The Concept of War *(Qitāl)* in the Qur'an: A Comparative Study of Tafsir Al-Mishbah and Tafsir Al-Muharrar Al-Wajiz

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Abstract

The study of war or *qitāl* in the Qur'an often causes controversy, primarily because some circles still associate verses of jihad with violence or terrorism. This indicates a gap in understanding that needs to be bridged through in-depth *tafsir* (exegesis) studies. This research aims to analyze the concept of war in the Qur'an through a comparative study of two *tafsirs*: *Tafsir Al-Mishbah* by Quraish Shihab and *Tafsir Al-Muharrar Al-Wajiz* by Ibn Athiyyah. The method used is qualitative research based on a literature study with a thematic and comparative approach. The results show that both *mufassirs* (exegetes) agree that war in Islam is defensive in nature, oriented toward justice, and limited by humanitarian values. War is not intended as a means of aggression but as a last resort for self-defense and the protection of religious freedom. However, differences are observed in the emphasis: *Tafsir Al-Mishbah* highlights the contextual, moral, and spiritual aspects more, while *Tafsir Al-Muharrar Al-Wajiz* tends to emphasize the legal side of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) and linguistic debates. This study contributes by demonstrating how contextual-moral and *fiqh*-linguistic approaches complement each other in constructing a holistic Qur'anic understanding of war.

Keywords: War, *Qitāl*, Comparative Tafsir, Tafsir Al-Mishbah, Al-Muharrar al-Wajiz.

Abstrak

Kajian mengenai perang dalam Al-Qur'an sering menimbulkan kontroversi, terutama karena sebagian kalangan masih mengaitkan ayat-ayat jihad dengan kekerasan atau terorisme. Hal ini menunjukkan adanya kesenjangan pemahaman yang perlu dijembatani melalui kajian tafsir yang mendalam. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis konsep perang dalam al-Qur'an melalui studi perbandingan dua tafsir, yaitu *Tafsir al-Mishbah* karya Quraish Shihab dan Tafsir *al-Muharrar al-Wajiz* karya Ibn Athiyyah. Metode yang digunakan adalah penelitian kualitatif berbasis studi pustaka dengan pendekatan tematik dan komparatif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kedua mufassir sepakat memandang perang dalam Islam bersifat defensif, berorientasi pada keadilan, serta dibatasi oleh nilai-nilai kemanusiaan. Perang tidak ditujukan sebagai sarana agresi, melainkan sebagai jalan terakhir untuk membela diri dan melindungi kebebasan beragama. Namun, perbedaan terlihat dalam penekanan, *Tafsir al-Mishbah* lebih menggaris bawahi aspek kontekstual, moral, dan spiritual, sedangkan Tafsir *al-Muharrar al-Wajiz* cenderung menekankan sisi hukum fiqh serta perdebatan linguistik. Temuan ini memperlihatkan bahwa pemahaman holistik sangat diperlukan agar konsep jihad tidak disalah pahami dalam wacana kontemporer, terutama terkait isu terorisme dan kekerasan atas nama agama.

Kata kunci: Perang, *Qitāl*, Tafsir Perbandingan, Tafsir Al-Mishbah, Al-Muharrar al-Wajiz

Introduction

In Islamic thought, the Qur'an serves as the foundational source of ethical and normative guidance, including its articulation of principles related to conflict, justice, and resistance to oppression. It not only contains spiritual and ethical values, but also includes social, political, and military guidance according to Islamic principles. Therefore, understanding the Qur'an requires the involvement of multidisciplinary approaches, both from historical, sociological, psychological, and political aspects, so that the message contained in it is not misunderstood.[1]

One of the important themes in the Qur'an that often stirs up debate is the verses about *jihad* and *qitāl*. These verses are often misinterpreted by some circles, both from Western society and some Muslims themselves, who view Islam as a religion synonymous with violence. In fact, if examined in depth, the *jihad* verses in the Qur'an do not intend to teach expansion by violence, but rather the principle of self-defense and maintaining religious freedom. For example, QS. al-Baqarah: 190 affirms that Muslims should fight only against those who fight them, with a prohibition on going beyond the limits. This verse affirms that Islam rejects all forms of aggression and oppression.[2]

The history of the spread of Islam suggests that *jihad* and *qitāl* in Islamic history was generally understood as intended to impose beliefs, but was defensive in order to protect the continuity of da'wah. However, this concept is often blurred when viewed from a modern perspective that is full of issues of

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[1]   Emha Ainun Nadjib, *Surat Kepada Kanjeng Nabi* (Bandung: Mizan, 1997).

[2]   Hasmi T, "Ethics of War in Islam: A Critical Analysis.," *Oxford Islamic Studies.*, 2019.

radicalism and terrorism.[3] Therefore, it is important to review the meaning of war in the Qur'an, so that people do not get caught up in the wrong stigma against Islamic teachings.[4]

The Qur'an addresses armed conflict as a contextual response to oppression (*ẓulm*), framed within ethical limitations, rather than as a primary means of da'wah In Qur'anic discourse, moral resilience and spiritual commitment are emphasized as foundational elements in facing oppression, rather than being derived from armed conflict itself. From a historical perspective, instances of armed conflict in early Islam emerged in response to concrete social, political, and existential challenges, without implying that such conflict constituted a defining or progressive force of Islamic doctrine.[5] Therefore, a contextual and critical understanding of *jihad* and *qitāl* in the Qur'an is essential, particularly in relation to ethical constraints and historical circumstances, to prevent misinterpretations that detach Qur'anic teachings from their normative principles of justice and restraint.

This study chose two monumental works as the object of comparative study: *Tafsir Al-Mishbah* by M. Quraish Shihab and *Tafsir Al-Muharrar Al-Wajiz* by Ibn Athiyyah al-Andalusi. The selection of these two interpretations is based on methodological considerations and intellectual representation. *The Tafsir of Al-Mishbah* represents a modern-contextual style of interpretation that focuses on moral messages, ethics, and thematic relevance for contemporary people. In contrast, *Tafsir Al-Muharrar Al-Wajiz* represents a strong classical style of tafsir in the dimensions of linguistics, law (*fiqh*), and interpretive histories, making it the main reference for the study of tafsir *bi al-ma'thur* (based on history). The comparison of the two is expected to produce a holistic understanding, rich in perspectives, and be able to bridge classical and modern discourses.

Several previous studies have addressed the issue of *jihad* and *qitāl* in the Qur'an, either through a single thematic study or an analysis of a single work of commentary. For example, the study of the concept of jihad in the Qur'an, the perspective of Hamka in *Tafsir al-Azhar* by Sudarmono,[6] then war in the Qur'an: a study of the application *of Fazlur Rahman*'s double movement theory in interpreting *qitāl* verses by Muhammad Arief.[7] However, there has been no explicit and comprehensive comparative study that systematically examines *Tafsir al-Mishbah* and *Tafsir al-Muharrar al-Wajiz*, particularly with regard to the

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[3]   Ahmad al-Usairy, *Sejarah Islam Sejak Zaman Nabi Adam Hingga Abad XX* (Akbar Media Eka Sarana, 2004), 243.

[4]   Hilmi bakar Almascaty, *Panduan Jihad* (Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 2001), 15.

[5]   Hilmi bakar Almascaty, *Panduan Jihad Untuk Aktivis Gerakan Islam* (Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 2001), 3.

[6]   Sudarmono, "Interpretasi Makna Jihad dalam Pandangan Hamka dalam Tafsir Al-Azhar," *Ta'wiluna: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an*, Tafsir dan Pemikiran Islam 4, No. 1 (2023): 1–20, https://doi.org/10.58401/takwiluna.v4i1.817

[7]   Muhammad Arief, "War in the Qur'an: A Study of the Application of Fazlur Rahman's Double Movement Theory in Interpreting *Qitāl* Verses," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* XX, no. X (tahun): xx–xx

interpretation of *jihad* and *qitāl* verses. Existing studies tend to focus on single interpretive approaches, without critically comparing the differing methodological orientations of contextual interpretation and *fiqh*-linguistic exegesis. This lack of comparative analysis constitutes a significant methodological gap, which this study seeks to address in order to clarify how ethical, legal, and contextual considerations are articulated differently in the two exegetical traditions.

Based on this background, the formulation of the problem in this study is: (1) How is the interpretation of the war verses in the Qur'an according to *Tafsir al-Mishbah* by Quraish Shihab? (2) What is the interpretation of the war verses in the Qur'an according to *Tafsir al-Muharrar al-Wajiz* by Ibn Athiyyah? (3) What are the similarities and differences in the interpretation of the war verses in the two interpretations? The objectives of this research are: (1) To find out the interpretation of war verses in the Qur'an according to *Tafsir al-Mishbah* by Quraish Shihab. (2) To find out the interpretation of the war verses in the Qur'an according to *Tafsir al-Muharrar al-Wajiz* by Ibn Athiyyah. (3) To analyze the similarities and differences in the interpretation of the war verses in the two interpretations.

This research is a qualitative, focusing on selected *qitāl* verses that explicitly address armed conflict. The unit of analysis is the interpretation of each verse in two mufassir. The analysis is conducted thematically and analytically, followed by a comparative examination of the interpretive methods and ethical orientations of the two exegetical works. The primary sources of this study are *Tafsir al-Mishbah* and *Tafsir al-Muharrar al-Wajiz*, supported by relevant secondary sources.

Thus, this research is expected to contribute to the development of contemporary thematic interpretation studies, especially on issues of jihad and war, by offering a comprehensive approach that combines historical, ethical, and social perspectives. In addition, this research also serves as an academic clarification against the negative stigma that is often directed at Islam, as well as enriching the scientific literature on the Qur'an in the realm of religious, political, and international relations studies.

The Concept of War in the Qur'an.

Etymologically, *qitāl* comes from the masdar form of the word *qatala-yuqatilu*, which is a derivative of *the word qatala*. This word has three main meanings: first, to fight against someone; second, showing hostility (*adahu*); and third, to fight against the enemy (*harabahu al-ada*). In addition, according to Ibn Manẓur, *qitāl* can also mean cursing.[8] In Qur'an and tafsir studies *qitāl* primarily refers to armed fighting or physical combat, although classical tafsir usage may include other linguistic meanings, such as, *qatala al-barud*, as well as mixing something with

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[8]   Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-'Arab,* Jilid 5, (Kairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1119), 3531.

another, as in the sentence *qataltu al-khamra bi al-mai*, which means "I mix *khamar* with water. [9]

According to the commentators, as explained by the Qurṭubi in his commentary, *qitāl* refers to the war against the enemies of Islam from among the infidels.[10] It can be concluded that *qitāl* is a form of hostility that occurs between two or more parties, whether individuals, groups, nations, countries, tribes, or religions. As a form of *masdar* from *qatala*, *qitāl* means killing each other, and because the act of killing each other often occurs in war, *qitāl* is interpreted as war.

Beyond its linguistic and terminological dimensions, the concept of *qitāl* in the Qur'an is inseparable from its ethical and legal limitations. The Qur'an does not present *qitāl* as an unrestricted act of violence, but rather as a regulated response to aggression and persecution. This principle is clearly articulated in Q. *al-Baqarah [2]: 190*, which commands believers to fight only those who initiate hostilities while strictly prohibiting transgression. Classical exegetes such as al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Kathīr emphasize that this verse establishes a foundational rule: *qitāl* is conditional upon injustice committed by the opposing party and cannot be justified as an act of unprovoked aggression[11]

Furthermore, modern Qur'anic scholars highlight the importance of historical and socio-political context in understanding the verses on *qitāl*. Fazlur Rahman argues that Qur'anic regulations concerning warfare emerged in response to concrete experiences of oppression faced by the early Muslim community, particularly during the Meccan and early Medinan periods.[2] From this perspective, *qitāl* functions primarily as a defensive mechanism aimed at safeguarding religious freedom and communal survival. Such a contextual reading prevents the absolutization of situational commands and underscores the distinction between universal Qur'anic moral objectives (*maqāṣid*) and historically contingent legal directives.[12]

From a thematic (*tafsīr mawḍūʿī*) standpoint, the Qur'an balances the discourse of *qitāl* with a strong emphasis on peace, reconciliation, and the sanctity of human life. Verses such as Q. *al-Anfāl [8]:61* encourage reconciliation when the opposing party inclines toward peace, while Q. *al-Māʾidah [5]:32* affirms the inviolability of human life by equating the killing of one person with the killing of all humanity. Scholars like Muhammad Abu Zahrah and Abdullah Saeed argue that these verses indicate that *qitāl* is not an ultimate goal in itself, but a last resort within a broader Qur'anic ethical framework that prioritizes justice, mercy, and social harmony.[13]

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[9]   Al-'Allamah al-Ragib al-Asfahani, *Mufradat Alfaẓ al-Qur`an*, (Dār al-Qalam, 2002), 55–56.

[10]   Al-Qurṭubi, *al-Jami' Li Ahkami al-Qur`an, Juz III*, (Dar al-Kutub al-Misriyyah, 1964), 38.

[11]   Muḥammad ibn Jarīr Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-Bayān ʿan Taʾwīl Āy al-Qurʾān*, jil. 3. (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risālah, 2000), 67

[12]   Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur'an*. Edisi ke-2. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 35

[13]   Muḥammad Abu Zahrah. *Al-ʿAlāqāt al-Duwaliyyah fī al-Islām*. (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-ʿArabī, 1995), 59;

War in the Time of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be Upon Him).

Terms such as *al-qitāl*, *al-Ghazwun*, and *al-Harb* have essentially the same meaning, namely fighting the enemy. However, these terms can be distinguished into two contexts: fighting the enemy in a religious context and fighting the enemy in the context of the state.

The first, Fighting the enemy in a religious context, Enemy in this context refers to non-Muslims or infidels who are hostile to Muslims. Fighting them is considered a struggle to uphold religion.

Second, Fighting the enemy in the context of statehood refers to armed confrontation with political opposition discussed within the framework of *bughāt*, which is subject to specific legal conditions and scholarly differences of opinion, as reflected in the context of the Medinan state.[14]

The establishment of the State of Medina strengthened the position of Islam, which then developed rapidly. This development caused concern among the people of Makkah and the enemies of Islam. These concerns prompted the *Quraysh* to take various actions. In anticipation of enemy attacks, the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) as the leader of the government devised a strategy and formed a military force. There are two reasons that allow Muslims to go to war: (1) As an effort to defend themselves, their property, and their rights. (2) And to protect the freedom of preaching and to protect the faith from interference by those who try to hinder it. The history of the State of Medina records many wars that took place, all aimed at defending the Muslims from enemy attacks.[15]

Various Wars in the Time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).

Badr War

The Battle of Badr was the first battle that was very important for the future of the Muslims, namely the conflict between the Muslims and the polytheists of the Quraish. On the 8th of Ramadan in the 2nd year of Hijri, the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and 305 troops moved from Medina with modest equipment. In the district of Badr, about 120 kilometers from Medina, the Prophet's army encountered a *Quraysh* army

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Abdullah Saeed. *Reading the Qur'an in the Twenty-First Century: A Contextualist Approach*. (London: Routledge, 2014), 32

[14] Jalal B., Ghani, S. A., Ismail, A. S., Yasin, R., & Salleh, M. "Etika Ketentaraan dan Perang Zaman Nabi Muhammad SAW.," *Al-Sirat, II*, 2021, 24–37.

[15] Amanila B, "Sejarah Peradaban Islam Pada Masa Rasulullah SAW; Rasulullah SAW Sebagai Pemimpin Agama dan Negara.," *Mutiara: Jurnal Penelitian Dan Karya Ilmiah*, 2024, 226–38.

numbering between 900 and 1,000 men.[16]

One year before the Battle of Badr erupted, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said. Forming a special force tasked with carrying out intelligence missions, including monitoring the opponent's strength, controlling battlefield conditions, and supervising enemy movements.[17] Then the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) immediately led his army to the spring of Badr with the aim of preventing the infidels of *Quraysh* from taking control of it. This strategy gave the Muslims an advantage because they could access the water freely, while the *Quraysh* army was blocked. In addition, Muslims stocked up on several water sources, leaving only one pond for their own needs. Thus, only Muslim troops had a sufficient supply of water during the battle.[18]

Battle of Uhud

The second war was the Battle of Uhud, in which the enemy army numbered about 3,000 men. Meanwhile, there were initially 1,000 on the Muslim side, but after Abdullah bin Ubay's 300 troops defected, the number of Muslims remained only 700. Due to the unbalanced number of troops, the Prophet PBUH arranged a strategy by placing a group of archers on Rumat hill. The main objective was to prevent enemy forces from besieging the Muslims from the front and rear. This archer squad is tasked with repelling enemy attacks who try to turn the hill, so that the battle continues to take place frontally.[19]

However, when the Muslim forces began to gain the upper hand, some archers dismounted from their positions to take the spoils of war, in violation of the Prophet's orders. This opportunity was cleverly used by Khalid bin Walid who was still on the side of the infidels to lead his cavalry around the hill and attack from behind. As a result, the Muslim ranks became chaotic and eventually suffered defeat.[20]

The Ahzab/Khandaq War

The Battle of Khandaq, also known as the Trench War, occurred when an enemy force of 24,000 men attacked the Muslims. To deal with this massive attack, Muslims dug trenches as a defense strategy to hinder the enemy's advance. After being besieged for a month, the enemy forces were finally crushed by the fierce winds and storms that hit their camp, causing chaos and forcing them to retreat.[21]

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[16]   Yatim B, *Sejarah Peradaban Islam,* (Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada., 2020), 87.

[17]   Saufan A, "Strategi dan diplomasi perang Rasulullah.," *Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan,* 13(1), 2015, 107–34.

[18]   Shafiyurrahman Al Mubarakfuri, S., *Sirah Nabawiyah,* (Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Kautsar, 2023),

[19]   Yatim B, *Sejarah Peradaban Islam*, 221.

[20]   Al Mubarakfuri, S., *Sirah Nabawiyah*, 250.

[21]   Yatim B, *Sejarah Peradaban Islam*, 245.

The Khandak (Trench) War did not cause many casualties, but rather a war of nerves. There were no fierce battles, but in the history of Islam, this war was recorded as a very tense moment. In the end, the Musyrikin army suffered a moral defeat, proving that no matter how strong the Arab alliance at that time was unable to stop the rapid rise of Islam.[22]

Analysis And Conclusion of War in The Qur'an According to Tafsir Tafsir Al-Mishbah and Al-Muḥarrar Al-Wajīz

War (*al-qitāl*) in the Qur'an is a theme frequently understood differently by various parties, particularly within the contexts of classical and contemporary exegesis (*tafsir*). Some classical interpretations tend to highlight the legal dimensions of war (*ahkam*) and the historical context of conflict during the era of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). In contrast, contemporary commentators often emphasize ethical principles and the objectives of war in the interest of defending rights and justice. A comparison between *Tafsir Tafsir Al-Mishbah* by M. Quraish Shihab and *Al-Muḥarrar al-Wajīz* by Ibn ʿAtiyyah provides rich insights into this issue, while simultaneously opening a path toward a more comprehensive understanding of the principles of war from a Qur'anic perspective.

The First, The Purpose of War: Defensive and Ethical Dimensions

In *Tafsir Tafsir Al-Mishbah*, Quraish Shihab views war in the Qur'an as being aligned with the principles of defensive warfare, which is justified only when the Muslim community is in a threatened position, whether physically or in terms of their values. Shihab emphasizes that war is not intended for domination or aggression against others, but solely to uphold justice, protect the faith (*aqidah*), and defend the oppressed. This approach is consistent with contemporary research showing that in the context of *QS. al-Baqarah: 190-193*, the verses on war contain strong ethical implications for self-defense and the establishment of social balance.[23]

Meanwhile, *Al-Muḥarrar al-Wajīz* by Ibn ʿAtiyyah a classical Sunni exegesis from the 5th century AH combines traditional (*tafsir bi al-ma'thur*) and rational (*tafsir bi al-ra'y*) approaches in interpreting the verses of war.[24] This classical commentary typically views war as a response to enemy aggression and a means to maintain social order when Muslims face serious threats. Nevertheless, Ibn ʿAtiyyah remains attentive to the occasions of revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*) and the historical context; thus, he does not treat war as a mere literal command without considering the socio-political background of the era in which the revelation was

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[22]   Al Mubarakfuri, S., *Sirah Nabawiyah*, 300.

[23]   M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Tafsir Al-Mishbah, Pesan, Kesan dan Keserasian al-Qur'an*, Vol. I (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2007), 419.

[24]   Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq ibn Ghālib ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Tamām ibn ʿAṭiyyah al-Andalusī al-Muḥāribī (t. 542 H), *al-Muḥarrar al-Wajīz fī Tafsīr al-Kitāb al-ʿAzīz*. Jilid I. (Beirūt: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah). 262.

sent down.

The primary difference between these two commentaries lies in the emphasis on the objectives of war. Quraish Shihab highlights moral and spiritual goals more prominently: war as a tool to eradicate *fitnah* (tribulation/persecution) and oppression, and to restore a just and peaceful way of life. On the other hand, Ibn 'Atiyyah, while viewing war as a response to aggression, continues to refer to classical legal frameworks that are more literal in certain verses, yet he does not ignore the principles of moderation known within the Sunni tradition.

Second, The Nature of War: Defensive, Ethical, and Proportional

The perspectives of both exegetes demonstrate that war in the Qur'an is not inherently offensive without limits; rather, it must be defensive and grounded in moral and humanitarian principles. Quraish Shihab explicitly states that war is permissible only when the enemy attacks or threatens the Muslim community, and it must be ceased immediately once the enemy halts hostilities.[25]

A similar sentiment is found in other classical exegetical approaches, such as *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, which states that the command for war is mandated as a defense against oppression and the violation of Muslim rights, not for the aggressive spread of religion. This interpretation emphasizes that conflict is justified only when the enemy launches an aggression, and this principle must be followed with full ethics, not exceeding the limits set by the *Sharia*.[26]

Ibn 'Atiyyah, as a classical *mufassir*, despite living in an era that supported Islamic political expansion, nonetheless provided interpretations far removed from teachings of uncontrolled aggression. His commentary reflects a balance between responding to threats and the moderate ethics of war within the Sunni tradition.[27]

Thus, although their historical and methodological contexts differ, both commentaries agree that war is not an instrument of boundless aggression and must be based on defense, proportionality, and the protection of human rights.

Third, The Cessation of War and Legal Flexibility

Both commentaries agree that war must be terminated once physical threats or hostilities have ceased. This is consistent with the Qur'anic principle that if the enemy stops fighting the Muslims, then Islam likewise does not wage war against them.

However, *Al-Muḥarrar al-Wajīz* tends to incorporate jurisprudential (*fiqh*) dimensions and legal flexibility in the application of verses such as QS. at-Tawbah: 29 for instance, regarding the implementation of *jizyah* and relations with the People of the Book (*Ahl al-Kitab*). In this regard, Ibn 'Atiyyah pays close attention to social and legal conditions based on the specific historical context of

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[25]   Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbah*, Vol. I, 586

[26]   Aryadi Cahyadi, "Perang Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an (Studi Muqarin Tafsir Al-Mishbah dan Ibnu Katsir)", 2018. Sarjana thesis, IAIN Curup.

[27]   Ibn 'Aṭiyyah, *al-Muḥarrar al-Wajiz*, Vol. I, 78

each verse.[28]

In Quraish Shihab's view, the emphasis is placed more on the universality of the principles of justice and protection. He asserts that the application of war-related verses must not be misused to oppress or exploit other parties, especially if they have ceased their hostilities against the Muslim community.[29]

Fourth, The Role of Piety and Divine Assistance

Both Quraish Shihab and classical exegeses found in studies on the context of war place piety (*taqwa*), patience, and the help of Allah as the keys to victory and the steadfastness of the *Ummah* when facing conflict. *Tafsir Tafsir Al-Mishbah* consistently demonstrates that victory is not determined by physical strength alone, but rather by devotion to Allah and the upholding of moral values during the conduct of war.

The connection between the ethics of war, piety, and divine assistance is also reflected in the approaches of other classical exegetes such as at-Tabari and al-Qurtubi, where war is not interpreted merely as a physical mechanism, but also as a spiritual test and an act of obedience to Divine guidance. Furthermore, other commentaries like *Tafsir al-Munir* by Wahbah al-Zuhaili also explain that the verses of war in the Qur'an contain ethical principles that reject the use of such verses literally to justify violence that exceeds the boundaries of the Sharia.[30]

Fifth, The Context of At-Tawbah 29: Jizyah, Social Relations, and Moderation

QS. at-Tawbah: 29 is frequently used as a reference in contemporary debates regarding jihad and relations with non-Muslims in society. In Tafsir Tafsir Al-Mishbah, Quraish Shihab interprets this verse as guidance on the status of non-Muslims who are politically and economically subordinate, yet still have their social rights protected in accordance with the principles of Sharia.[31]

Meanwhile, the classical exegesis by Ibn 'Atiyyah emphasizes the historical context of the verse's revelation and the laws applicable at that time. Consequently, the understanding of the status of jizyah and social relations with the People of the Book (Ahl al-Kitab) must be situated within the socio-political legal context of society during the era of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).[32]

Sixth, Comparative Analysis of the Exegeses

From both a methodological and substantive perspective, several similarities emerge:

Both reject war as a tool for domination or revenge; war must always be constrained by the principles of justice. Both affirm that war is for self-defense,

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[28]   Ibn 'Aṭiyyah, *al-Muḥarrar al-Wajiz*, Vol. II, 189

[29]   Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbah*, Vol. II ….., 410

[30]   Muhammad Adib Akrom, "The Meaning of War in the Qur'an: Perspectives from Tafsir al-Munir and Tafsir at-Thabari", *IJORESCO: International Journal of Religion and Social Community*, Vol. 3, N0. 2, September 2025, 27-44

[31]   Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbah*, Vol. II, 213

[32]   Ibn 'Aṭiyyah, *al-Muḥarrar al-Wajiz*, Vol. II, 123

rather than unprovoked aggression. Both place piety *(taqwa)* and moral values as the primary factors in the legitimacy and conduct of war.

However, distinct differences appear in their nuances of emphasis: *Tafsir Al-Mishbah* (Contemporary): Tends to highlight moral-spiritual aspects and modern context, as well as the social relevance of the ethics of war. *Al-Muḥarrar al-Wajīz* (Classical): Places greater weight on the narrative approach, the occasions of revelation *(asbāb al-nuzūl)*, and classical legal principles appropriate to the era of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), thereby allowing for legal flexibility suited to its context.

In addition, there are several other points regarding the comparison between the interpretations of Quraish Shihab and Ibn Atiyyah concerning war in the Quran, which can be summarized in the following table:

NO.	SURAH & VERSE	Similarities	DIFFERENCE	
			Tafsir Al-Mishbah	*Al-Muharrar Al-Wajiz*
1.	*Q.S. Al-Baqarah (2): 190*	1. Both recognize the limits of ethics in war. 2. Both mention that war is carried out in the way of Allah, not because of worldly ambition alone.	Emphasizing the prohibition of attacking first unless there is evidence of Aggression[33]	There are two opinions: this verse may have been narrated by *Q.S. At-Taubah: 36*, or remains valid to maintain the limits of the ethics of war[34]
2.	*Q.S. Al-Baqarah (2): 193*	1, Both agreed that the purpose of war was to eliminate *"fitnah"* (disbelief, shirk, oppression or harassment against Muslims. 2, both agreed that if the enemy ceased to be hostile, then the war should be stopped, except	Interpreting *"fitnah"* as shirk and oppression (depending on the context: Meccan polytheists or common enemies)[35]	Declaring this is an absolute verse about fighting the infidels without them having to start first. Slander is interpreted as shirk and harassment.[36]

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[33] M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbah,* Vol. 1, (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002), 456-459.

[34] Ibn 'Aṭiyyah al-Andalusi, *al-Muḥarrar al-Wajiz fi Tafsir al-Kitab al-'Aziz*, Vol. 1, (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2001), 252–254.

[35] Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbah*, Vol. 1, 463-466.

[36] Ibn 'Aṭiyyah, *al-Muḥarrar al-Wajiz*, Vol. 1, 255–257.

		against the unjust party.		
3.	*Q.S. An-Nisa' (4): 74-75*	1. Both interpret war as an effort to defend the oppressed and uphold justice.2. Mention the great reward for those who fight in the way of Allah.	Focus on the spirit of defending the weak and divine values[37]	It is more technical in explaining the meaning of the word "selling the world for the hereafter" as a motivation for *jihad*.[38]
4.	*Q.S. An-Nisa' (4): 84*	Both emphasize the responsibility of the individual to fight and encourage the spirit of the believers	Include an explanation of the role of the Prophet Muhammad as a role model.[39]	Emphasizing that the order to fight applies to all people, not just the Prophet.[40]
5.	*Al-Anfal (8): 39-40*	Both agreed that the purpose of war was to eliminate slander (shirk/oppression) and uphold the religion of Allah.	Explain the meaning of "slander" broadly, including oppression.[41]	Focus more on shirk as the main form of slander.[42]
6.	*Al-Anfal (8): 65*	Both explain that victory depends on patience and piety as well as the moral superiority of Muslims.	Emphasizing the meaning of patience, mental steel, and the spiritual superiority of believers as the main	It presents an analysis of *nahwu* and *qira'at*, and focuses on the debate of scholars about the *nasakh* (abolition) of the law of one believer against ten infidels, then it becomes

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37   Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbah*, Vol. 3, 120–125.
38   Ibn 'Aṭiyyah, *al-Muḥarrar al-Wajiz*, Vol. 2, 79-82.
39   Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbah*, Vol. 3, 138-140.
40   Ibn 'Aṭiyyah, *al-Muḥarrar al-Wajiz*, Vol. 2, 90-92.
41   Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbah*, Vol. 4, 238-242.
42   Ibn 'Aṭiyyah, *al-Muḥarrar al-Wajiz*, Vol. 3, 311-314.

			strength.[43]	one against two.[44]
7.	At-Taubah(9): 29	Both said that jizyah is a form of state protection for non-Muslims and not a form of religious coercion.	Emphasizing *jizyah* as a reward tax for protection. Reject symbolic insults to *dzimmi*.[45]	Providing various opinions of scholars about who is subject to *jizyah*, (including the Magi) and the technicalities of payment.[46]
8.	At-Taubah (9): 36	Both interpret the four months of haram and the prohibition of doing wrong.	Focus on explaining the historical context of the deviation of the Arabic calendar and the spiritual value of the haram month. Also the prohibition of persecution in the haram month, as well as explaining the Qamariyah calendar system and the meaning of the majesty of	Describe the practice of jahiliyah in the manipulation of the haram month (nasi') and explain the history and practice of the Arabic calendar in detail.[48]

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43   Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbah,* Vol. 4, 255-258.

44   Ibn 'Aṭiyyah, *al-Muḥarrar al-Wajiz,* Vol. 3, 321-325.

45   Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbah,* Vol. 5, 42-47.

46   Ibn 'Aṭiyyah, *al-Muḥarrar al-Wajiz,* Vol. 3, 451-456.

48   Ibn 'Aṭiyyah, *al-Muḥarrar al-Wajiz,* Vol. 3, 468-472.

No.	Verse			
				the haram months.[47]
9.	Al-Hajj (22): 39-40	Both interpret the permission of war as a defense of the oppressed.2. Mention the protection of places of worship as the purpose of war.	Emphasizing the principle of "there is no coercion in religion".[49]	Discussing the difference in qira'at of the word *yuqātalūn* (disputed/fought).[50]

Table 1. Similarities and Differences between Tafsir Al-Mishbah and Muharrar Al-Wajiz

The *Tafsir Al-Mishbah* tends to be contextual, with in-depth explanations of universal values such as justice and tolerance. Meanwhile, *Tafsir al-Muharrar al-Wajiz* is more technical, including differences of opinion of scholars *(khilafiyah)* and linguistic discussions *(qira'at, nasakh)*. Thus, the Table that the researcher has made, hopefully it can help readers in understanding the similarities and differences of the two interpretations in interpreting the verses of war.

Conclusion

A comparative analysis of *Tafsir al-Mishbah* and *Tafsir al-Muḥarrar al-Wajiz* reveals that both works interpret *qital* (war) verses as a contextual and defensive response rather than a tool for expansion or domination. Both agree that warfare in Islam is intended to protect religious freedom, defend the oppressed, and uphold justice within strict ethical boundaries. Victory is understood not merely in material terms but as a result of moral discipline, patience, and divine assistance, with an obligation to cease hostilities as soon as aggression ends.

The primary difference lies in their methodological focus: *Al-Mishbah* emphasizes ethical-philosophical reflection and contextual reasoning, while *al-Muḥarrar al-Wajiz* leans toward linguistic analysis and classical legal *(fiqh)* categories. For instance, regarding the concept of *jizyah*, *Al-Mishbah* views it as a political arrangement for peaceful coexistence, whereas *al-Muḥarrar al-Wajiz* situates it within a formal classical juridical framework. Despite these technical differences, the two approaches are complementary, providing a comprehensive understanding of Islamic moderation concerning jihad and armed conflict.

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[47]   Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbah*, Vol. 5, 63-67.

[49]   Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbah*, Vol. 9, 92–97.

[50]   Ibn 'Aṭiyyah, *al-Muḥarrar al-Wajiz*, Vol. 5, 53–57.

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