citizens from oppression. The state must implement international and domestic law by prioritizing the principles of justice, humanity, and protection of civilians.

Conclusion

This study explores the understanding of asbabun nuzul (the causes of the revelation of the verse) in the context of the verses of war in Surah Al-Baqarah (190-193), as well as how Al-Qurtubi's interpretation interprets the laws contained therein. Based on Al-Qurtubi's interpretation, it can be concluded that:

Historical Context and Self-Defense: These verses were revealed in the context of a war situation between the Muslims and the Quraysh who oppressed and expelled the Muslims from Mecca. This war was more emphasized on the self-defense of Muslims who could not avoid oppression. Al-Qurtubi emphasizes that warfare is justified only in emergency situations in response to oppression and aggression by the enemy.

The interpretation of the war verses of QS. Al-Baqarah 190-193 in the interpretation of al-Qurtubi; **(1)** QS. Al-Baqarah 190, Moral principles in warfare: although warfare is permitted, al-Qurtubi teaches that warfare in Islam has strict moral limits. Muslims are commanded not to overstep their bounds by attacking those not involved in the war, such as women, children, and civilians, and to respect holy places such as the Grand Mosque. This principle is very much in line with international humanitarian law which regulates the protection of civilians in armed conflicts. **(2)** QS. Al-Baqarah 191, The purpose of warfare is to uphold justice: these verses emphasize that the main purpose of warfare is to end fitnah (oppression) and to ensure religious freedom. Warfare in Islam is not to seek power or material gain, but rather to uphold justice and human rights, a principle that is also relevant to international law and foreign policy that prioritizes the protection of human rights. **(3)** QS. Al-Baqarah 192-193, The Importance of Peace and Forgiveness: One of the important aspects highlighted by Al-Qurtubi is that although warfare is justified under certain conditions, peace is preferred. If those who are hostile to Muslims stop fighting them, then war should cease and peace be accepted. This concept teaches the value of forgiveness and reconciliation, which guides conflict resolution today.

Relevance to Contemporary Islamic Law: In the context of contemporary Islamic law, the principles contained in these verses and Al-Qurtubi's commentary remain relevant, especially in terms of self-defense, protection of civilians, and upholding justice and peace. They can also serve as guidelines in the foreign policies of Muslim countries, as well as in international legal frameworks that focus on the prevention of war and peaceful settlement.

Author Contributions

Muhammad Syamsul Munir: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Supervision, Project administration. **Regita Dyah Ramadhani:** Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Investigation. **Masruhan:** Supervisor, Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Investigation. **Ibrahim Nashrulloh Kholid:** Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Investigation

Acknowledgement

We would like to thank's for Sunan Ampel State Islamic University, Surabaya, Indonesia, for their support in this research. We would also like to express our gratitude to several Universities that are willing to collaborate in this research, such as State Islamic Institute, Ponorogo, Sunan Ampel Islamic University Surabaya, and Jaamia Binoria Aalamia University, Pakistan.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Funding

This research did not receive any financial support

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- Dewanti Palangkey, Lc., MA., Dr. Andi Satrianingsih, Lc., M.Th.I., Dr. Erfandi AM Lc., MA., Dr. Mukhlis Bakri, Lc., MA., Zainal Abidin, SH., MH., Dr. Kasman Bakry, M.H.I., DR. WAHYUDIN, Lc., MA., Abdillah S., S.Pd.I., M.A., Dr. Miftah Ulya, S.Th.I, MA., Dr. Abbas, Lc., MA., Dr. Mahlani Sabae, S.Th.I., MA., Arfan, S.S., M.Ag. - Google Buku." Accessed: Mar. 09, 2025. [Online]. Available: https://books.google.co.id/books?hl=id&lr=&id=uYRDEQAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA1&dq=pembagian+asbabun+nuzul+sharih+dan+ghairu+sharih+&ots=-zlbwDs5ZX&sig=wHY-5icpwLkFfP4bFi8MFgpb3xw&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=pembagian%20asbabun%20nuzul%20sharih%20dan%20ghairu%20sharih&f=false
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