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Analysis of Works Dedicated to the Reasons for Revelation

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Abstract: This article discusses works written on the reasons for the revelation of Qur'anic verses, analyzing the scholarly legacy and research of scholars such as Maymun ibn Mihran, Ali Madini, Ismail Naysaburi, Abulhasan Wahidi, Suyuti, Asqalani, as well as contemporary researchers.

Keywords: Qur'an, Verse, Reasons for Revelation, Narration, Narrator, Sanad, Wahidi, Suyuti.

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Introduction

In order to analyze any historical event, social phenomenon, or political process and develop specific solutions, it is essential to identify the causes behind them. Similarly, to understand many chapters and verses of the Holy Qur'an, it is necessary to know the reasons for their revelation. Exegetes have always used the reasons for revelation when interpreting Qur'anic verses. In addition, separate works have been written specifically on the reasons for revelation. One such work is *Tafsil li-asbab at-tanzil* ("تفصيل الاسباب التنزيل"), written by Maymun ibn Mihran (died 117/735 CE). Unfortunately, its copies have not survived to the present day. The name of this work is mentioned in the writings of Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani. According to him, the Levantine scholar Abdulhakim Unays confirmed the existence of this work and claimed to have seen its manuscript (Asqaloni, 1997).

Methodology

Ali ibn al-Madini (161/778–234/849) wrote the work *Asbab an-Nuzul* ("اسباب النزول") [8]. However, no surviving copy of this work has been identified. Considering that the author was one of the foremost scholars in the field of *jarh wa ta'dil* (the criticism and validation of narrators) and *'ilal al-hadith* (hidden defects in hadiths), it can be assumed that he included

only authentic (*sahih*) and sound (*hasan*) narrations in his book. Imam Bukhari's statement, "I never felt as insignificant in front of anyone as I did before Ali ibn al-Madini" (Zahabiy, 1990), also testifies to his expertise in the science of hadith. Qadi Abdurahman ibn Muhammad ibn Isa (d. 402/1012 CE) also authored a separate work on the reasons for revelation, Ibn Bashkuwal (494/1101–578/1183) mentioned its title as *al-Qisas wa-l-asbab allati nazala min ajliha al-Qur'an* ("القصاص والاسباب التي نزل من اجلها القرآن"). Ibn al-Imad al-Hanbali (1032/1623–1089/1679) mentioned the title of this work as *Kitab Asbab an-Nuzul* (Zahabiy, 1985). Imam al-Dhahabi put forward the idea that *Kitab al-Qisas* and *Kitab Asbab an-Nuzul* were separate works [Shams al-Din Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Dhahabi. *Tarikh al-Islam*. Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, 1410/1990. Vol. XXVIII, p. 61], but he did not reach a definitive conclusion. From the title of the work, it is clear that the author distinguished between *sabab* (reason) and *qissa* (story). If they had meant the same thing, one title would have sufficed. Additionally, the title indicates that the stories of the nations mentioned in the Qur'an are not related to the reasons for their revelation. Qadi Abdurrahman lived in a time when public libraries were abundant, and there were many copyist scribes. Andalusian rulers especially placed great importance on collecting books from Baghdad and other parts of the Islamic world. Therefore, it is likely that Qadi Abdurrahman was familiar with the work of Ali ibn al-Madini and incorporated even more information from it into his own work. The fact that Qadi Abdurrahman was a great hadith scholar and engaged in Qur'anic sciences further supports this view. Ismail ibn Ahmad Naysaburi Zorir (d. 431/1040) wrote a work titled "*Asma Man Nazala Fihim Al-Qur'an*", which focused on the people related to the circumstances of the revelation of Quranic verses. Scholars have recognized him as an authority in the fields of Qur'anic recitation, interpretation, and Hadith. Jalaluddin Suyuti (849/1445–911/1505) mentioned this work as a source in his famous book "*Al-Itqan Fi Ullum Al-Qur'an*", indicating that this book was in circulation in the late 15th century.

Result and Discussion

One of the most famous works on the reasons for revelation that has survived to this day is "*Asbab an-Nuzul*" by Abul Hasan Ali ibn Ahmad Wahidi (d. 468/1076). In his book, Wahidi discusses the reasons for over 500 revelations, starting with the chapter name and then explaining the specific reasons for the verses' revelation. In the preface, Wahidi emphasized that discussing the reasons for revelation is permissible only if reported through authentic chains of transmission (Vohidiy, 1991). However, many of the narrations in this work lack a chain of transmission. For example, the narration concerning the reason for the revelation of verses 57-58 of *Surah Al-Ma'idah* is provided without a chain. Wahidi was a student of Ahmad ibn Ibrahim Tha'labi (d. 427/1035) and often used information from his teacher's book "*Al-Kashf wa al-Bayan*". Since Wahidi trusted Tha'labi's information, he did not independently verify it but transmitted it directly (Zahabiy, 1985).

Additionally, Abul Muzaffar Muhammad ibn Asad Hanafi (d. 567/1172) authored "*Asbab an-Nuzul wa al-Qisas al-Furqaniyah*". However, this book remains unpublished, with a study based on its manuscripts in Berlin and Chester Beatty conducted by researcher Sayyid Muhammad Abdulkarim (Husayn. et all. 2017).

Shi'a scholar Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Shahriashub (d. 588/1192) also wrote a book titled "*Asbab Nuzul al-Qur'an*". His work was later listed under the title "*Asbab wa an-Nuzul ala Mazhab Ahl al-Rasul*" by Umar Rida Kakhala in his "*Majma' al-Mu'allifin*" (Safadiy. Et all, 2000).

Several other works are noteworthy, including Abul Faraj ibn Jawzi's (d. 597/1200) "*Asbab an-Nuzul*", recorded by Haji Khalifa under the same title (Xalifa. Et all).

A more concise work is Ibrahim ibn Umar Ja'bari's "*Mukhtasar Asbab an-Nuzul*". A manuscript of this work is preserved in Berlin under the number 3578. Ja'bari's book is based on Wahidi's work, but with the addition of chains of transmission (Suyuti). There are instances where Ja'bari includes narrations not found in Wahidi's book, such as the reason for the revelation of verses 14–16 of *Surah Al-Baqarah*.

Ahmad ibn Hajar Asqalani (773/1371–852/1448) also authored a book on this topic titled "*Al-Ijab fi Bayan al-Asbab*". Ibn Hajar emphasized the importance of authentic chains of transmission, explaining that merely reporting a chain is insufficient; it must be valid (*Al-Ijab fi Bayan al-Asbab an-Nuzul*). He used Wahidi's work as a foundation and added his own assessments, classifying narrations as authentic, reliable, weak, or very weak.

Jalaluddin Suyuti's "*Lubab an-Nuqul fi Asbab an-Nuzul*" synthesized previous works and became highly regarded for its brevity and thorough documentation. The work was first published separately in Cairo in 1873 under the title "*Asbab an-Nuzul*".

Another noteworthy author, Atiyyallah ibn Atiyya Burhani Azhuri (d. 1190/1776), composed a work titled "*Irshad ar-Rahman li-Asbab an-Nuzul wa-Nasikh al-Mutashabih wa-Tajwid al-Qur'an*", which summarized the works of Wahidi, Ja'bari, and Suyuti.

Conclusion

Among modern scholars, Muqbil ibn Hadi Wadi'i authored "*As-Sahih al-Musnad min Asbab an-Nuzul*". However, he focused primarily on the chains of transmission rather than the content of the narrations. There are instances where his analysis conflicts with the widely accepted classifications of Makki and Madani verses, as he attributes a Madani incident to the revelation of a Makki verse (Vodi'iy, et all).

In summary, numerous classical and modern works have been written on the reasons for revelation, often bearing the same title, "*Asbab an-Nuzul*".

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