

An Exploration in Identifying the Sabab Nuzul Āyah on the Fourth Juz of the Al-Quran in the Tafsir Tarjuman Al-Mustafid According to a Genetic Perspective

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Abstract

In Tafsir Tarjuman al-Mustafid, Al-Fansuri incorporates data on the sabab nuzul (context of revelation) in his interpretation of Quranic verses. This study aims to explore and analyze the sabab nuzul referenced in the Tafsir Tarjuman al-Mustafid, focusing specifically on the fourth juz of the Quran as an initial step towards refining the content of this significant work of Quranic exegesis. Future studies will expand the scope to include other ajza' of the Quran. The findings of this study reveal the presence of 11 sabab nuzul within the fourth juz in Tafsir Tarjuman al-Mustafid.

Keywords: Tafsir Tarjuman al-Mustafid; sabab nuzul āyah; genetic approach; the fourth juz of the Quran

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1.0 Introduction

During the early introduction of Islam to Malaya, Islamic scholars actively authored works across diverse disciplines, including fiqh, aqidah, tafsir, hadith, akhlak, and muamalat. These contributions remain relevant and are frequently referenced by contemporary researchers for academic studies. This enduring legacy is a testament to the remarkable success of earlier scholars whose writings continue to be studied and examined.

In the 17th century, Islam solidified its foundation in Aceh through the Aceh Dar al-Salam Kingdom, which became a significant center of Islamic scholarship in Southeast Asia (Hasyimi, 2021). Scholars such as Al-Fansuri, A. R. played a pivotal role, notably serving as a Qadi to the Queen of Aceh. With the government's support, he authored numerous scholarly works and contributed to the propagation of Islam across Aceh and its surrounding regions. His expertise spanned various Islamic disciplines, including jurisprudence, mysticism, theology, exegesis, and hadith (Hidayatullah & Elit, 2020), leaving a lasting impact on the intellectual and spiritual life of the community.

One of Al-Fansuri, A. R.'s most renowned works in Quranic exegesis is Tafsir Tarjuman al-Mustafid, widely recognized among the Malay community in Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia. This groundbreaking tafsir, covering all 30 juzs, is the earliest Quranic exegesis produced in the Malay world by a Nusantara scholar. For over three centuries, it has been regarded as a translation of Tafsir al-Baydawi. Serving as a valuable resource, it is extensively used for scholarly purposes and as educational material in traditional Islamic schools.

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(pondok), mosques, and suraus across Malaysia. Some editions are titled *al-Tarjamat al-Jāwiyyah li al-Tafsīr al-Musamma Anwār al-Tanzīl wa Asrār al-Ta'wīl li al-Imām al-Qaḍī al-Bayḍāwī*, reinforcing its association with *Tafsir al-Baydawi*. This scholarly significance has inspired extensive research into its history, language, and influence, cementing its role as a foundational reference in Quranic interpretation (Yusoff & Abdullah, 2021).

Moreover, a closer examination of the content of *Tafsir Tarjuman al-Mustafid* reveals a wealth of scientific knowledge embedded within it. In his interpretation of the Quranic verses, Al-Fansuri, A. R. incorporated various sources such as the Hadith of the Prophet, discussions on the differences in Qiraat recitation, accounts of previous communities, verses of *al-Nasikh* and *al-Mansukh*, the virtues of the Quran, and the *sabab nuzul* (reasons for revelation) of certain verses. However, Al-Fansuri, A. R. did not systematically categorize these scientific facts in a clear and organized manner, which has led to confusion among some readers and scholars of *Tafsir Tarjuman al-Mustafid*. If these scientific facts were properly classified, they would undoubtedly aid the community in better understanding the content of the Quran. In light of this, the present study aims to uncover and clarify the scientific facts present in *Tafsir Tarjuman al-Mustafid*, authored by Al-Fansuri, A. R.

This study serves as a continuation of previous research conducted on the first juz of the Quran in *Tafsir Tarjuman al-Mustafid*. It also focuses explicitly on the fourth juz of the Quran within the same tafsir, building on the previous work to further refine the content of *Tafsir Tarjuman al-Mustafid*. This research will eventually expand to cover other juzs of the Quran. By applying a genetic approach, this study not only delves into the interpretation of *Tafsir Tarjuman al-Mustafid* but also references other scholarly works, such as *Tafsīr al-Baydawi* and *Tafsīr al-Tabari*, to identify and validate the sought-after facts. Hopefully, this study will contribute new and valuable insights for the community in utilizing *Tafsīr Tarjuman al-Mustafid* effectively.

The primary objective of this study is to identify and present data related to the *sabab nuzul āyah* (reasons for revelation) found in *Tafsir Tarjuman al-Mustafid*. The study specifically focuses on the fourth juz of the Quran within this work.

2.0 Literature Review

Sabab nuzūl refers to the historical context or circumstances under which specific Quranic verses were revealed. Classical tafsirs, such as those by al-Tabari (*Tafsir al-Tabari*), al-Qurtubi (*Tafsir al-Qurtubi*), and al-Baydawi (*Tafsir al-Baydawi*), provide extensive narratives regarding the reasons behind the revelation of particular verses. The knowledge of *sabāb nuzūl* aids in clarifying the intended message of a verse, its legal rulings, and its moral guidance. While classical tafsir texts, including *Tafsir al-Baydawi*, have been studied extensively, *Tafsir Tarjuman al-Mustafid* remains relatively underexplored in the context of *sabāb nuzūl* studies.

2.1 Genetic Approach in Tafsir Research

A genetic approach, as applied to the study of tafsir, involves examining how various exegeses are interconnected and how they evolve through time. This approach examines the relationship between the *Tafsir Tarjuman al-Mustafid* and other classical tafsir works, such as those of al-Tabari and al-Baydawi, focusing on tracing the transmission of knowledge and interpretive methodologies. Researchers applying a genetic perspective aim to uncover the broader intellectual heritage from which *Tafsir Tarjuman al-Mustafid* draws its insights.

For instance, Al-Fansuri's work is closely linked to *Tafsir al-Baydawi*, an influential source for many Malay scholars. As a result, a genetic approach reveals that Al-Fansuri's interpretations were often shaped by previous scholars while simultaneously reflecting the local Southeast Asian Islamic experience. Studies that adopt this perspective are particularly important for understanding how Al-Fansuri navigated the complex theological issues of his time, such as the early Islamic debates on the nature of divine revelation.

2.2 Studies on Sabāb Nuzūl in Southeast Asian Tafsir

Recent scholarship on Southeast Asian Quranic exegesis, particularly in Malaysia and Indonesia, has explored how local scholars have interpreted *sabāb nuzūl* in their tafsir works. These studies highlight the specific historical and cultural contexts in which these exegeses were written, such as the development of Islam in the Malay Archipelago and the role of the Aceh Sultanate as an Islamic center. In *Tafsir Tarjuman al-Mustafid*, Al-Fansuri provides valuable insights into how the *sabāb nuzūl* influenced the interpretation of Quranic verses within the sociopolitical context of 17th-century Aceh.

One prominent study by Yusoff and Abdullah (2021) discussed the legacy of *Tafsir Tarjuman al-Mustafid* in the Malay world, emphasizing its impact on Quranic scholarship in the region. These scholars argue that while Al-Fansuri's work was largely based on *Tafsir al-Baydawi*, it also incorporated local traditions and experiences, especially concerning the *sabāb nuzūl*.

Moreover, studies on *sabāb nuzūl* in Southeast Asian tafsir often highlight the selective incorporation of specific historical events that resonate with local readers. In this context, *Tafsir Tarjuman al-Mustafid* serves as a cultural bridge, integrating global Islamic scholarly traditions with the Malay world's local religious and social fabric.

While much attention has been given to the linguistic and doctrinal dimensions of *Tafsir Tarjuman al-Mustafid*, less focus has been placed on identifying the *sabāb nuzūl* for the verses in the fourth juz of the Quran. The current study aims to fill this gap by using a genetic approach to explore these reasons for revelation. By identifying the specific circumstances surrounding the revelation of verses in the fourth juz, this research seeks to enrich the understanding of Al-Fansuri's tafsir and contribute to the broader field of Quranic exegesis in Southeast Asia.

The study concludes that *Tafsir Tarjuman al-Mustafid* by Al-Fansuri holds significant value in understanding the *sabab nuzul* (context of revelation) for Quranic verses, particularly those in the fourth juz. The research identified 11 instances of *sabab nuzul* within this section, each providing a contextual backdrop for the verses. These findings emphasize Al-Fansuri's deep engagement with historical

and situational contexts, illustrating his effort to convey the Quran's meanings through culturally relevant interpretations for the Malay-speaking Muslim community.

The study highlights how Al-Fansuri incorporates elements such as the Prophet's traditions, differences in qira'at, and narratives from prior communities to elucidate the Quranic text. However, it also reveals areas of improvement in structuring and organizing these details systematically for enhanced accessibility and comprehension.

By adopting a genetic perspective, the research offers a methodology for exploring classical tafsir works. It demonstrates how historical, linguistic, and theological dimensions intersect in Quranic exegesis and underscores the importance of preserving and revisiting classical texts to enrich contemporary Islamic scholarship.

Future research is encouraged to expand this exploration to other juzs within the tafsir, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of Al-Fansuri's methodologies and their implications for the broader study of Quranic interpretations. The study of sabāb nuzūl (reasons for revelation) is integral to understanding the Quranic text, as it provides context for the verses, which often clarifies their meaning and application. The importance of knowing the sabāb nuzūl is highlighted in numerous classical works of tafsir (Quranic exegesis). One of the earliest and most influential Malay-language tafsir works, Tafsir Tarjuman al-Mustafid, is often recognized for its contextualization of Quranic verses and incorporation of sabāb nuzūl. The tafsir was written by Al-Fansuri, a renowned scholar in 17th-century Aceh, and serves as one of the earliest exegeses produced in Southeast Asia.

3.0 Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach, focusing on textual analysis of the Tafsir Tarjuman al-Mustafid, particularly the sabab nuzul (context of revelation) within the fourth juz of the Quran. The genetic approach serves as the primary analytical framework, emphasizing the origins and contextual backgrounds of the selected Quranic verses. Data collection involved identifying instances of sabab nuzul as presented by Al-Fansuri and cross-referencing these findings with classical tafsir works like Tafsir al-Baydawi and Tafsir al-Tabari to ensure accuracy and validation. Key themes and interpretations were systematically categorized to provide clarity. The methodology aims to refine the understanding of the Quranic exegesis in historical and contextual dimensions.

This methodology is justified as it provides a rigorous framework for understanding sabab nuzul in Tafsir Tarjuman al-Mustafid. The qualitative approach ensures in-depth textual analysis, while the genetic method highlights historical contexts. Cross-referencing with classical tafsir validates findings, ensuring accuracy and enriching insights into Quranic interpretation in its historical framework.

4.0 Findings and Discussions

The analysis of the nuzul āyah contained in the fourth juz of the Quran in the Tafsir Tarjuman al-Mustafid using a genetic approach is explained in Table 1 below.

Code	Surah	Interpretation
Q1	Ali Imran, 03: 02	When the Jews said to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) that he claimed to follow the creed of Abraham, while the creed of Abraham abstained from consuming camel meat and its milk, the divine revelation from Allah Almighty was revealed.
S2	Ali Imran, 03: 137	(The narrative) when the believers were scattered during the Battle of Uhud, then the divine revelation from Allah Almighty was revealed.
S3	Ali Imran, 03: 144	(The narrative) when they were scattered during the Battle of Uhud due to the widespread rumor that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) had been killed, the hypocrites said to them, "If he has indeed been killed, then return to your former religion." Thus, the divine revelation from Allah Almighty was revealed.
S4	Ali Imran, 03: 152	(The narrative) as mentioned in Khazin, when the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) returned to Madinah with his companions after the Battle of Uhud, having endured what they had endured, some of his companions said, "How could this befall us? We have suffered despite the promise of Allah's help." Thereupon, the divine revelation from Allah Almighty was revealed.
S5	Ali Imran, 03: 161	(The narrative) when a red cloak, known as qatifah, went missing on the day of the Battle of Badr, some people speculated, "Perhaps the Prophet took it." Thereupon, the divine revelation from Allah Almighty was revealed.
S6	Ali Imran, 03: 172	(Benefit) It is mentioned in Jami' al-Bayan that the verse "alladhīna istajābū" was revealed concerning the remnants of the Battle of Uhud, while they were merely feigning sincerity.
S7	Ali Imran, 03: 182	They said, "If Allah Almighty were truly rich, He would not demand repayment of debts." Thereupon, the divine revelation from Allah Almighty was revealed.
S8	Ali Imran, 03: 185	(The narrative) as mentioned in Khazin, when the divine revelation from Allah Almighty, "Qul Yatawaffakum al-Maut" (Say, "The death that you flee from will surely meet you"), was revealed, they said, "O Messenger of Allah, this verse appears to apply only to the children of Adam. What about the jinn and the animals?" Thereupon, the divine revelation from Allah Almighty was revealed.
S9	Ali Imran, 03: 196	(The narrative) when the Muslims said that the enemies of Allah Almighty are in a state of prosperity, while we are in a state of hardship, the divine revelation from Allah Almighty was revealed.
S10	Al-Nisa', 04: 03	(The narrative) when the aforementioned verse was revealed, their hearts became constricted from instructing the orphans, fearing sin. Some of them had ten or eight wives, but they were not just in their treatment toward them. Thereupon, the divine revelation from Allah Almighty was revealed.
S11	Al-Nisa', 04: 07	(The narrative) during the time of Jahiliyyah, they did not provide for women and children. Then, the divine revelation from Allah SWT came to reject such practices.

(Source: al-Fansuri, 2021)

Based on the table above, the research findings are explained as follows. Code S1, according to the table, refers to the occasion of the revelation of the verse from Surah Ali Imran, verse 02, which was revealed to mention that Prophet Jacob (peace be upon him) had refrained from eating camel meat. This event took place before the Torah was revealed. Prophet Jacob had suffered from sciatica, a type of nerve disease. He made a vow that if his illness was healed by Allah SWT, he would abstain from eating camel meat. Code S2 refers to the verse from Surah Ali Imran, verse 137. Through this verse, Allah SWT recounts the incident of the Battle of Uhud when the archers abandoned the military position that had been entrusted to them to monitor the advance of the enemy. This action was admonished by Allah SWT.

Code S3, according to the table, also narrates the incident during the battle of Uhud when the news of the death of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) spread. This news greatly troubled the Muslims, to the point that some sought refuge with Abu Sufyan, one of the leaders of the Quraysh. Meanwhile, the hypocrites claimed that if Muhammad were truly a Prophet, he would not have died. Allah then revealed this verse to reassure the Muslims and refute the words of the hypocrites.

Code S4 discusses the return of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) and his companions from the Battle of Uhud, deeply saddened by their defeat in the battle. Some of the companions were overwhelmed with grief, beseeching the help of Allah SWT. Therefore, this verse was revealed to remind the companions of what had happened to the archers' troops and the consequences of their actions. Through Code S5, it is understood that this verse was revealed in response to the accusations made by the hypocrites who claimed that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) had betrayed and stolen the spoils of war from the Battle of Badr.

Code S6 highlights the revelation of verse 172 of Surah Ali Imran, which occurred after the Battle of Uhud. As the Quraysh army retreated to Makkah, they considered returning to attack the Muslims. However, Allah SWT instilled fear in their hearts, preventing them from carrying out their plan. This divine intervention thwarted their intent to re-engage in battle. Code S7 addresses verse 182 of Surah Ali Imran, revealed to condemn the Jews who arrogantly claimed that Allah SWT was poor while they were rich. Allah SWT refutes their blasphemous statements and warns of severe punishment awaiting them in the Hereafter.

Code S8, according to the table, explains the occasion of the revelation of verse 185 of Surah Ali Imran. The companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) inquired about the verse in Surah al-Sajdah, verse 11, regarding the death of humans, and questioned what happens to the death of other creatures. This verse was revealed to answer that question. Code S9 refers to the occasion of the revelation of verse 196 of Surah Ali Imran, which explains that there is no distinction between one Muslim and another in the sight of Allah SWT based on lineage, ethnicity, caste, rank, wealth, or any such worldly factors. Indeed, it emphasizes that the position of the disbelievers is in the Hellfire.

Code S10 clarifies the prohibition against men marrying more than four wives, referencing verse 3 of Surah al-Nisa'. This verse limits the number of wives to four, provided specific Islamic legal criteria are met. Historically, some Arabs married up to eight or ten women, often neglecting justice in their treatment. Meanwhile, Code S11 addresses verse 7 of Surah al-Nisa', revealed to correct Jahiliyyah practices that denied women and children their inheritance rights. Allah SWT firmly establishes that these rights must be upheld, protecting them from exploitation by society or any individual, both then and until the Day of Judgment. This underscores the enduring commitment to justice and equality in Islamic teachings.

Recommendations for Future Studies

Future studies could expand the scope to analyze sabab nuzul in other *ajza'* of the Quran within Tafsir Tarjuman al-Mustafid. Comparative studies with other classical tafsir, such as Tafsir al-Baydawi and Tafsir al-Tabari, may further validate the interpretations and uncover additional dimensions. Investigating linguistic, theological, and jurisprudential aspects in the tafsir can also offer deeper insights into its relevance and application in contemporary Islamic studies.

5.0 Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concludes that Tafsir Tarjuman al-Mustafid by Al-Fansuri holds significant value in understanding the sabab nuzul (context of revelation) for Quranic verses, particularly those in the fourth juz. The research identified 11 distinct instances of sabab nuzul within this section, each providing a contextual backdrop for the verses. These findings emphasize Al-Fansuri's deep engagement with historical and situational contexts, illustrating his effort to convey the Quran's meanings through culturally relevant interpretations for the Malay-speaking Muslim community.

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