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THE SCHOLARLY IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING THE RESEARCH BEHIND THE REVELATION OF QUR'ANIC VERSES

Abstract. *Understanding the research behind the revelation of Qur'anic verses—commonly known as Asbab al-nuzul—holds significant scholarly importance for accurate interpretation of the Qur'an. Causes of revelation, which refers to the historical and situational context behind the revelation of Qur'anic verses, represents a fundamental discipline within Qur'anic sciences. This field of study provides historical, social, and linguistic contexts in which specific verses were revealed, enabling scholars to grasp the intended meanings and objectives of the divine message. This article explores the importance of understanding the historical and situational contexts in which Qur'anic revelation occurred. This paper examines the circumstances surrounding revelation, researchers can distinguish between general and specific rulings, reconcile seemingly contradictory verses, and prevent misinterpretation detached from context.*

Keywords: *The Qur'an, Islam, revelation, exegesis, history, science, contemporary.*

INTRODUCTION

The Qur'an is a divine blessing from Allah bestowed upon all of humanity, one that no amount of worldly wealth can ever replace. Every individual approaches the Qur'an from a unique perspective, whether driven by intellectual inquiry or awakened through

spiritual experience. These questions and encounters shape the way believers engage with the words of the Creator. The Qur'an is a source of healing and guidance, bringing blessings in both this world and the Hereafter—through its recitation, contemplation, listening, reading to others, learning and teaching, practicing its commands, and spreading its message in every possible manner (Usmani, 2000:23).

The technical definition of Qur'an aims to describe the words of Allah preserved by oral transmission and written codices. The word Qur'an is derived from Qara'a Yaqra'u, which literally means "to collect" but later on this word came to be used for "reading" because the words and letters are collected together while reading something. In the Arabic language, a verbal noun (maṣḍar) is at times employed with the meaning of its passive participle (Kalimah Center, n.d.). The designation "Qur'an" likewise reflects this linguistic usage, signifying "that which is recited" or "the Book that is read".

MAIN PART

The primary aim behind the development of various Islamic disciplines was to unlock and interpret the Qur'anic text. Accordingly, diverse forms of engagement with the Qur'an employ a variety of research methodologies drawn from a broad range of scholarly disciplines. As these disciplines developed over time, it became necessary to systematize and consolidate issues related to the text and context of the Qur'an within a distinct and overarching field, namely Qur'anic Studies. Thus, Qur'anic Studies emerged as an integrative field that brings together multiple disciplines rather than functioning as an entirely independent area of inquiry. This inherently interdisciplinary character facilitated the development of numerous sub-disciplines and scholarly approaches concerned with both the breadth and depth of the Qur'anic text.

Accordingly, Ulum al-Qur'an serves as an umbrella term encompassing the various disciplines and areas of study related to the Qur'an's meaning, its oral and written transmission, and its modes of recitation and interpretation. It is a vast body of knowledge and it underlines the principles and basis of exegesis (Tafsir) (Usmani, 2000, p. 25). It illustrates how the Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet ﷺ, the reality of wahy (Sammuslim, n.d.), the sequence of revelation, the period during which the whole of it was revealed, the distinction of chapters before migration and after it, the background of revelation and how it helps in interpreting the Qur'an, as well as the abrogated verses

of the Qur'an. It also addresses the meanings of many letters, the multiple modes of Qur'anic recitation, its subject matter, the manner in which Allah has preserved it, the stages through which its writing and printing have passed, the principles and manners of exegesis, the correct way to understand it, and errors that could mislead interpreters.

Understanding the occasions of Qur'anic revelation holds significant interpretive value in Qur'anic studies. Moreover, such research strengthens the relationship between the Qur'anic text and prophetic practice, enriching disciplines such as Islamic jurisprudence, theology, and Qur'anic exegesis. Consequently, a systematic understanding of the research behind Qur'anic revelation is essential for preserving the authenticity of interpretation, addressing contemporary issues responsibly, and advancing rigorous academic engagement with the Qur'an.

The field of *ulum al-Qur'an* developed through the efforts of Muslim scholars who aimed to organize and explain the various aspects of Qur'anic studies. Prominent among these scholars were Badruddin al-Zarkashi (745/1344–794/1392), Jalaluddin al-Suyuti (849/1445–911/1505), Muhammad al-Zarqani (1645–1710), and Jalaluddin al-Bulqini (724/1324–805/1403). Through systematic study of topics such as revelation, compilation, interpretation, and linguistic analysis, these scholars made major contributions to shaping *ulum al-Qur'an* as a distinct and structured discipline. Their works brought together earlier scholarly discussions and established foundational approaches that continue to influence Qur'anic studies today.

The work of Badruddin al-Zarkashi, *Al-Burhan fi Ulum al-Qur'an*, laid an early systematic framework for Qur'anic sciences, which was later expanded and encyclopedically organized by Jalaluddin al-Suyuti in *Al-Itqan fi Ulum al-Qur'an*. Building on earlier classical works, Muhammad al-Zarqani's *Manahil al-Irfan fi Ulum al-Qur'an* presents the sciences of the Qur'an in a clear, systematic, and pedagogical manner. Similarly, Jalaluddin al-Bulqini's *Mawaqi al-Ulum fi Mawaqi al-Nujum* addresses core topics of the discipline, including the nature of divine revelation, the circumstances of revelation (*asbab al-nuzul*), modes of transmission, linguistic and rhetorical features, and principles of interpretation.

Muhammad Sadiq Muhammad Yusuf (1952–2015) stands as a pivotal figure in the post-Soviet Islamic renaissance, particularly for his role in modernizing the presentation of *Ulam al-Qur'an* within Central Asia. His contribution is characterized by a synthesis

of the classical Hanafi tradition and a systematic, pedagogical methodology designed for contemporary readers.

The Qur'an was revealed in response to various occasions over a period of twenty-three years and was not framed as a systematic philosophical work dedicated to a particular topic or audience, which makes its text "above all a text rooted in context" (Hidoyat, n.d.). This discipline employs a historical approach, examining the circumstances that prompted revelation and contributing to accounts of the Qur'an's arrangement and compilation. The final ordering of the surahs, as directed by the Prophet ﷺ and implemented in the compilation of 'Uthman's mushaf, does not correspond to the sequence of revelation (Islom, n.d.). Comparing these two arrangements provides opportunities for tadabbur and enhances deeper comprehension (Yaqeen Institute, n.d.).

One of the main themes of this discipline is the inner-Qur'anic chronology and the sequencing of chapters. The classification of revelation into Meccan and Medinan periods provides a thorough analysis of the stages of revelation and the Qur'anic discourse modes addressing a growing audience. In addition to this chronological schema, the exploration of extra-scriptural traditions leads to the identification of a diachronic order known as the "occasion of revelation" (asbab al-nuzul) (Islom, n.d.).

The academic study of asbab al-nuzul is fundamental to classical and modern Islamic hermeneutics, serving as a vital methodological tool for contextualizing the Qur'anic text within its historical and linguistic milieu. By identifying the circumstances under which specific verses were revealed, scholars ensure that interpretation remains grounded in historical reality rather than abstract speculation. The primary merits of this discipline include knowing the wisdom behind legislation, reconciling seemingly contradictory verses, determining the scope of application of rulings, and enriching personal tadabbur.

Independent scholarship dedicated to asbab al-nuzul dates back to the early development of Islamic sciences. Jalaluddin al-Suyuti identified a third category of revelation involving multiple verses sharing a single cause. He also discussed cases where multiple occasions are reported for a single verse, outlining methodological principles for reconciliation (al-Aqilah al-Makki, 1427 AH).

Furthermore, Jalaluddin al-Suyuti identified additional sub-disciplines within Qur'anic studies, including verses revealed at specific times, exclusively to the Prophet ﷺ, to other prophets, on multiple occasions, or all at once. He also examined modes of

revelation, whether mediated through Jibril or received directly from Allah (Mir Arab, n.d.; Islam Ansiklopedisi, n.d.).

CONCLUSION

This article has shown that Asbab al-Nuzul is a central discipline within ulum al-Qur'an and plays a vital role in ensuring accurate interpretation of the Qur'anic text. By situating revelation within its historical context, scholars preserve interpretive authenticity and enable responsible engagement with the Qur'an in both classical and contemporary settings (al-Suyuti, 2009).

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