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The Concept of the History of the Reasons for Revelation from the Perspective of al-Suyuti (A Study of the Book Lubāb al-Nuqūl in Reasons for Revelation)

Konsepsi Riwayat Asbāb al-Nuzūl Perspektif al-Suyūṭī (Telaah Kitab Lubāb al-Nuzūl fī Asbāb al-Nuzūl)

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Abstract

One of the important works in the study of Asbāb al-Nuzūl is Lubāb al-Nuqūl fī Asbāb al-Nuzūl written by al-Suyūṭī. This article seeks to uncover the profile of his work and explore more deeply related to the conception of asbāb al-nuzūl the perspective of Jalal al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911 H), especially in his work entitled Lubāb al-Nuqūl fī Asbāb al-Nuzūl. This study is important to carry out because Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī is considered to have a more mature conception in formulating the study of asbāb al-nuzūl. To elaborate the problem, this research will use a descriptive-qualitative method, data taken based on literature data including scientific articles, books, books, and other scientific sources related to the research, so that this research is included in the category of library research. The results of this

study show that al-Suyūṭī carried out a theoretical-methodological development of the study of asbāb al-nuzūl. In addition, al-Suyūṭī also reconceptualized the study of asbāb al-nuzūl including the understanding of asbāb al-nuzūl, the source of obtaining of asbāb al-nuzūl, methodological steps in formulating the asbāb al-nuzūl, and the urgency of understanding the asbāb al-nuzūl.

Keywords: al-Suyūtī; Asbāb al-Nuzūl; Conception.

Abstrak

Salah satu karva penting dalam kajian Asbāb al-Nuzūl adalah Lubāb al-Nuqūl fī Asbāb al-Nuzūl yang ditulis oleh al-Suyūtī. Artikel ini berupaya mengungkap profil karyanya tersebut serta menelusuri lebih mendalam terkait konsepsi kajian asbāb al-nuzūl perspektif Jalal al-Din al-Suyūti (w. 911 H) khususnya dalam karyanya berjudul Lubāb al-Nugūl fi Asbāb al-Nuzūl tersebut. Kajian ini penting untuk dilakukan karena Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūtī dinilai memiliki konsepsi yang lebih matang dalam merumuskan kajian asbāb al-nuzūl. Untuk mengelaborasi permasalahan, penelitian ini akan menggunakan metode deskriptif-kualitatif, data yang diambil berbasis data kepustakaan meliputi artikel ilmiah, buku, kitab, dan sumber-sumber ilmiah lain yang berhubungan dengan penelitian, sehingga penelitian ini termasuk dalam kategori penelitian kepustakaan (library research). Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa al-Suyūtī melakukan pengembangan teoritis-metodologis atas kajian asbāb al-nuzūl. Selain itu, al-Suyūtī juga melakukan rekonsepsi kajian asbāb alnuzūl meliputi pengertian riwayat asbāb al-nuzūl, sumber memperoleh riwayat asbāb al-nuzūl, langkah metodologis dalam merumuskan riwayat asbāb al-nuzūl, serta urgensitas memahami riwayat asbāb al-nuzūl.

Kata Kunci: al-Suyūtī; Asbāb al-Nuzūl; Konsepsi.

A. Introduction

Understanding the context behind the revelation of verses in the Qur'an, according to scholars, is vital knowledge, especially for those who wish to interpret the Qur'an. This assumption is based on the fact that there are verses in the Qur'an that were revealed due to specific reasons. Therefore, knowing the historical events behind the revelation of these verses allows a Qur'an researcher to find dialectical information between the text and

reality.¹ Furthermore, understanding the background of the revelation of a verse will help a researcher of the Qur'an grasp the intended meaning that Allah wishes to convey in the Qur'an.²

Chronologically, it can be traced that the process of the revelation of the Qur'an is surrounded by the socio-cultural dynamics that occurred at the time the verses were revealed. In other words, the Qur'an was not revealed suddenly, but rather in response to the issues that were happening in Arab society at that time, both as answers to questions and as responses to certain events.³ Textual information regarding the events that led to the revelation of a verse in Islamic studies discourse is referred to as the narration of asbāb al-nuzūl.

Genealogically, the history of asbāb al-nuzūl was initially found only in Islamic historiography books such as sirah nabawi and the commentaries of classical scholars. This study then evolved into an independent discipline, although it still falls within the realm of 'ulūm al-Qur'ān. According to al-Zarkashī, one of the first figures to introduce this study as an independent field was 'Alī ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Madīnī (d. 234 AH).⁴ Indeed, according to al-Suyuti, al-Madini was the first person to lay the foundations for the study of the causes of revelation.⁵

Bassām al-Jamal, one of the contemporary researchers in the study of asbāb al-nuzūl, does not align with what al-Suyūṭī stated above. According to him, the pioneer of the study of asbāb al-nuzūl is not al-Madīnī, but rather al-Waḥīdī. This is based on two arguments: first, Ibn al-Nadīm, as quoted by Bassām al-Jamal,

¹ Midih Saputra, "The Asbab Al-Nuzul Dalam Pandangan Ulama Klasik Dan Kontemporer", *eL-HIKMAH: Jurnal Kajian Dan Penelitian Pendidikan Islam*, 2018, page. 3, doi:10.20414/elhikmah.v0i0.284.

² Hafizi, 'Asbab An-Nuzul Dalam Penafsiran Al-Qur'an (Aspek Sejarah Dan Kontekstual Penafsiran)', *Al-Dzikra: Jurnal Studi Ilmu al-Qur'an Dan al-Hadits*, 14.1 (2020), page. 45, doi:10.24042/al-dzikra.v14i1.6047.

³ Niswatur Rokhmah, "Studi Analisis Kaidah Asbabun Nuzul Kelebihan Dan Kekurangannya", *Al-Tadabbur: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir*, 4.02 (2019), page. 160, doi:10.30868/at.v4i02.467.

⁴ Badr al-Dîn al-Zarkashî, *al-Burhān fī 'ulūm al-Qur'ān* (Kairo: Dār al-Hadīth, 2006), page. 28.

 $^{^5}$ Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2019), page. 48 .

mentions that al-Madīnī did indeed write a book titled "Kitāb al-Tanzīl," but this work is included in the list of lost works and has never been found, thus it has never been referenced by scholars. Second, regarding his scholarly capacity. Although al-Madīnī was a hadith expert, he did not receive sufficient recognition from scholars in the field of tafsir. ⁶

Andrew Rippin, one of the Orientalists, conducted an indepth investigation into the works of asbab al-nuzul. As a result, he discovered at least 19 works on asbab al-nuzul written by various scholars. These works were authored by: 'Ikrimah (d. 105 AH), Hasan al-Basrī (d. 110 AH), 'Alī Ibn al-Madīnī (d. 234 AH), 'Abd al-Rahman al-Andalusi (d. 402 AH), Ismā'il al-Naisābūri al-Darir (d. 430 AH), Abū al-Hasan 'Alī al-Wahidī al-Naisābūrī (d. 468 AH), Muhammad ibn As'ad al-'Iraqi (d. 567 AH), Abū Ja'far al-Mazandarani (d. 588 AH), Ibn al-Jauzi (d. 597 AH), Burhan al-Din Ibrāhīm al-Ja'barī (d. 732 AH) and Hibat Allāh (d. 738 AH), Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jauziyyah (d. 751 AH), Abū al-'Abbas Ahmad al-Hanafi (d. 816 AH), Ibn al-Hajar al-'Asqalani (d. 852 AH), Jalal al-Din al-Suyūtī (d. 911 AH), Muhammad Ibn Taj al-'Ārifin, Ibn 'Atiyvah al-Ujhūrī (d. 1190 AH), and two others for which the authors are unknown, found still in manuscript form. 7 Most of the works that have been mentioned have not reached us. Only four works have survived and managed to circulate, namely: Asbab al-Nuzūl by al-Wahidī, Asbāb al-Nuzūl wa Qisas al-Furgāniyyah by

⁶ Bassām Jamal, *Asbāb Al-Nuzūl: 'ilm Min 'ulūm al-Qur'ān*, al-Ṭab'ah 1 (al-Dār al-Baiḍā': al-Markaz al-Thaqāfī al-'Arabī, 2005), page. 87.

⁷ There is another work in the study of asba>b al-nuzu>l that is still in manuscript format and whose author is unknown. This work is kept in the library of Princeton University, New Jersey with the name of this catalog "The Garret Princeton Collection 135 (Yahuda 5143)". the work is then titled "Asbāb al-Nuzul al-Āya wa al-Suwar". Next, a work titled "Tafṣīl li Asbāb al-Nuzul" stored in the Berlin library, with catalog OR 1300. The authorship of this work is unknown; however, the manuscript is tentatively believed to have been written around the year 900 AH. See more details at: Andrew Rippin, "The Exegetical Genre Asbāb al-Nuzūl: A Bibliographical and Terminological Survey", Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, 48.1 (1985), page. 2-12.

al-'Irāqī, the work of al-Ja'barī, and Lubāb al-Nuqūl fī Asbāb al-Nuzūl by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyuṭī.⁸

The presentation of the works above demonstrates the significant attention that scholars have given to the study of asbab al-nuzul. Among the works mentioned, al-Suyuti's work is considered the most representative in the study of asbab al-nuzul. This is because al-Suyūtī has a more mature conception than his predecessors. One of the differing perspectives on the narration of asbāb al-nuzūl according to al-Suvūtī is that he views the narration as an explanation of the events behind the revelation of the verses of the Our'an during the period of revelation (ayyām wuqū'ih). This contrasts with the ideas proposed by his predecessor, al-Wahidi, who included stories and events that occurred among earlier communities as part of asbāb al-nuzūl. Additionally, al-Suyūtī also developed the study of asbab al-nuzul by incorporating the chain of transmission of the narration and constructing a method for establishing the narration of asbab al-nuzul. This will be the focus of this research.

Research related to the study of asbab al-nuzul has been extensively conducted by previous authors, including "Asbab An-Nuzul dan Urgensinya Dalam Memahami Makna Al-Qur'an" by Ahmad Zaini. "Analysis of the Study Asbabun Nuzul: The Urgency and Contribution in Understanding the Qur'an" by Mukhlis. "Memahami Makna dan Urgensi Asbab An-Nuzul Al-Qur'an" is a collaborative work by Herni, Helda, and Hayatun Nida. "The works that have been mentioned have a similar focus of study between one another with the focal point of explaining the study of asbāb al-nuzūl in general and its function as one of the

⁸ Martin Nguyen, "Sunni Hermeneutical Literature", dalam Mustafa Akram Ali Shah and M. A. Abdel Haleem (ed), *The Oxford Handbook of Qur'anic Studies*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), page. 838.

⁹ Ahmad Zaini, "Asbab An-Nuzul Dan Urgensinya Dalam Memahami Makna Al-Qur'an", *Hermeneutik: Jurnal Ilmu Al Qur'an Dan Tafsir*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (2014), https://doi.org/10.21043/hermeneutik.v8i1.902.

¹⁰ Mukhlis, "Analysis of the Study Asbabun Nuzul: The Urgency and Contribution in Understanding the Qur'an", *Al-Muhith: Jurnal Ilmu Qur'an Dan Hadits*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (2024), https://doi.org/10.35931/am.v2i2.2945.

¹¹ Herni, Helda, Dan Hayatun Nida, "Memahami Makna Dan Urgensi Asbab Annuzul Quran', *Mushaf Journal: Jurnal Ilmu Al Quran Dan Hadis*, Vol. 2, No.2 (2022), https://mushafjournal.com/index.php/mj/article/view/30.

media or tools for interpreting the Qur'an. The research that has similarity in study content is an article written by Siti Muslimah, Yayan Mulyana, and Medina Chodijah, entitled "Urgensi Asbāb al-Nuzūl Perspektif al-Wāḥidi". However, the research focuses on the thoughts of al-Wāḥidi. ¹² As far as the author's search, research that focuses on the conception of the study of asbāb al-nuzūl al-Suyūṭī perspective has never been done before.

This article will use a descriptive-qualitative method. This research itself is included in the category of library research because the data taken is based on library data such as scientific articles, books, scientific magazines and so on. To find the conception of asbāb al-Nuzūl from al-Suyūṭī's perspective, the author will examine more deeply al-Suyūṭī's work entitled Lubāb al-Nuqūl fī Asbāb al-Nuzūl as well as explain the methodology used by al-Suyūṭī in compiling his work. Furthermore, the author will suggest differences in the conception of asbāb al-nuzūl from al-Suyūṭī's perspective with the views of other scholars to determine the position of al-Suyūṭī's work in the discourse of asbāb al-nuzūl studies.

B. Biography of Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī

His name is Jalāl al-Dīn Abū al-Faḍl 'Abd al-Raḥman ibn Abī Bakr ibn Muḥammad al-Suyūṭī. He was born on the 1st of Rajab in the year 849 Hijri or coinciding with October 3, 1445 AD in Egypt in an area called Asyūṭ. ¹³ Scientifically, al-Suyūṭī got the first teaching from his own father named Kamāl al-Dīn Abū Bakr al-Suyūṭī. Unfortunately, it seems that al-Suyūṭī did not take a long education at his father, because his father died on the 5th of Safar in 855 Hijri, when al-Suyūṭī was still approximately five and a half years old. ¹⁴

His father himself was one of the academic figures of his day, he held an important position in a madrasa called

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¹² Siti Muslimah, Yayan Mulyana, dan Medina Chodijah, "Urgensi Asbāb Al-Nuzūl Menurut Al-Wahidi", *Al-Bayan: Jurnal Studi Ilmu Al- Qur'an Dan Tafsir*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (2017). https://doi.org/10.15575/al-bayan.v2i1.1808

¹³ E. M. Sartain, "*Jalāl al-dīn al-Suyūṭī.: Biography and background*", (London: Cambridge University Press, 1975), page. 24.

¹⁴ Sartain, page. 24.

Shaikhūniyyah, so his father had quite extensive relations with the scholars who taught there. This was utilized by al-Suyūṭī's father to bring little al-Suyūṭī together with the scholars. In fact, when he was three years old, al-Suyūṭī was invited by his father to attend a gathering of knowledge taught by the popular scholar Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī.¹⁵ Scholastically, al-Suyūṭī studied the Qur'an as the initial focus of his intellectual journey. He then managed to finish memorizing the Qur'an before he was eight years old. After completing the memorization of the Qur'an, he began to focus on the study of fiqh and Arabic grammar, he was recorded studying books in the field of fiqh which are quite popular such as 'Umdah al-Aḥkām, Minhaj al-Ṭālibīn, Minhaj al-Wuṣul, and in the study of Arabic grammar such as Alfiyyah Ibn Mālik. In addition, he also studied the Qur'an, hadith, Farāiḍ and so on across Islamic scientific studies.¹¹6

His diligence in learning led al-Suyūṭī to become a figure who was very good at various Islamic studies. As quoted by Iyyād Khālid, Al-Suyūṭī explicitly stated:

"Praise be to Allah, I have been blessed with mastery in seven fields of knowledge: tafsir, hadith, fiqh, Arabic grammar, 'ilm al-Ma'ānī, 'ilm al-bayān, and 'ilm al-badī'". 17

In addition to these sciences, al-Suyūṭī also claimed to have mastery in the study of uṣūl al-fiqh, farāiḍ and the science of Qirā'āt. In relation to the study of qirā'āt, al-Suyūṭī seems to master it by himself, so he stated that he would not teach it to anyone, because the science of qirā'āt is a study that is transmisional (canonized), in other words, it is not valid if it does not get its study serially from a teacher to its peak to the Prophet Muhammad, so al-Suyūṭī stated that he did not teach it widely.¹⁸

As a scholar, al-Suyūṭī was a very productive person. According to the confession of one of his students, al-Dāwudī, as quoted by Ḥusain al-Dhahabī that every day al-Suyūṭī wrote works

¹⁵ Sartain, page. 27.

¹⁶ Sartain

¹⁷ Iyyād Khālid al-Ṭibbā', *Al-Imām al-Ḥafiz Jalal al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī*, (Damaskus: Dār al-Qalam, 1996), page. 74-75.

¹⁸ Al-Tibbā', page. 75.

not less than three sheets of paper. ¹⁹ If calculated, during his lifetime, al-Suyūṭī has managed to write at least five hundred titles of works with a variety of fields of study, such as tafsir, tafsir science, hadith, fiqh, history, linguistic studies and so on. ²⁰ Among al-Suyūṭī's popular works, especially in the study of tafsir and tafsir science, are: al-Durr al-manthūr fi tafsīr bi al-ma'thūr, Tafsīr al-Jalālain, al-Itqān fi 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān, Lubāb al-Nuqūl fi Asbāb al-Nuzūl, Asrār al-Tanzīl, al-Iklīl fi Istinbāṭ al-Tanzīl, al-Taḥbīr fi 'Ilm al-Tafsīr, and Mu'tarak al-Aqrān fī I'jāz al-Qur'ān, and so on. ²¹

Al-Suyūṭī died on Thursday, 19 Jumada al-Ūlā in 911 Hijri after suffering from an illness for approximately seven days. His remains were interred near Khānqāh (a kind of Sufī place of worship), in the Cairo area, Egypt. Al-Suyūṭī has perpetuated his name as one of the scholars who made a major contribution in Islamic studies, especially in the study of 'ulūm al-Qur'ān.

C. Profile of Lubāb al-Nuqūl fi Asbāb al-Nuzūl

Al-Suyūṭī admitted to writing Lubāb al-Nuqūl fī Asbāb al-Nuzūl by writing his work inspired by al-Wāḥīdī's work entitled Asbāb al-Nuzūl. He reveals this himself in his introduction. Al-Suyūṭī did not even hesitate to praise al-Wāḥīdi's work as the best book in the field of asbāb al-nuzūl, although in the end al-Suyūṭī disagreed in several discussions. In terms of systematics, al-Suyūṭī's work is not much different from al-Wāḥīdi's Asbāb al-nuzūl, where he mentions a verse then gives a description of the history of asbāb al-nuzūl after the verse and he arranges it in the order of verses and chapters in an orderly muṣḥafī.

¹⁹ Muḥammad Ḥusain al-Dhahabi, *al-Tafsir wa al-Mufassirūn*, jilid 1, (Kairo: Dār al-Hadīth, 2005), page. 218.

²⁰ As narrated by Mani', 'Abd al-Ḥalim Maḥmūd, citing al-Kannāni, al-Suyūṭi wrote at least 73 titles in the field of tafsir, 237 titles in the study of hadith, 71 titles in the field of fiqh, 20 titles in the study of *uṣūl al-fiqh*, *uṣūl al-din*, and tasawwuf, 72 titles in the study of language, 80 titles in studies compiled from various fields of knowledge, 30 titles in the study of *Ṭabaqāt* and history, and 37 titles in encyclopedic studies. See, Mani' 'Abd al-Ḥalim Maḥmūd, *Manāhij al-Mufassirin* (Kairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-Miṣrī, 2000), page. 247-248.

²¹ Al-Sayyid Muḥammad 'Alī al-Ayyāzī, *al-Mufassirūn Ḥayātuhum wa Manhajuhum*, Jilid 2, (Teheran: Wizārah al-thaqāfah wa al-Irshād al-Islāmī, 2008), page. 792.

Muhammad Husain al-Dhahabī assesses al-Suyūtī as one of the scholars who has expertise in the study of history, both the matan, sanad, and the prominence of hadith narrators.²² His expertise in the study of narration makes al-Suyūtī very careful in choosing references. In this regard, in formulating asbab al-nuzul verses, al-Suvūtī claims that Lubāb al-Nugūl fi Asbāb al-Nuzūl refers to authoritative books. The sources cited by al-Suvūtī are divided into two categories. From the category of hadith literature consists of: Sahīh al-Bukhārī, Sahīh Muslim, Sunan Abī Dāud, Sunan al-Tirmidhi, Sunan al-Nasai, Sunan Ibn Majah, Mustadrak al-Hākim, Sahīh Ibn Hibbān, Sunan al-Baihāqī, Sunan al-Dārugutnī, Musnad Ahmad, Musnad al-Bazzār, Musnad Abū Ya'la, Mu'jam al-Tabrani, and others. In addition to relying on the hadith literature, al-Suyūtī also quotes asbāb al-nuzūl narrations from the commentary literature. Such as: Jāmi' al-Bayān 'An Ta'wīl Āy al-Our'an, or tafsir al-Tabari, Tafsir Ibn Abi Hatim, Tafsir Ibn Mardawaih, Tafsīr Abī al-Shaikh, Tafsīr Ibn Hibban, Tafsīr al-Faryābī, Tafsīr 'Abd al-Razzāq, Tafsīr Ibn Mundhir and so on.²³

In addition to the quality of the references, al-Suyūṭī also details the elements of novelty compared to the works of his predecessors. There are at least six things that al-Suyūṭī mentions as elements of novelty of his work. First, al-Suyūṭī compiled his work in a more concise format. Secondly, al-Suyūṭī wrote more additional information than al-Wāḥī's work. Third, referring to the narrations collected in authoritative books as well as mentioning their ¬mukharrij¬.²⁴ Fourthly separating the saheeh traditions from the others and the accepted and rejected ones. Fifth, compiling conflicting reports. And sixth, separating the narrations that - in his analysis - do not fall under the category of asbāb al-nuzūl.²⁵

²² Al-Dhahabi, page. 218.

²³ Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Lubāb Al-Nuqūl Fī Asbāb al-Nuzūl* (Beirut: Mu'assasah al-Kutub al-Thaqāfiyyah, 2002), page. 9. Compare with, Andrew Rippin..., page. 9-10.

²⁴ Mukharrij is the ism al-fa'il (active participle) of the verb خرخ, which means "one who produces." In the context of hadith science, a mukharrij is a person who cites a hadith in their work along with its chain of narration. See, Abdul Majid Khon, Ulumul hadis (Jakarta: Amzah, 2013), page. 114.

²⁵ Al-Suyūtī, Lubāb Al-Nuqul Fī Asbāb al-Nuzul..., page. 8.

D. Conception of Asbāb al-Nuzūl History from al-Suyūṭī's Perspective

1. Definition

al-Suyūṭi in giving an understanding of the history of asbāb al-nuzūl does not provide a firm definition. However, he gives a brief understanding of asbāb al-nuzūl with the phrase (أيام وقوعه أنه ما نزلت الاية) which means that asbāb al-nuzūl is an event that is the background of the revelation of verses during the revelation of the Qur'an. As mentioned earlier, in some cases a Qur'ānic verse was revealed in relation to an event that occurred at the time of revelation. In other words, there are some events that cause the revelation of a verse or several verses of the Qur'an, and indeed the Qur'anic verse was revealed in response to the event.

This expression confirms that the history of asbāb al-nuzūl is a historical narrative accompanied by direct events at the time of the revelation of the Qur'an. The meaning of a direct event is that the Qur'an was revealed along with an event that was responded to by the Qur'an which became the cause of the revelation of a verse, whether the response was an event or a question from the community at the time the Qur'an was revealed. What needs to be underlined is that 'cause' here is not cause as understood in the law of causality. According to al-Suyūṭī as adapted by Syamsul Bakri, that historical events should not be understood as causes, and the revelation of the Qur'anic verse as an effect. Asbāb al-nuzūl refers more to the narrative that tells the days on which the Qur'anic verse was revealed and it is not causality.²⁷

What al-Suyūṭī asserts automatically revises the idea of asbāb al-nuzūl al-Waḥīdī. Al-Waḥīdī himself included the previous story as part of the asbāb al-nuzūl of a verse. Like al-Wāḥīdī's statement in mentioning the following asbāb al-nuzūl of surah al-Fil:

²⁶ Al-Suyūṭī, *Lubāb Al-Nuqūl Fī Asbāb al-Nuzūl*.

²⁷ Syamsul Bakri, "Asbabun Nuzul: Diaog Antara Teks Dan Realita Kesejarahan", *Jurnal At-Tibyan: Jurnal Ilmu Alqur'an Dan Tafsir*, 1.1 (2016), page. 3, doi:10.32505/at-tibyan.v1i1.30.

نزلت في قصة أصحاب الفيل و قصدهم تخريب الكعبة، و ما فعل الله تعالى بهم من إهلاكهم وصرفهم عن البنت وهي معروفة

"This surah was revealed in connection with the story of the aṣḥāb al-fil and their intention in destroying the Ka'bah, and what Allah did to them by destroying them, and turning them away from the Ka'bah and that is known". 28

Al-Suyūṭī's refutation of al-Waḥīdī's work above confirms the clarity of al-Suyūṭī's definition of asbāb al-nuzūl with the restriction (ايام وقوعه) that asbāb al-nuzūl is an event that is intertwined with the process of the revelation of the Qur'anic verse in the era of revelation. As for the stories that occurred in the past according to al-Suyūṭī although it is part of the background description of a verse or surah, it does not mean that it is asbāb al-nuzūl itself, but only a description of previous stories, such as the story of the people of Noah, the people of 'Ād, the people of Thamūd and others.²⁹

If it is further emphasized, the idea of al-Waḥīdī which includes the story of the attack on the Kaaba as asbāb al-nuzūl - based on the assumption that asbāb al-nuzūl is an event that causes the revelation of the Qur'anic verse, then this will have implications as if all Qur'anic verses have asbāb al-nuzūl. So it is necessary to affirm and limit the historical phenomena that fall into the category of asbāb al-nuzūl and which are not. This is related to the many narrations told by the companions on an event by linking it to a verse not as asbāb al-nuzūl, but an ijtihad or interpretation.³⁰

2. Sources of Asbāb al-Nuzūl History

As stated by the scholars, information regarding the history of asbāb al-nuzūl can only be obtained from the narration of those who witnessed the process of revelation, namely the companions. This is the same as what was stated by al-Wāḥīdī quoted by al-Suyūṭī that the only way to get the history of asbāb al-nuzūl is

²⁸ Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī al-Wāḥīdī, *Asbāb Al-Nuzul* (Arab Saudi: Dār Iṣlāḥ, 1992), page. 464.

²⁹ Al-Suyūtī, *Lubāb Al-Nugūl Fī Asbāb al-Nuzūl...*, page. 8.

 ³⁰ Shidqy Munjin, "Konsep Asbâb Al-Nuzul Dalam 'Ulum Al-Quran", Al
Tadabbur: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir, 4.01 (2019), page. 66, doi:10.30868/at.v4i01.311.

through information conveyed by the companions who witnessed firsthand the process of the revelation of the Qur'anic verse.³¹ Likewise, like the definition put forward by Andrew Rippin that asbāb al-nuzūl is: Reports, transmitted generally from the companions of Muhammad, detailing the cause, time and place of revelation of a portion (usually a verse) of the Qur'an".³²

To find information about asbāb al-nuzūl is not an easy job. With the many disputes of the scholars regarding the determination of the history of asbāb al-nuzūl is enough evidence that its determination is a complicated task. This is mainly due to the lack of accurate historical data that can provide precise information about the history of asbāb al-nuzūl. Therefore, the scholars are very careful in determining the history of asbāb al-nuzūl, so that in determining it they make efforts to criticize the sanad to filter which history is authentic and which is not.³³

As a scholar who has expertise in the field of history, al-Suyūṭī is very selective in determining the history of asbāb alnuzūl. In terms of the source of the narration quoted by al-Suyūṭī, in addition to the narration that comes from the companions who are connected to the Prophet Muhammad or the musnad hadith. 34 al-Suyūṭī also included a narration from the ṭābi'īn that was mursal. It is noted that it has a strong sanad, which comes from senior companions in the field of interpretation such as Mujāhid, 'Ikrimah, Sa'īd ibn Jubair, or traditions that are mursal but get support from other mursal narrations. 35 From the provisions underlined by al-Suyūṭī, he lists in Lubab al-Nuqūl fi asbāb al-nuzūl the number of

³¹ Al-Suyūtī, *Lubāb Al-Nuqul Fī Asbāb al-Nuzul*, page. 7.

³² Andrew Rippin, "Occasions of Revelation", dalam: *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, (Brill, 2003), page. 569.

³³ Rokhmah, page. 161.

³⁴ Lexically, the word "*musnad*" is the object form (*maf'ūl*) of the verb أسند, which means to attribute or to support. Terminologically, according to Maḥmūd Ṭaḥḥān, a *musnad* hadith is a hadith whose chain of narration is connected all the way to the Prophet Muhammad Saw. See, Mahmud al-Tahhan, *Taisir Mustalah al-Hadith* (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma'arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tauzi', 2010), page. 170.

³⁵ Al-Suyūṭi, *Lubāb Al-Nuqūl Fī Asbāb al-Nuzūl*, page. 8.

narrations of asbāb al-nuzul in the Qur'an is as many as 1053 narrations.³⁶

3. Methods of Knowing the History of Asbab al-Nuzul

Al-Suyūṭi launched several methods in determining the existence of asbāb al-nuzūl history. This is related to the indication that not all information conveyed by scholars related to the revelation of verses is asbāb al-nuzūl, sometimes it is an "interpretation" that a verse was revealed for a certain reason. So the method offered by al-Suyūṭi to find out the history of asbāb al-nuzūl is through the expression mentioned by the scholars. First, if a scholar states "nazalat fi kadha" (this verse was revealed regarding this matter), and another scholar also states the same expression but different cases are mentioned, then it is an interpretation, not showing the asbāb al-nuzūl.³⁷

Secondly, if a scholar states that "this verse was revealed in relation to this issue", while another scholar clearly states the asbab al-nuzul that contradicts the first scholar, then the scholar who states the asbab al-nuzul clearly is the one that can be used as a guide (mu'tamad), while the first is an interpretation. For example, when al-Bukhari mentioned a narration from Ibn 'Umar regarding the sabab al-nuzūl of Q.S Al-Bagarah [2]: 223 which according to Ibn 'Umar was revealed in connection with the waiver that Allah gave to Muslims to have sexual intercourse with their wives from behind.³⁸ On the other hand, Jabir states explicitly that the sabab al-nuzūl of Q.S Al-Baqarah [2]: 223 is a response to the Jewish saying that those who have intercourse with their wives from behind will have squinted children born to them.³⁹ So what is used as a guide is the narration from Jabir, because the narration is transmissive (mangul), while the narration from Ibn 'Umar is an interpretation.⁴⁰

Thirdly, if some of the scholars mention a narration of sabab al-nuzul explicitly, and other scholars also mention a different narration, then in this case what is used as a guide is which of the

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³⁶ Al-Suyūṭī, *Lubāb Al-Nuqūl Fī Asbāb al-Nuzūl*, page. 314.

³⁷ Al-Suyūtī, al-Itaan fī 'Ulūm al-Our'ān..., page. 53.

³⁸ Al-Suyūtī, *Lubāb Al-Nugūl Fī Asbāb al-Nuzūl*, page. 44.

³⁹ Al-Suyūṭī, *Lubāb Al-Nuqūl Fī Asbāb al-Nuzūl*, page. 44.

⁴⁰ Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān...*, page. 53.

two narrations has a valid chain of transmission (sanad) quality. Fourth, for example in the case of two narrations both have a strong sanad, then both are analyzed and then tarjīḥ to find which of the two narrations whose narrators were present and involved in the sabab al-nuzūl story of the verse. As an example in the case of the revelation of Q.S Al-Isra' [17]: 75 relating to the issue of the spirit. The first narration narrated by al-Bukhārī, from Ibn Mas'ūd, while the second narration narrated by al-Tirmidhī from Ibn 'Abbās. The two narrations are both of strong quality, but the narration that comes from Ibn Mas'ūd is favored to be used as a foothold because he was involved in the story. 42

Fifth, sometimes there are verses that have two causes (sabab al-nuzūl) or several causes mentioned, which are not known. Then such cases are understood with the existing problems. For example, a narration narrated by al-Bukhārī, from 'Ikrimah, from Ibn 'Abbas, which tells the accusation of Hilal bin Umayyah to the wife of the Prophet Muhammad who was accused of adultery with Shuraik bin Sahmā'. So the Prophet said "you must bring evidence or you will be punished with a whip on your back", Hilal then asked, "O Messenger of Allah, if one of us sees our wife with someone else, does it still require evidence?". Then Q.S Al-Nur [24] was revealed: 6-9.43 On the other hand, al-Bukhārī and Muslim narrated a tradition from Sahl b. Sa'd, who said: 'Uwaimir once came to 'Asim b. 'Adi, and he said, "I asked the Messenger of Allah (SAW), what do you think, O Messenger of Allah, about the person who encounters a man with his wife, then he kills him, should the one who kills him also be killed, or what should be done? The Prophet then reproached the questioner. 'Asim told this to 'Uwaimir, so 'Uwaimir said, "by Allah I will go to the Messenger of Allah and ask him about it" and the Messenger of Allah replied, "indeed a verse has been revealed regarding your problem and your friend".44

Scholars such as al-Nawāwī and Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī take the view that the two incidents described in the hadith have been

⁴¹ Al-Suyūṭī, al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān.

⁴² Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, page. 54.

⁴³ Al-Suyūṭī, al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān.

⁴⁴ Al-Suyūṭī, al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān, page. 54.

compromised, that the incident was originally experienced by Hilal ibn Umayyah, and coincided with the case of 'Uwaimir, so the verse above has a simultaneous cause. 45 Sixth, if it cannot be compromised as in the fifth case, then it can be understood that the verse was revealed repeatedly. As in the case of Q.S Al-Taubah [9]: 113. This verse has various versions of asbab al-nuzul, the first version is that this verse was revealed in connection with the Prophet Muhammad SAW who received a ban when he wanted to ask for forgiveness for his uncle Abū Tālib. The second version, is a narration submitted by al-Tirmidhi that one day there was a child who begged the forgiveness of his parents, while both were still polytheists. 'Alī bin Abī Tālib then asked the boy, "is it possible to ask for forgiveness for parents who are still polytheists?" The man replied that Prophet Ibrahim had prayed for his polytheist father. Hearing this answer, 'Ali bin Abi Talib asked the Prophet Muhammad about it and then the verse was revealed. The next version, narrated that the verse was revealed in connection with the Prophet Muhammad SAW who was not permitted by Allah when praying for his mother. So all the existing narrations are compromised by the scholars as a verse that was revealed with a variety of causes (ta'addud al-nuzūl).46

4. The Urgency of Understanding Asbāb al-Nuzūl History

The history of asbāb al-nuzūl is not just a historical narrative that keeps a written record of the history of past events that are intertwined with the process of the revelation of the Qur'an. Al-Suyūṭī regrets the attitude of those who merely judge that the history of asbāb al-nuzūl has no urgency other than being a historical document. According to al-Suyūṭī knowing and understanding the history of asbāb al-nuzūl has benefits including the following:

a. Knowing the wisdom behind the stipulation of a law.⁴⁷ The scholars agree that there is no law enacted by Allah without wisdom behind it. All laws that have been regulated contain wisdom. However, not all humans are able to grasp the wisdom behind the ruling. For example, the provision of

⁴⁵ Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*.

⁴⁶ Al-Suyūṭi, *al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān...*, page. 55.

⁴⁷ Al-Suyūtī, al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān, page. 48.

liquor (khamr) that passes through four stages, which is illustrated through four verses that discuss the law of khamr gradually, first Q.S Al-Nahl [16]: 67, the second stage Q.S Al-Baqarah[2]: 219, the third stage Q.S Al-Nisa'[4]: 43, and the final stage, where Allah forbids alcohol absolutely in Q.S Al-Maidah [5]: 90-91. By knowing the asbāb al-nuzūl of the four verses above, it can be seen that the proscription of khamr was carried out gradually to the Muslim community at that time. Along with the reality of pre-Islamic society that likes to drink alcohol, so it is necessary to take the process to forbid alcohol so that the legal provisions are implemented with awareness, not compulsion.⁴⁸

- b. Assisting in the process of specialization (takhṣiṣ) of a verse containing a law for people who follow the rule of al-'ibrah bi khuṣūṣ al-sabab lā bi 'umūm al-lafẓ (a provision is based on the specificity of the cause, not on the generality of the lafadz). Such is the case in the early verses of Q.S Al-Mujadilah, which relates the report of Khaulah bint Tha'labah on her husband Aus bin al-Ṣāmit who committed ẓihār. If the above rule is followed, then the ruling contained in the verse only applies specifically in that case. As for deciding other cases, it is necessary to conduct a review through the method of qiyās (analogy) or so on. Thus, knowledge of the cause of the revelation of a verse helps one to understand the integrity of the context of a verse, and vice versa.
- c. Helping to clarify the meaning of a verse and avoiding problematic understanding (mushkil). There are several examples of verses that cannot be understood proportionally except by understanding the historical context of the verse. Marwan bin Ḥakam, one of the companions of the Prophet once misunderstood Q.S Ali Imran [2]: 188. Marwan understood the verse in a purely literal way, where the verse provides an explanation that will be tortured people who are happy when given something and happy when praised for

⁴⁸ Ruslan, 'Urgensi Asbab Al-Nuzul Ayat-Ayat Ahkam', *Syariah Jurnal Hukum Dan Pemikiran*, 13.2 (2014), page. 6-6, doi:10.18592/syariah.v13i2.173.

⁴⁹ Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, page. 48.

⁵⁰ Muḥammad 'Abd al-Azim al-Zarqāni, *Manāhil Al-'Irfān Fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabi, 1995), page. 94.

what he did not do, so Ibn 'Abbās explained that the context of the verse was addressed to ahl al-kitāb who hid something from the Prophet Muhammad SAW and conveyed to the Prophet about something that they did not do, and asked to be praised for it.⁵¹

- d. Avoiding the misunderstanding of a restriction (al-ḥaṣr). For example, when al-Shāfi'i explains Q.S al-An'am[6]: 145, al-Shāfi'i said that the disbelievers forbid what Allah has forbidden and make lawful what Allah has forbidden. And they contradicted and challenged, so the verse was revealed as a response as well as against their goals. In short, it is as if the meaning of the verse is that Allah forbids what the disbelievers forbid, and makes lawful what they forbid. Whereas the main intention of the verse is opposition (al-mutaḍādah). And the purpose is to establish its prohibition (ithbāt al-taḥrīm), not at the same time establish its permissibility (ithbāt al-ḥall). 52
- e. Clarifying to whom a verse was revealed and emphasizing what is still unclear (mubham) from a verse. Marwan once revealed to 'Abd al-Raḥman ibn Abī Bakr that he was actually the one mentioned in the verse wa alladhī uff lakumā or Q.S Al-Ahqaf [46]: 18, so 'Aishah refused to deny it and explained the reason for the revelation of the verse.⁵³

From the five urgencies stated by al-Suyūṭī above, it can be said that asbāb al-nuzūl has a central position in the study of 'ulūm al-Qur'ān, especially in the process of understanding the Qur'an. In addition, according to al-Suyūṭī asbāb al-nuzūl is a science that must be studied and understood by those who want to produce laws (ijtihad) from the verses of the Qur'an. The reason for the revelation of the Qur'anic verses is bound to the socio-cultural reality of the society that received the Qur'an, so understanding the cause of the revelation of a verse will help someone in reconstructing the meaning and law of the Qur'an that is closer to the truth.

⁵¹ Al-Suyūtī, *al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Our'ān*, page. 48-49.

⁵² Al-Suyūṭi, *al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, page. 49.

⁵³ Al-Suyūṭī, al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān, page. 49.

E. Conclusion

Based on the description of the conception of asbab al-nuzul history according to al-Suyūtī above, it can be concluded that al-Suyūtī has made theoretical-methodological developments in the study of asbāb al-nuzūl, especially in his work entitled Lubāb al-Nuqul fi Asbab al-Nuzul. In addition, al-Suvuti also reconceptions the study of asbab al-nuzul. According to him, asbab al-nuzul is the events behind the revelation of the Qur'anic verse in the era of revelation. The history of asbab al-nuzul can only be obtained from the narration of people who know firsthand the process of the revelation of the Qur'an, namely the companions, while to identify between the history of asbab al-nuzul and what is not is through strict selection of existing narrative expressions. According to al-Suyūtī, understanding the history of asbāb al-nuzūl has several benefits, namely helping a person understand the wisdom behind the law, helping in the process of takhsis, helping to provide clarity of meaning, avoiding misunderstanding, and clarifying who is the figure behind the revelation of the Our'anic verse.

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