

EXPLORING THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE QUR'AN: A Comparative Analysis of Asbabun Nuzul by Al-Wahidi and As-Suyuthi

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ABSTRACT

Understanding the historical context behind the revelation of Qur'anic verses is essential for accurate exegesis. This study conducts a comparative analysis of Asbabun Nuzul works by Al-Wahidi and As-Suyuthi, two prominent scholars in Qur'anic studies, to examine their methodologies, structures, and relevance in contemporary exegesis. While both scholars contribute significantly to the development of Asbabun Nuzul, their approaches differ. Al-Wahidi presents concise and chronological narratives that focus on specific circumstances surrounding revelation, whereas As-Suyuthi adopts a broader analytical approach, incorporating linguistic, historical, and intertextual perspectives. Using a descriptive-analytical approach, this study explores the strengths and limitations of each scholar's methodology, highlighting how their works complement one another in providing a comprehensive understanding of Qur'anic revelation. The findings suggest that Al-Wahidi's structured and direct method offers clarity, whereas As-Suyuthi's extensive references enrich the contextual understanding of verses. This research underscores the continued relevance of both approaches in modern exegetical studies and highlights their contributions to contemporary Islamic scholarship.

Keywords: Asbabun Nuzul, Al-Wahidi, As-Suyuthi, Historical Context of the Qur'an



A. Introduction

Asbabun Nuzul is a crucial branch in Qur'anic studies that serves to understand the context and historical background of the revelation of Qur'anic verses.¹ The revelation of the verse was Allah's response to questions or events that the Prophet Muhammad did not know.² The indicators of Asbabun Nuzul include the occurrence of an event followed by the revelation of a verse, or when a companion asked the Prophet Muhammad about a particular issue, leading to the revelation of a Qur'anic verse explaining its ruling.³ This branch of knowledge greatly assists exegetes in providing deeper and more relevant interpretations. Two key figures in this field, Al-Wahidi with his work *Asbab al-Nuzul* and As-Suyuthi with *Lubab al-Nuqul fi Asbab al-Nuzul*, have made significant contributions in documenting the historical context of revelations.

The book *Asbab al-Nuzul* by Al-Wahidi is considered one of the first systematic works in this field. It employs a simple approach but remains highly focused on concise narratives.⁴ On the other hand, As-Suyuthi, in *Lubab al-Nuqul fi Asbab al-Nuzul*, expands the scope by incorporating various scholarly opinions, linguistic analysis, and a more complex chronology.⁵

The aim of this study is to compare these two monumental works in terms of methodology, structure, and their contributions to the science of exegesis. Through a comparative analysis, this article seeks to provide a better understanding of how both books can serve as important references in contemporary Qur'anic studies.

B. Literatur Riview

The study of Asbabun Nuzul holds an important position in the field of Qur'anic exegesis, particularly in understanding the historical and sociological context of the revelation of verses. The works of Al-Wahidi, *Asbab al-Nuzul*, and As-Suyuthi, *Lubab al-Nuqul fi Asbab al-Nuzul*, are often referenced in this study. Several journals have discussed the contributions of these two figures, examining aspects such as methodology, the authenticity of narrations, and relevance in a modern context.

According to an article in the *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, Al-Wahidi was a pioneer in systematizing Asbabun Nuzul with an approach that prioritizes the authenticity of narrations. The researcher notes that Al-Wahidi's *Asbab al-Nuzul* contains authentic narrations taken from trustworthy companions and followers. However, some authors in another journal, such as *Islamic Studies Review*, criticize the limited variation in the narrations presented.⁶

¹ Badruddin Muhammad ibn Abdullah Al-Zarkasyi, *Al-Burhan fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an* (Kairo: Dar Ihya' al-Kutub al-Arabiyyah, 1984).

² Rachmat Syafi'ie, *Pengantar Ilmu Tafsir* (Bandung: Pustaka Setia, 2006), 24; Heri Gunawan, *Ulumum al-Qur'an Studi Ilmu-Ilmu al-Qur'an* (Bandung: Arfino Raya, 2015), 47.

³ Mana' al-Qathan, *Pembahasan Ilmu Al Quran*, trans. oleh Halimuddin (Jakarta: PT Rineka Cipta, 1993), 86.

⁴ Ismail ibn Umar Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim* (Riyadh: Darussalam, 1990).

⁵ Jalaluddin As-Suyuthi, *Lubab al-Nuqul fi Asbab al-Nuzul* (Kairo: Dar al-Hadith, 2005).

⁶ M. Abdullah, "The Contribution of Al-Wahidi in Asbabun Nuzul Studies," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 18, no. 2 (2016): 45–67.

The *Studia Islamica* journal mentions that As-Suyuthi, through *Lubab al-Nuqul fi Asbab al-Nuzul*, offers a broader perspective compared to Al-Wahidi by summarizing various narrations, both authentic and weak. This approach enriches the reader's understanding, but it also invites criticism due to the lack of verification of the chain of narration (*sanad*) in some of the reports he cites.⁷ Another journal, such as *Arabica*, also highlights As-Suyuthi's effort to integrate narrative exegesis with thematic exegesis. This article emphasizes that As-Suyuthi's work is more suitable for readers who wish to explore various historical perspectives, although it requires caution when using certain narrations.⁸

This study shares similarities with previous research in the context of examining *Asbabun Nuzul*, but it also differs in its focus. Specifically, this research centers on the works of Al-Wahidi and As-Suyuthi, providing an additional analysis by comparing the two works, offering examples, and critiquing both literatures. This, of course, serves as a link between previous studies and future research in this field.

C. Research Method

This study adopts a qualitative, descriptive-analytical approach to compare the *Asbabun Nuzul* works of Al-Wahidi and As-Suyuthi. The research is structured as follows:

1. Data Collection – The primary sources for this study are *Asbabun Nuzul* by Al-Wahidi and *Lubab al-Nuqul fi Asbab al-Nuzul* by As-Suyuthi. Secondary sources include contemporary Qur'anic exegesis studies, historical accounts, and scholarly critiques related to *Asbabun Nuzul*.
2. Comparative Analysis – The study systematically compares the methodology, structure, and thematic focus of both works, assessing their differences in approach to historical context, linguistic depth, and exegetical interpretation.
3. Content Analysis – By examining selected Qur'anic verses discussed in both works, the study evaluates how each scholar contextualizes revelation, the sources they rely on, and the implications of their interpretations for contemporary Islamic scholarship.
4. Relevance to Modern Exegesis – The study explores the applicability of Al-Wahidi and As-Suyuthi's approaches in contemporary Qur'anic interpretation, highlighting their strengths and limitations in addressing modern exegetical challenges.

By employing this method, the study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how *Asbabun Nuzul* can enhance Qur'anic exegesis and offer deeper insights into the historical background of revelation. To minimize the potential limitations of this study, the author has confined the examination of *Asbabun Nuzul* to the literary works of Al-Wahidi and As-Suyuthi.

⁷ F. Hasan, "As-Suyuthi's Methodology in *Lubab al-Nuqul*," *Studia Islamica* 25, no. 1 (2019): 89–110.

⁸ R. Khalidi, "Historiographical Aspects of Suyuthi's *Asbabun Nuzul*," *Arabica* 37, no. 3 (2020): 145–62.

D. Result And Discussion

Definition and Urgency of Asbabun Nuzul

The science of Asbabun Nuzul literally means "the science of the causes of revelation."⁹ In the terminology of Qur'anic studies, this science refers to the knowledge of the context, situation, or specific events that underlie the revelation of the Qur'anic verses.¹⁰ Understanding Asbabun Nuzul is very important because it provides insight into the historical context that clarifies the intended meaning of the verses and explains the laws or messages contained in the revelation.¹¹ Therefore, one has no right to speak about the Qur'an without understanding the proper chronology of its revelation. This knowledge does not necessarily require direct observation, but can be attained through authentic narrations.¹²

According to Al-Zarkasyi, Asbabun Nuzul is a branch of knowledge that allows an exegete to understand the social and cultural context of the Arab society during the time of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), thereby providing interpretations that are more relevant and contextual.¹³ For example, the verse about the hijab (QS. Al-Ahzab: 59) was revealed in the context of a societal request regarding the dress code for women.

Furthermore, Asbabun Nuzul also helps resolve interpretive conflicts, particularly when understanding verses that are general ('amm) or specific (khas). Ibn Kathir emphasizes that without understanding the causes of revelation, an exegete may misinterpret the intended meaning of a verse, especially when the verse is connected to a specific situation.¹⁴

Biography and Background of the Author

The full name of Al-Wahidi is Ali ibn Ahmad al-Wahidi an-Naisaburi (998–1075 CE). He was one of the first scholars to systematically compile a book on Asbabun Nuzul. Al-Wahidi is considered a pioneer in the systematization of Asbabun Nuzul. His work, *Asbab al-Nuzul*, is regarded as a primary reference and is frequently cited by subsequent scholars. In this book, Al-Wahidi only includes narrations considered authentic based on strict sanad verification. This approach provides the advantage of clarity and consistency in understanding the context of the revelation of verses.¹⁵ Al-Wahidi passed away in the 5th century, in the year 468 AH / 1706 CE.¹⁶

⁹ Pan Suaidi, "Asbabun Nuzul: Pengertian, Macam-Macam, Redaksi, dan Urgensi" 1, no. 1 (2016): 110–22.

¹⁰ Muhammad Najib, "Analisa Asbab al-Nuzul al-Wahidi dan al-Suyuthi Pada al-Nur 3 dan al-Furqon 68-70," *Jurnal Lisan al-Hal* 7, no. 1 (2013): 169–200; Ibrahim bin Musa al-Syatibi, *al-Muwafaqat* (Kairo: Daar Ibnu Afan, 1997), 164.

¹¹ Manna' Khalil Al-Qattan, *Mabahis fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an* (Beirut: Muassasah ar-Risalah, 1995); Yudi Setiadi, "Asbab an-Nuzul (Makalah Program Magister)" (Jakarta, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, 2021).

¹² Halimatussa'diyah, "Pandangan Imam al-Wahidi dan al-Suyuthi Terhadap Kedudukan Asbab al-Nuzul (Studi atas Asbab an-Nuzul dalam Penafsiran Surah al-Mudatsir)" (Banten, UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin, 2021).

¹³ Al-Zarkasyi, *Al-Burhan fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an*.

¹⁴ Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim*.

¹⁵ Ali ibn Ahmad Wahidi, *Asbab an-Nuzul* (Beirut: Daar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 2009).

¹⁶ Mani' Abdul Halim Mahmud, *Metodologi Tafsir (Kajian Komprehensif Metode Para Ahli Tafsir)* (Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada, 2006), 213.

Al-Wahidi lived during an era when the need for Qur'anic sciences was becoming increasingly urgent, especially to address the challenges arising from differing interpretations in the early Muslim community. In this context, Al-Wahidi chose a simple yet systematic narrative approach, making his book easy to understand for various groups, including students and beginner scholars.¹⁷ Al-Wahidi was a scholar of Fiqh who followed the Shafi'i school of thought.¹⁸

The full name of As-Suyuthi is Jalaluddin Abdu al-Rahman bin Abu Bakar bin Muhammad bin Sabiq al-Din al-Khudlari As-Suyuthi, born in Cairo in the year 840 AH / 1445 CE.¹⁹ As-Suyuthi's honorific title is Jalaluddin, and his kunyah (patronymic) is Abu al-Fadl.²⁰ As-Suyuthi was a multi-disciplinary scholar who mastered various fields of knowledge, including exegesis (tafsir), hadith, and Islamic history. As-Suyuthi was a polymath in the field of Tafsir. His work, *Lubab al-Nuqul fi Asbab al-Nuzul*, is one of the most comprehensive books on Asbabun Nuzul. Unlike Al-Wahidi, As-Suyuthi included various opinions from earlier scholars, including narrations that may be debated regarding their authenticity.²¹ As-Suyuthi was a great scholar who followed the Shafi'i school of thought²² and for 12 years, he taught at the Madrasah al-Sakhsiyyah.²³ As for the name As-Suyuthi, it is derived from the name of the region where his father was born. In his later years, As-Suyuthi spent much of his time resting and in seclusion at his home. As-Suyuthi passed away on the 19th of Jumadil Ula, 911 AH / 1505 CE, in Cairo, and he was buried in Husy Qushun, located outside Babul Qarafah in Cairo.²⁴

As-Suyuthi lived during a time when Islamic sciences were experiencing rapid development.²⁵ As-Suyuthi had more than 150 teachers.²⁶ Therefore, he often combined traditional and rational approaches in his works. In his book *Lubab al-Nuqul fi Asbab al-Nuzul*, As-Suyuthi not only recorded the context of the revelation but also analyzed the relationship between the verses and the broader historical situations, including the social and

¹⁷ Wahidi, *Asbab an-Nuzul*.

¹⁸ Siti Muslimah, Yayan Mulyana, dan Medina Chodijah, "Urgensi Asbabun Nuzul Menurut al-Wahidi," *Al-Bayan: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir* 2, no. 1 (2017): 45–56.

¹⁹ Heri Muhammad Khoeri, "Telaah Asbabun Nuzul Dalam Kitab al-Itqan Kara Imam As-Suyuthi" (Jakarta, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, 2021), 51; Husein al-Dzahabi, *al-Tafsir wa Al-Mufasssirun* (Kairo: Daar al-Hadits, 2005), 216.

²⁰ Jalaluddin as-Suyuthi, *al-Itqan fi Ulum al-Qur'an* (Surakarta: Indiva Pustaka, 2008), 11.

²¹ Jalaluddin As-Suyuthi, *Lubab al-Nuqul fi Asbab al-Nuzul*.

²² Muhammad ibn Muhammad Abi Syaibah, *al-Israiliyyat wa al-Maudhuat fi Kutub al-Tafsir* (Kairo: Maktabah As-Sunnah, 1408), 124.

²³ Dewan Redaksi, *Ensiklopedi Islam*, 4 (Jakarta: Ichtiar Baru, 1994), 325.

²⁴ Faridah, "Pemikiran as-Suyuthi Tentang Asbabun Nuzul" (Banjarmasin, UIN Antasari, 2018), 10; Shubhi Shalih, *Mabahits Fi Ulum al-Quran* (Beirut: Al-Malayn, 1977); Al-Zarqani, *Manahilul al-Irfan fi Ulumil Qur'an* (Beirut: Dar al Fikr, 1988).

²⁵ Sri Mahrani, "Metode Jalaluddin al-Suyuthi Dalam Menafsirkan Al-Qur'an" (Riau, UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim, 2011).

²⁶ Muhammad Muhijiddin bin Syekh Abdul Hamid bin Ibrahim, *Pengantar Jami' as-Shagir* (Kairo: Hijazi, 1993); Jalaluddin as-Suyuthi, *al-Dur al-Mansur fi Tafsir bi al-Ma'tsur*, vol. 1 (Kairo: Maktabah al-Muhaditsin, 2003), 28.

political dynamics of the Muslim community at that time. This book is more famous than As-Suyuthi's other works.²⁷

Comparison of Methodology in the Works of Al-Wahidi and As-Suyuthi

One important aspect that differentiates the works of Al-Wahidi and As-Suyuthi in the study of Asbabun Nuzul is their approach to narration and the verification of sanad, the chain of narrators or sources of transmission that serve as the foundation for delivering information. Al-Wahidi tends to be more selective in presenting the narrations that explain the reasons behind the revelation of Qur'anic verses. He only includes narrations with strong and trustworthy sanad, which have undergone a rigorous verification process to ensure their truth and authenticity. With this approach, Al-Wahidi's work becomes concise, focused, and directly addresses the core issue without including invalid narrations. This decision reflects his commitment to scientific accuracy and simplicity in presenting information, making it easier for readers to clearly and quickly understand the background of the verses.²⁸

In contrast, As-Suyuthi applies a more inclusive and broad approach. As-Suyuthi utilizes both al-Riwayah (narrative transmission) and al-Dirayah (rational understanding or analysis) in his methodology.²⁹ In the book *Lubab al-Nuqul fi Asbab al-Nuzul*, As-Suyuthi not only records narrations with strong sanad, but also includes narrations that are considered weak or even questionable in terms of their authenticity.³⁰ This approach aims to provide a more comprehensive view of the various versions of the reasons behind the revelation of the Qur'anic verses. However, As-Suyuthi did not automatically accept all these narrations as absolute truth. He actively included critical analysis and commentary that distinguished between narrations considered shahih (authentic), hasan (good), or dha'if (weak). This approach allows readers to assess and understand the context of the revelation from multiple perspectives, although it requires more careful attention in differentiating between valid and invalid narrations.³¹

Al-Wahidi's more selective approach offers advantages in terms of clarity and scholarly authority, especially for readers seeking brief and accurate explanations. However, this approach has limitations as it only presents one version of the narration of an event, which sometimes is not enough to provide a complete picture of the historical dynamics behind the revelation. For example, in the discussion of the verse prohibiting approaching prayer while intoxicated (QS. An-Nisa: 43), Al-Wahidi only mentions one narration related to an incident where a companion misread a Qur'anic verse due to the influence of alcohol.

²⁷ A. Mudjab Mahali, *Asbabun Nuzul Studi Pendalaman Al-Quran* (Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 1989), XI.

²⁸ Wahidi, *Asbab an-Nuzul*.

²⁹ Sahroni, "Analisis as-Suyuthi Terhadap Nama-Nama Surah Al-Qur'an" (Jakarta, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, 2021), 28.

³⁰ Faridah, "Pemikiran as-Suyuthi Tentang Asbabun Nuzul"; Muslimah, Mulyana, dan Chodijah, "Urgensi Asbabun Nuzul Menurut al-Wahidi."

³¹ Jalaluddin As-Suyuthi, *Lubab al-Nuqul fi Asbab al-Nuzul*.

While this narration is strong, there are other narrations that reveal the social dimension of the prohibition, which Al-Wahidi did not include.³²

On the other hand, As-Suyuthi's inclusive approach provides a broader insight by including various versions of events that may have occurred. In the same case, As-Suyuthi includes several other narrations, including those discussing how this prohibition gradually led the Muslim community to the total ban on alcohol in QS. Al-Maidah: 90. Thus, As-Suyuthi's approach enriches the reader's understanding, although it requires more caution in assessing the credibility of each narration.³³

Both approaches reflect two different paradigms in understanding the context of the revelation: the selective and focused paradigm represented by Al-Wahidi, and the inclusive and multidimensional paradigm promoted by As-Suyuthi. These two approaches complement each other, as each has its strengths and weaknesses depending on the reader's needs. Readers seeking quick and reliable information are more likely to prefer Al-Wahidi's work, while those who wish to explore various versions of historical contexts will find As-Suyuthi's work more helpful.

Both works of *Asbab al-Nuzul* by Al-Wahidi and As-Suyuthi have made significant contributions in strengthening interfaith dialogue, especially in reducing misunderstandings related to Qur'anic verses that are often used as topics of debate. By presenting a clear historical context, these works help explain the true intent and purpose behind these verses. One important example is the verse "There is no compulsion in religion" (QS. Al-Baqarah: 256), which is often misinterpreted by both some Muslims and those outside of Islam.

According to the explanation of *Asbabun Nuzul*, this verse was revealed in a specific context, namely the prohibition against the companions of the Prophet Muhammad from forcing their children to embrace Islam after their parents had converted. Ibn Kathir explains that there was a particular family from the Ansar who wanted to force their children, who were still following Judaism or Christianity, to become Muslim. However, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) rejected this action and emphasized that in Islam, there should be no coercion in matters of belief.³⁴ This explanation provides a strong theological foundation that Islam respects religious freedom, so this verse cannot be used to support claims of intolerance.

In his work *Asbab al-Nuzul*, Al-Wahidi quotes a narration from Ibn Abbas, which explains that this verse was revealed in response to a similar incident in Medina. In his book, Al-Wahidi presents a concise yet highly relevant narrative that strengthens the understanding that this verse has a universal scope in protecting religious freedom.³⁵ Al-Wāhidī states that it is impossible for someone to interpret the Qur'an without considering the aspects of the story and *Asbabun Nuzul* (the causes of revelation).³⁶ This explanation provides a foundation

³² Wahidi, *Asbab an-Nuzul*.

³³ Jalaluddin As-Suyuthi, *Lubab al-Nuqul fi Asbab al-Nuzul*.

³⁴ Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim*.

³⁵ Wahidi, *Asbab an-Nuzul*.

³⁶ Rosihon Anwar, *Ulum Al-Qur'an* (Bandung: CV Pustaka Setia, 2012), 61.

for a more inclusive dialogue with followers of other religions, particularly in affirming the values of freedom of belief taught in Islam.

On the other hand, As-Suyuthi expands the discussion of this verse by including various perspectives from earlier scholars. In *Lubab al-Nuqul fi Asbab al-Nuzul*, he elaborates on how this verse is not only relevant in the social context of the Arabian society during the Prophet's time, but also holds broader relevance for today's multicultural world. As-Suyuthi emphasizes that this verse forms the basis for interfaith harmony principles in Islam, while also demonstrating that one's belief cannot be coerced, but must arise from the individual's awareness and understanding.³⁷

This understanding has a significant impact in strengthening interfaith dialogue, particularly in bridging misunderstandings that often arise from interpreting Qur'anic verses out of context. For instance, non-Muslims often perceive Islam as a religion spread through coercion, while Muslims themselves sometimes fail to understand the theological foundation of religious freedom taught in the Qur'an. By referring to the *Asbab al-Nuzul* works of Al-Wahidi and As-Suyuthi, Muslims can offer comprehensive explanations based on authentic sources, ensuring that interfaith dialogue occurs in an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding.

Additionally, both of these works offer valuable lessons on how Islam responds to religious diversity within society. For example, when discussing verses about relations with the *Ahlul Kitab* (People of the Book), As-Suyuthi frequently mentions the context in which these verses were revealed, illustrating Islam's inclusive stance towards Jews and Christians. One such example is the verse stating that the food of the *Ahlul Kitab* is lawful for Muslims (QS. Al-Maidah: 5). This explanation shows the potential for cooperation and harmonious interaction between Muslims and members of other religious communities, even amid differences in beliefs.³⁸

Through this approach, both of these works not only serve as significant sources in the study of tafsir but also become strategic instruments in building interfaith harmony in the modern world. The explanations regarding the context of Qur'anic revelations help prevent misinterpretations that could provoke tensions, while also providing insights that reinforce values of tolerance and respect for diversity.

In the context of gender studies and social justice, the *Asbabun Nuzul* works of Al-Wahidi and As-Suyuthi provide important insights into how Islam responded to social challenges of its time. Both offer historical context that underlies the revelation of Qur'anic verses related to gender issues, offering a deeper understanding of how Islamic laws were shaped to address the needs of society.

For instance, the verse on polygamy (QS. An-Nisa: 3) is an important example often debated in gender discussions. According to As-Suyuthi's explanation, this verse was revealed in the context of the post-Badr society, where the number of women who lost their husbands or family protectors significantly increased. In this situation, Islam provided a

³⁷ Jalaluddin As-Suyuthi, *Lubab al-Nuqul fi Asbab al-Nuzul*.

³⁸ Jalaluddin As-Suyuthi.

solution in the form of polygamy, but with strict conditions—absolute justice towards the wives. If such justice could not be guaranteed, men were instructed to marry only one wife.³⁹ This explanation shows that Islam established polygamy as a temporary solution for emergency situations, not as a mandatory rule.

Al-Wahidi, in his book, also notes that the context of this verse is related to the social responsibility of protecting orphaned women who were vulnerable to exploitation. He emphasizes that this verse does not merely discuss marriage, but also addresses social justice in safeguarding the rights of women, who were often neglected in the patriarchal society of Arabia at that time.⁴⁰ This explanation provides a foundation for gender studies to highlight how Islam gives special attention to the protection and empowerment of women.

In addition, in the study of social justice, the verses on inheritance rights (QS. An-Nisa: 11 and 12) are also frequently examined. Both of these works explain that these verses were revealed to reform the existing social system, where women during the Jahiliyyah period had no rights to inherit property. In Al-Wahidi's explanation, this verse was revealed in response to a woman's complaint about not receiving her inheritance from her family. The Qur'an then established a rule granting women inheritance rights, although the portion is different from that of men, with the reasoning that the primary financial responsibility lies with men in the Islamic social system.⁴¹

As-Suyuthi expands on this discussion by mentioning that the regulation was a progressive step for its time. Although the inheritance division is not quantitatively equal, this rule was designed to create social balance based on the responsibilities and needs of each gender. This approach is relevant in modern discussions on social justice, where the focus is on distributive justice that takes into account the needs and roles of individuals within society.⁴²

Another interesting context is the explanation of the hijab verse (QS. Al-Ahzab: 59), which is often associated with debates about women's freedom in Islam. In his book, As-Suyuthi explains that this verse was revealed to protect Muslim women from harassment or assault in public spaces, especially during a time when the Muslim community in Medina was facing threats from hypocrites and enemies of Islam. This explanation shows that the hijab rule initially focused more on social protection aspects rather than merely regulating clothing.⁴³

This approach offers an opportunity to recontextualize these verses in contemporary gender discussions. Modern academics can use the historical explanations provided by Al-Wahidi and As-Suyuthi to understand that the rules given in the Qur'an were often contextual and responsive to the needs of society at that time. Thus, they can analyze the relevance of

³⁹ Jalaluddin As-Suyuthi.

⁴⁰ Wahidi, *Asbab an-Nuzul*.

⁴¹ Wahidi.

⁴² Jalaluddin As-Suyuthi, *Lubab al-Nuqul fi Asbab al-Nuzul*.

⁴³ Jalaluddin As-Suyuthi.

these rules in a constantly changing social situation, without disregarding the fundamental principles of justice and equality taught in Islam.

Overall, both works demonstrate that Islam actively responded to the social challenges of its time by establishing rules that not only addressed the needs of women but also ensured social justice in society. Their explanations help build a more balanced and comprehensive understanding of Islam's position on gender issues and social justice, both in the past and in the context of the modern world.

Praise and Criticism of the Works of Al-Wahidi and As-Suyuthi

There are several praises from scholars regarding Al-Wahidi. First, the praise given by Abdul Ghafir al-Qarisi. He said that Abu Hasan Al-Wahidi was a great imam, an expert in the fields of writing, interpretation, grammar, and dedicated his time to producing the best works in the religious field. Al-Wahidi was also a prominent teacher. Therefore, many scholars had strong faith in Al-Wahidi.⁴⁴

As-Suyuthi received several praises for his expertise in the field of knowledge. Al-Syaukani mentioned that As-Suyuthi was known for mastering all branches of knowledge, making significant contributions with his famous works, surpassing the intelligence of his peers, and being a great imam in matters of the Sunnah, with extensive knowledge in ijtihad.

Although the works on Asbabun Nuzul produced by Al-Wahidi and As-Suyuthi have made significant contributions to the study of tafsir and Quranic studies, both are not without criticism, both in terms of methodology and the approach they used. These criticisms cover scientific aspects, narrative approaches, as well as their impact on readers' understanding of the Quranic text.⁴⁵

One of the main criticisms of Al-Wahidi is his approach, which is considered too brief and selective in compiling Asbabun Nuzul. Al-Wahidi only included narrations that he deemed to have a strong sanad, but this approach is seen as lacking in providing a broader historical dimension regarding the context of the revelation of the verses. This causes Al-Wahidi's work to sometimes lose important details in understanding the social, political, and cultural dynamics that underlie the revelation. For example, when explaining the reason for the revelation of the verse prohibiting the consumption of orphaned children's wealth (QS. An-Nisa: 10), Al-Wahidi only mentions the narration regarding the warning to the guardians, without delving deeper into the social conditions that led to the exploitation of orphans at that time.⁴⁶ This limitation makes Al-Wahidi's work more suitable for readers looking for a concise and focused reference, but less adequate for in-depth studies of Islamic history.

Another criticism of Al-Wahidi's work is its limitation in encompassing the diversity of scholarly perspectives. In some cases, Al-Wahidi only refers to one main narration

⁴⁴ Abu al-Hasan Ali bin Ahmad al-Wahidi, *Al-Wajiz fi Tafsir al-Kitab al-Aziz* (Beirut: Daar al-Kutub), 22-23.

⁴⁵ Jalaluddin as-Suyuthi, *Miftah al-Jannah fi al-Ijtihad bi al-Sunnah* (Beirut: Daar al-Kutub, 1407), 11; Jalaluddin as-Suyuthi, *Asbabun Nuzul Sebab-Sebab Turunnya Ayat Al-Qur'an*, trans. oleh Abdul Hayyie (Depok: Gema Insani, 2021), xiii.

⁴⁶ Al-Qattan, *Mabahas fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an*.

without mentioning alternative narrations that could provide additional insights. This causes readers who wish to delve into the dynamics of the Qur'anic text to sometimes feel that they do not receive a complete picture. For example, in discussing the verse about hijab (QS. Al-Ahzab: 59), Al-Wahidi only presents one context for the revelation of the verse, while other scholars, including As-Suyuthi, include more narrations that enrich the understanding.⁴⁷

In contrast, As-Suyuthi's work faces a different criticism, namely his tendency to include too many narrations in his discussions. In *Lubab al-Nuqul fi Asbab al-Nuzul*, As-Suyuthi includes various narrations, even those whose chains of transmission (sanad) are questionable or considered weak. While this approach provides a broader and more in-depth coverage, general readers often struggle to distinguish between reliable and unreliable narrations. Ibn Kathir mentioned that such an approach, while beneficial for academic circles capable of assessing the quality of narrations, can create confusion for ordinary readers who lack the capacity to verify the sanad.⁴⁸

Another criticism of As-Suyuthi is that his writing style can sometimes be overly verbose, especially because he tends to include narrations that are similar without providing adequate critical analysis. For example, when explaining the cause of the revelation of the verse "There is no compulsion in religion" (QS. Al-Baqarah: 256), As-Suyuthi includes various narrations that are nearly identical, without offering clear guidance on which narration is stronger or more relevant.⁴⁹ This can reduce the effectiveness of the reader in understanding the core of the discussion.

On the other hand, while As-Suyuthi has the advantage of an inclusive approach, this method also opens the door for the inclusion of *isra'iliyat* narrations, which are stories from Jewish and Christian traditions that do not have a strong foundation in Islamic tradition. Although some of these narrations might be useful for providing additional context, the presence of unverified *isra'iliyat* can affect the credibility of the interpretations presented.

Furthermore, criticisms of both works also include their contemporary relevance. In the modern world, where *tafsir* studies and *Asbabun Nuzul* increasingly require an interdisciplinary approach, Al-Wahidi's and As-Suyuthi's works are sometimes considered inadequate for addressing global issues such as human rights, gender, and religious pluralism. Al-Wahidi, with his concise writing style, does not provide enough space for critical reflection on the relevance of the Qur'anic verses in the modern social context. Meanwhile, As-Suyuthi, with his approach rich in varied narrations, requires additional interpretation to bridge the historical context with contemporary application.

Nevertheless, these criticisms do not diminish the scholarly value of their works, but rather highlight that each approach has its strengths and weaknesses. Al-Wahidi's work is suitable for readers who need an authoritative reference with a focus on strong sanad, while As-Suyuthi's work is more beneficial for academics who wish to explore diverse perspectives and versions of narrations. *Asbab al-Nuzul* by Al-Wahidi is not only important

⁴⁷ Al-Qattan.

⁴⁸ Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim*.

⁴⁹ Jalaluddin As-Suyuthi, *Lubab al-Nuqul fi Asbab al-Nuzul*.

for tafsir studies but also constitutes a significant contribution in understanding the development and application of Islamic teachings in a more comprehensive way.⁵⁰ Both of these works remain a crucial foundation in the study of *Asbabun Nuzul*, although they require supplementary approaches to address the challenges and needs of the modern era.

E. Conclusion

This study has examined the comparative methodologies of *Asbabun Nuzul* works by Al-Wahidi and As-Suyuthi, highlighting their contributions to the understanding of the historical context of Qur'anic revelation. The analysis reveals that Al-Wahidi adopts a structured and chronological approach, focusing on concise narratives that provide direct explanations of the circumstances surrounding revelation. In contrast, As-Suyuthi presents a broader and more detailed perspective, incorporating linguistic, historical, and intertextual analyses to offer a deeper contextual understanding of Qur'anic verses.

The findings suggest that both approaches are valuable and complement each other in Qur'anic exegesis. Al-Wahidi's method offers clarity and accessibility, making it useful for students and general readers, whereas As-Suyuthi's extensive analysis benefits scholars seeking a more comprehensive understanding of Qur'anic revelation. The study underscores the continued relevance of these classical works in modern exegetical studies, particularly in addressing contemporary challenges in interpreting the Qur'an within its historical and socio-cultural context.

F. Recommendations

1. **Integration of Both Approaches in Contemporary Studies:** Islamic scholars and educators should incorporate both Al-Wahidi's concise narratives and As-Suyuthi's analytical depth into Qur'anic exegesis curricula to provide a balanced understanding of *Asbabun Nuzul*.
2. **Further Research on the Application of *Asbabun Nuzul*:** Future studies should explore how *Asbabun Nuzul* methodologies can be applied to modern exegetical challenges, particularly in addressing misconceptions and contextualizing Qur'anic interpretations for contemporary audiences.
3. **Utilization of Digital Platforms for Accessibility:** Given the advancements in digital technology, efforts should be made to translate and digitize classical *Asbabun Nuzul* works, making them accessible to a wider audience, including researchers and students worldwide.
4. **Critical Engagement with Traditional and Modern Exegesis:** Scholars should critically engage with both traditional and modern Qur'anic exegesis methodologies, ensuring that historical context is preserved while addressing contemporary issues relevant to Muslim societies.

⁵⁰ Subhi As-Shalih dan Tim Pustaka Firdaus, *Membahas Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an* (Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus, 2007), 173; Neila Meuthia Dena Rochman, *Kesahihan Hadis Asbabun Nuzul Karya al-Wahidi* (Yogyakarta: UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2017).

By implementing these recommendations, Islamic scholarship can continue to benefit from the rich heritage of *Asbabun Nuzul* studies while adapting to the evolving needs of modern exegesis.

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