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Research Article

Interfaith Relations In The Quran: A Contextual And Comparative Study Of Misinterpretations Of Selected Verses

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Abstract. This study critically examines selected Qur'anic verses frequently cited in Western writings and contemporary narratives as evidence of Islamic intolerance and religious hostility toward non-Muslims. The study aims to reassess such allegations by examining the relevant verses within their historical and exegetical contexts. A qualitative textual and comparative method is employed, drawing upon asbab al-nuzul literature and interpretations from classical and contemporary Qur'anic exegetes. Selected verses concerning interfaith relations such as; religious difference, non-compulsion and warfare,including Qur'an 109:1–6, 73:10–11, 2:256, 4:160–161, 9:5, 9:29, 9:41, 5:33, 2:190–192, 4:76, and 22:39–40 are analyzed in relation to the allegations made against them. The study finds that several criticisms result from reading individual verses in isolation from their occasions of revelation. The analysis demonstrates that the Qur an distinguishes between theological disagreement and social hostility.it also permits peaceful coexistence and prohibits religious coercion and unjust aggression. The study concludes that a contextual and exegetical reading provides a more clear understanding of Qur'anic teachings on interfaith relations.

Keywords: Qur'anic Contextualization, Asbab Al-Nuzul, Interfaith Relations, Exegetical Analysis, Religious Coercion.

INTRODUCTION

Interfaith relations have become an increasingly important subject in contemporary religious and academic discourse, particularly in the context of growing religious diversity, globalization, and debates surrounding Islam and religious tolerance. The Qur'an contains numerous verses addressing relations between Muslims and non muslims, including passages concerning religious difference, peaceful coexistence and armed conflict. Some of these verses have frequently been cited in Western polemical writings as evidence that Islam promotes hostility toward non-Muslims. Such interpretations often focus on individual Qur'anic statements without considering their historical circumstances and explanations provided by Muslim exegetes.The problem is not simply the existence of differing interpretations but the methodological approach through which Qur'anic verses are interpreted. Robert Spencer, for example, cites verses such as Qur'an 109:1–6, 9:5, 9:29, and 9:41 to argue that the Qur'an contains teachings incompatible with peaceful coexistence and tolerance. Similarly, Thomas D. Ice [1]presents several Qur'anic passages related to fighting as evidence for the claim that Islam is not a peaceful religion. Such readings have contributed to a broader polemical representation of Islam in which verses revealed in particular historical and political circumstances are treated as universal commands without adequate attention to the circumstances in which they were revealed. But Muslim scholars have emphasized the importance of interpreting Qur'anic verses through *asbab al-nuzul* (occasions of revelation), linguistic analysis, textual context, and the broader objectives of the Qur'an. Classical exegetes such as al-Bayḍawi, Ibn Kathir, and Abu al-Suʿud provide contextual explanations of verses dealing with religious difference and conflict. Contemporary exegetes, including Muḥammad ʿAli al-Ṣabuni, Muḥammad Rashid Riḍa and Sayed quthub, likewise demonstrate that verses criticizing particular communities or prescribing fighting cannot automatically be generalized to all non-Muslims. Their works indicate the importance of distinguishing between theological disagreement, political conflict, persecution, and ordinary social relations.

Previous studies on Qur'anic approaches to interfaith relations have also highlighted the Qur'an's principles of religious responsibility, justice, and peaceful coexistence. Recent scholarship has examined Qur'anic teachings on emerging challenges in interfaith relations and emphasized the importance of engaging with the Qur'an as a comprehensive ethical and theological framework rather than extracting isolated statements from their contexts.[2]Nevertheless, there remains a need for a focused comparative study that places polemical allegations alongside the

[1] Thomas D. Ice, "Islam Is NOT a Peaceful Religion," liberty university scholarly crossing,*Article Archives*, no. 102 (May 2009).

[2]Hassan Baig and Hafsa Maqsood, "Addressing Emerging Challenges in Interfaith Relations through Quranic Teachings in the 21st Century," *Al-Idah* 43, no. 1 (June 2025):

relevant *asbab al-nuzul* reports and exegetical interpretations and then evaluates the allegations against the wider Qur'anic discourse.

This study aims to critically analyze selected Qur'anic verses that have frequently been employed in arguments portraying Islam as intolerant or inherently hostile toward other religious communities. The selected passages include Qur'an 109:1–6, 73:10–11, 2:256, 4:160–161, 9:5, 9:29, 9:41, 5:33, 2:190–192, 4:76, and 22:39–40. Rather than treating these verses independently, the study examines their occasions of revelation, immediate textual contexts, and interpretations in selected classical and contemporary works of *tafsir* considering the distinction between religious disagreement and physical aggression, as well as between theological exclusivity and social intolerance.

The significance of this research lies in its contextual and comparative approach. Instead of merely rejecting allegations against the Qur'an, the study places the allegations and their textual evidence alongside primary Qur'anic passages and established exegetical interpretations. This approach seeks to demonstrate how contextual reading can clarify the intended meaning of verses that are frequently presented in isolation. The study contributes to contemporary interfaith scholarship by providing a Qur'an-centered framework for understanding religious difference, peaceful coexistence, and legitimate armed resistance. It argues that a comprehensive reading of the Qur'an reveals a distinction between maintaining Islamic theological identity and engaging in unjust hostility toward people of other faiths. Such an approach can contribute to more balanced academic discussions of Islam and interfaith relations and help address interpretations that arise primarily from decontextualized readings of Qur'anic texts.

RESEARCH METHODS

Qualitative library research method is used for this study. Library research is a research approach conducted through the systematic study of literature, including books, scholarly articles, research reports, and other relevant written sources. This method is appropriate for the present study because its primary objective is to examine Qur'anic verses and their interpretations in classical and contemporary Qur'anic exegesis. The study does not involve field surveys, interviews, or experimental methods; rather, it analyzes existing textual and scholarly materials related to Qur'anic teachings on interfaith relations.

The data for this research are obtained from both **primary and secondary sources**. The primary sources consist of the Qur'an and selected works of *tafsir* and *asbab al-nuzul*, including the works of al-Waḥidi, al-Bayḍawi, Ibn Kathir, Abu al-Suʿud, Sayyid Quṭb, Muḥammad Rashid Riḍa, and Muḥammad ʿAli al-Ṣabuni. The selected Qur'anic passages include verses related to religious difference, non-compulsion, interfaith relations, and warfare, particularly Qur'an 109:1–6, 73:10–11, 2:256, 4:160–161, 9:5, 9:29, 9:41, 5:33, 2:190–192, 4:76, and 22:39–40.Secondary sources include academic books, peer-reviewed journal articles, research papers, conference publications, and relevant writings that discuss interfaith relations, Islam, Qur'anic interpretation, and allegations concerning Qur'anic teachings. it examines selected Western polemical writings in which the Qur'anic verses under investigation are

presented as evidence of intolerance toward non-Muslims. These sources are used primarily to identify and analyze the arguments and interpretations that form the subject of the comparative analysis.

Data are collected through **documentary and textual study**. Relevant Qur'anic verses, *asbab al-nuzul* reports, exegetical explanations, scholarly arguments, and statements from selected academic and polemical writings are identified, collected, classified, and organized according to the themes of the research. Particular attention is given to the historical circumstances of revelation, the immediate textual context of each verse, and the interpretations provided by recognized Qur'anic exegetes and scholars related to the study of the context for quranic verses.The collected materials are organized into thematic categories, including **religious difference, religious freedom, non-compulsion, peaceful coexistence, justice, and warfare**. Allegations concerning particular Qur'anic verses are first identified from relevant writings and are then compared with the Qur'anic text and interpretations found in the selected exegetical sources.

The study uses **qualitative content analysis and comparative analysis** to interpret the collected data. First, the relevant Qur'anic verses are examined in their linguistic and textual contexts. Second, their *asbab al-nuzul* are examined to identify the historical circumstances surrounding their revelation. Third, interpretations from classical and contemporary exegetes are compared in Then compares these contextual and exegetical interpretations with the allegations presented in selected Western writings. This comparative process helps determine whether the allegations accurately represent the meaning of the Qur'anic passages or result from selective and decontextualized readings. The analysis particularly distinguishes between **theological disagreement and social hostility**, and between **legitimate defensive warfare and unrestricted aggression**.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

These are the selected Qur'anic verses that have frequently been quoted and misinterpreted in certain Western writings and narratives. Each allegation is presented together with its original source and citation. The discussion then analyzes these interpretations by examining the Asbab Nuzul (occasions of revelation) and the explanations of classical and contemporary Qur'anic exegetes. This contextual approach helps to demonstrate how many of these interpretations arise from reading the verses in isolation from their contexts and concequently reaching in conclusions that differ from the intended meaning of the Qur'anic text.

قُلْ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلْكَٰفِرُونَ ١ لَآ أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ ٢ وَلَآ أَنتُمْ عَٰبِدُونَ مَآ أَعْبُدُ ٣ وَلَآ أَنَا۠ عَابِدٌ مَّا عَبَدتُّمْ ٤ وَلَآ أَنتُمْ عَٰبِدُونَ مَآ أَعْبُدُ ٥ لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِىَ دِينِ ٦

Qur'an 109:1-6

Allegation

It is mocked that doesn't Quran really teach tolerance and peace? Sure but there are a few bad verses here and there, but there are also a lot of verses that affirm the

brotherhood of a man and the equality and dignity of all people, right? And states their explanation for this question with a no. Followed by the description that the closest the Quran comes actually towards tolerance or peaceful coexistence is to counsel believers to leave them alone in their errors; and quotes Quran verse; “Say ;O disbelievers I worship not that ye worship ;nor worship ye that which I worship. And I shall not worship that which ye worship. Nor will ye worship that which I worship. Unto you your religion and unto me my religion.”[3]

Denial

"Say, 'O disbelievers, I do not worship what you worship. Nor do you worship what I worship. And I will not worship what you worship. Nor will you worship what I worship. For you is your religion, and for me is my religion."

This powerful statement from the Quran emphasizes the importance of respecting religious differences. It acknowledges that there will always be differences in belief, but it encourages mutual respect and non-interference in the practices of others.[4]

It was revealed concerning a group from Quraysh who said, "O Muhammad (PBUH), come and follow our religion, and we will follow your religion. You shall worship our gods for one year, and we shall worship your God for one year. If what you have brought is better than what we possess, we will have shared in it and obtained our portion of it. And if what we possess is better than what you have, then you will have shared in our matter and obtained your portion of it. He said, "Allah forbid that I should associate anything else with Him. “Then Allah, revealed: "Say, O disbelievers..." to the end of the surah.

The next morning, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) went to al Masjid al Ḥaram, where the chiefs of Quraysh were gathered, and he recited it to them until he completed the surah. At that point, they lost hope of him.

Another narration on the authority of Abd Allah ibn Abbas that the Quraysh promised the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) that they would give him wealth until he became the richest man in Makkah. Also marry him to any woman he desired, and follow his leadership. They said, "All of this shall be yours, O Muhammad, if you stop criticizing our gods. If you do not accept this, then we offer you a proposal that will benefit both you and us." The Prophet (PBUH) asked, "What is it?" They replied that he should worship their deities al-Lat and al-Uzza for one year and they will worship his God for one year. The Prophet (PBUH) said, that he needed to wait for the instruction of Almighty. Then revelation came.[5]

[3] The politically incorrect guide to islam (and crusades) Robert spencers ,regnery publishing, INC pg 21

[4] Hassan Baig and Hafsa Maqsood, "Addressing Emerging Challenges in Interfaith Relations through Quranic Teachings in the 21st Century," *Al-Idah* 43, no. 1 (June 2025): 1–12.

[5] Salim ibn Eid al-Hilali and Muhammad ibn Musa Al Nasr, *Al-Istiab fi Bayan al-Asbab*, 1st ed., 3 vols. (Riyadh: Dar Ibn al-Jawzi, 1425 AH/2004 CE)

Major Tafsir Interpretations Are Like;

My religion, which I adhere to, I do not renounce. There is in it neither permission for disbelief nor prohibition of jihad so that it should be considered abrogated by the verse of fighting, unless it is interpreted as mutual non-interference and leaving each of the two parties to remain upon its religion. The ord **din** has been interpreted as **reckoning (ḥisab), recompense (jaza), supplication (dua),** and **worship (ibadah).**[6]

For the interpretation of last verse, it is given as a summary of the reality of separation in which there is no meeting, difference in which there is no resemblance, division in which there is no connection, and distinction in which there is no mixing[7].

Analysis

The allegation claims that the Qur'an contains only a limited call to tolerance and that **Surah al Kafirun (109:1–6)** merely advises Muslims to leave disbelievers alone while affirming an irreconcilable religious divide. This interpretation isolates the surah from its historical context (*asbab al nuzul*) and overlooks its rhetorical purpose. The *asbab al nuzul* literature records that the surah was revealed after leaders of Quraysh proposed a religious compromise to the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH): each side would worship the other's deity alternately for a year. The proposal was not an invitation to peaceful coexistence but an attempt to dilute the doctrine of **Tawḥid** through religious syncretism. The revelation therefore rejects theological compromise, not peaceful relations with those of other faiths. The concluding statement, "**For you is your religion, and for me is my religion,**" marks the end of negotiations over belief while avoiding coercion or retaliation.

This context is reflected in the classical exegetical tradition. Al Bayḍawi explains that the final verse establishes the exclusive commitment of each party to its own religion. The verse is intended to negate any expectation that the Prophet (PBUH) would participate in polytheistic worship. The expression is understood as a declaration of the impossibility of combining **Tawḥid** and **shirk**, rather than a command to hostility. Similarly, the interpretation cited from *Fi Ẓilal al Qurʾan* describes the verse as a declaration of complete separation in matters of creed: a separation "in which there is no meeting, difference in which there is no resemblance, division in which there is no connection." This description concerns theological identity. It does not address or prescribe the nature of social, political, or humanitarian relations with non-Muslims.

Tafsir Abi suod interprets the verse as a declaration of mutual non-interference: You continue upon your religion, and I continue upon my religion of Tawḥid. In this reading, the verse affirms that each side bears responsibility for its own beliefs without compelling the other to abandon its faith. The statement therefore establishes boundaries of belief rather than supporting religious compulsion. The

[6] Naṣir al-Din Abu Sa id Abd Allah ibn Abi Umar ibn Muḥammad al-Shirazi al-Bayḍawi, *Anwar al-Tanzil wa Asrar al-Taʾwil*, vol. 5, ed. (Dar al-Fikr ,under the supervision of the Office of Research and Studies).

[7] Sayyid Quṭb, *Fi Ẓilal al-Qurʾan*, vol. 1, new ed. (Dar al-Shuruq).

allegation also ignores the distinction between **theological exclusivity** and **social intolerance**. Every revealed religion makes exclusive truth claims regarding its own doctrines. Surah al Kafirun affirms Islam's rejection of polytheistic worship while stoping any command to compel conversion or punish disbelief. The closing declaration leaves each party with its own religion instead of prescribing force against those who reject Islam. Furthermore, reading the surah alongside other Qur'anic passages, such as **Surah al Baqarah (2:256)** ("There is no compulsion in religion") and **Surah al Mumtaḥanah (60:8)** (**لا ينهاكم الله عن الذين لم يقاتلوكم في الدين ولم يخرجوكم من ديياركم أن تبروهم وتقسطوا إليهم إن الله يحب المقسطين**), demonstrates that doctrinal separation is not same as hostility or the denial of peaceful coexistence. These passages address different aspects of Muslim interaction with others and should be interpreted together rather than in isolation.

The allegation results from reading Surah al Kafirun independently of its historical background and classical interpretation. The surah is not a denial of tolerance, rather, it is a rejection of religious compromise. Its central message is the preservation of doctrinal integrity while acknowledging that each community remains responsible for its own religious commitment. Consequently, the chapter establishes clear theological boundaries without advocating coercion or prohibiting peaceful coexistence.

Qur'an 73:10-11

وَٱصۡبِرۡ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَٱهۡجُرۡهُمۡ هَجۡرٗا جَمِيلٗا ١٠ وَذَرۡنِي وَٱلۡمُكَذِّبِينَ أُوْلِي ٱلنَّعۡمَةِ وَمَهِّلۡهُمۡ قَلِيلًا ١١

The Command to be Patient with the Harms of the Disbelievers and a Discussion of what they will receive because of it;

Allah commands His Messenger to be patient with what the foolish who reject him among his people say. Allah also commands him to keep away from them in a nice way. This means in a way that is not blameworthy. Then Allah says to him, as a threat and a warning to his people and He (Allah) is the Most Great, Whose anger nothing can stand before.

Allegation

Similarly another verse also seen mentioned in relation with the same issue of letting them to be the effect bearers without lending a helping hand. Stating that “of course they are to be left alone so that Allah can deal with them; and have patience with what they say, and leave them with noble dignity. And leave me alone to deal with those in possession of the good things of life, who yet deny the Truth; and bear with them for a little while leaving them their own is judged as an ignorance towards them.[8]

Above all, the verse of non-compulsion in religion

[8] The politically incorrect guide to islam (and crusades) Robert spencers ,regnery publishing, INC pg 21

لَآ إِكْرَاهَ فِي ٱلدِّينِ ۖ قَد تَّبَيَّنَ ٱلرُّشْدُ مِنَ ٱلْغَيِّ ۚ فَمَن يَكْفُرْ بِٱلطَّٰغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنۢ بِٱللَّهِ فَقَدِ ٱسْتَمْسَكَ بِٱلْعُرْوَةِ ٱلْوُثْقَىٰ لَا ٱنفِصَامَ لَهَا ۗ وَٱللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٢٥٦

Quran 2:256

This is also quoted and stated that no mulsim should force anyone to accept Islam. And it is neglected by saying that it is not the actual tolerance that modern westerners understand it.[9]

Denial

Reason behind is an incident According to Abdullah ibn Abbas (RA), there was a woman among the Ansar whose children rarely survived. She vowed that if one of her children lived she would make him a Jew. When Banu al-Nadir were expelled from Madinah some of the sons of the Ansar were among them. The Ansar said, "We will not leave our sons." Thereupon Allah revealed the verse, "**There is no compulsion in religion**" (Qur'an 2:256). This report is regarded as authentic (Sahih)."[10] [11] [12]

Analysis

The historical context of **Qur'an 2:256** clarifies its meaning. According to the reported *asbab al-nuzul*, is the incident of some women among the Muslim families. This historical context directly challenges the allegation that the verse merely expresses a limited or insincere form of tolerance. Instead, it establishes a clear principle that genuine belief cannot be produced through force.[13]

Qur'an 4 :160–161

إِلَّا ٱلَّذِينَ تَابُوا۟ وَأَصْلَحُوا۟ وَبَيَّنُوا۟ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ أَتُوبُ عَلَيْهِمْ ۚ وَأَنَا ٱلتَّوَّابُ ٱلرَّحِيمُ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ وَمَاتُوا۟ وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَعْنَةُ ٱللَّهِ وَٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةِ وَٱلنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ ١٦٠ ١٦١

Allegation

"Because of the wickedness of certain Jews, and because they turn many from the way of God, We have forbidden them good and wholesome foods which were formerly allowed them; and because they have taken to usury, though they were forbidden it; and have cheated others of their possessions, We have prepared a grievous punishment for the Infidels amongst them."

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[9] The politically incorrect guide to islam (and crusades) Robert spencers ,regnery publishing, INC pg 21

[10] Abu al-Ḥasan Ali ibn Aḥmad al-Waḥidi al-Naysaburi, *Asbab al-Nuzul* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, new .ed.)

[11] Salim ibn Eid al-Hilali and Muhammad ibn Musa Al Nasr, *Al-Istiab fi Bayan al-Asbab*, 1st ed., 3 vols. (Riyadh: Dar Ibn al-Jawzi, 1425 AH/2004 CE)

[12] Khalid ibn Sulayman al-Muzayni, *Al-Muharrar fi Asbab Nuzul al-Qur'an min Khilal al-Kutub al-Tis'ah* (Dammam: Dar Ibn al-Jawzi).

[13] Ienash Huwaida Aziz, Fejrian Yazdajird Iwanebel, and Cecep Soleh Kurniawan, "From Protection to Inclusive Dialogue: A Contextual Interpretation of Surah al-Tawbah [9]:6 as the Basis for the Ethics of Da'wā in Religious Plurality," *[JUIT]* 1, no. 1 (June 2023): 51.

He argue that these are some of the sentiments expressed in the Quran, which remains for all Muslims, and not just "fundamentalists," the word of God Himself. It is valid for all times and places; its ideas are, according to all Muslims, absolutely true and beyond any criticism.

Denial

Interpretation for this verse in tafsir manar is that "And we have prepared for the disbelievers among them a painful punishment" refers to the painful punishment of the Fire, which Allah has prepared for those among them who disbelieved in any of His messengers, especially Jesus and Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon them). These are the ones whose condition Allah has clarified in this context and elsewhere.

Since the discourse in this context generally describes the evil condition, disbelief, and disobedience of the Jews, it may give the impression that what has been mentioned applies universally to all of them. Therefore, this is immediately followed by an exception clarifying the condition of their righteous members, those whose insight was not blinded by the blindness of blind imitation.[14] Moreover another prophetic verse related to this is reported through the chain,

Abu Naṣr Aḥmad ibn ʿUbayd Allah al Makhladi informed us. He said: Abu ʿAmr ibn Nujayd narrated to us. He said: Muslim informed us. He said: ʿAbd al Raḥman ibn Ḥammad narrated to us. He said: Said ibn Abi Arubah narrated to us, from Qatadah, from Anas:A group from ʿUkl and ʿUraynah came to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) and said, "O Messenger of Allah, we are people of livestock and not people of cultivated land, and the climate of al Madinah did not suit us."

The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) ordered that they be given some camels, and that they go out with them and drink from their milk and urine. Then they killed the shepherd of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) and drove away the camels. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) sent men in pursuit of them, and they were brought back. He cut off their hands and feet, branded their eyes, and left them in the Ḥarrah until they died in that condition.Qatadah said: It was mentioned to us that this verse was revealed concerning them:"Indeed, the recompense of those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger and strive throughout the land spreading corruption..."to the end of the verse.[15] [16]

War related allegations

Allegation

some Islamic theologians have asserted that the Verse of the Sword abrogates no fewer than 124 more peaceful and tolerant verses of the Qur'an.3 Tafsir al Jalalayn, by the respected imams Jalal al Din Muhammad ibn Ahmad al Mahalli (1389–1459)

[14] Muhammad Rashid Rida, Tafsir al-Manar, ed. Ibrahim Shams al-Din, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, n.d.)

[15] Abu al-Ḥasan Ali ibn Aḥmad al-Waḥidi al-Naysaburi, *Asbab al-Nuzul* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, new ed.)

[16] Khalid ibn Sulayman al-Muzayni, *Al-Muharrar fi Asbab Nuzul al-Qur'an min Khilal al-Kutub al-Tis'ah* (Dammam: Dar Ibn al-Jawzi).

and Jalal al Din ‘Abd al Rahman ibn Abi Bakr al Suyuti (1445–1505), asserts that the ninth sura “was sent down when security was removed by the sword.”.Isma il bin ‘Amr bin Kathir al Dimashqi (1301–1372), known popularly as Ibn Kathir, declares that sura 9:5 “abrogated every agreement of peace between the Prophet and any idolater, every treaty, and every term. Quoting the opinion of Al Dhahak, No idolater had any more treaty or promise of safety ever since Surah Bara ah [the ninth sura] was revealed by the tenth of the month of Rabi‘Al-Akhir[17]. Ibn Juzayy (d.1340), yet another Qur‘an commentator whose works are still read in the Islamic world, agrees: The Verse of the Sword s purpose is “abrogating every peace treaty in the Quran.”[18]

Context

وَٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ وَكَذَّبُواْ بِـَٔايَٰتِنَآ أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ أَصْحَٰبُ ٱلنَّارِ ۖ هُمْ فِيهَا خَٰلِدُونَ ٣٩ يَٰبَنِيٓ إِسْرَٰٓءِيلَ ٱذْكُرُواْ نِعْمَتِيَ ٱلَّتِيٓ أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَوْفُواْ بِعَهْدِيٓ أُوفِ بِعَهْدِكُمْ وَإِيَّٰيَ فَٱرْهَبُونِ ٤٠

(Qur'an 22:39–40)

About this verse the exegetes said: The polytheists of Makkah used to persecute the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). They would continually come to him with injuries, some beaten and others wounded in the head, and they complained about them to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). He would say to them, "Be patient, for I have not been commanded to fight." This continued until the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) emigrated. Then Allah, revealed this verse. Ibn ʿAbbas said: When the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) was driven out of Makkah, Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "Indeed, we belong to Allah..." Then Allah revealed: "**Permission has been given to those who are fought...**" the verse. Abu Bakr said, "Then I knew that there would be fighting."[19] [20]

Denial

وقيله يا رب إن هؤلاء قوم لا يؤمنون فاصفح عنهم وقل سلام فسوف يعلمون

Ibn Kathir makes this clear in his commentary on another “tolerance verse”: “And he [Muhammad] said: O my Lord! Lo! These are a folk who believe not. Then bear with them, O Muhammad, and say: Peace. But they will come to know” (Quran 43:88–89). Ibn Kathir explains: “Say Salam (peace) means, ‘do not respond to them in the same evil manner in which they address you; but try to soften their hearts and forgive them in word and deed. ” However, that is not the end of the passage. Ibn Kathir then takes up the last part: “But they will come to know. This is a warning from Allah for them. His punishment, which cannot be warded off, struck them, and His religion and His word was supreme. Subsequently Jihad and striving were prescribed

[17] Tafsir ibn kathir,2247/6609

[18]The politically incorrect guide to islam (and crusades) Robert spencers ,regnery publishing,INC pg 25

[19] Abu al-Ḥasan Ali ibn Aḥmad al-Waḥidi al-Naysaburi, *Asbab al-Nuzul* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, new .ed.)

[20] Khalid ibn Sulayman al-Muzayni, *Al-Muharrar fi Asbab Nuzul al-Qur'an min Khilal al-Kutub al-Tis'ah* (Dammam: Dar Ibn al-Jawzi).

until the people entered the religion of Allah in crowds, and Islam spread throughout the east and the west.[21]

Surah Thawba

Sayyid Quthub translation in its first section, verses 1 28, the surah defines the final shape of relations between the Muslim community and the idolaters in the Arabian Peninsula, highlighting the practical, historical and ideological bases of these relations. All this is given in the inimitable Quranic style, with its strong rhythm and the powerful impressions it creates. (See in particular verses 1 16, 23 24, and 28.) The style employed in these verses, and in the passage as a whole, and the strong emphasis laid on fighting the idolaters in Arabia and the encouragement to take part in such fighting make it clear that at least a section of the Muslim community was very reluctant to take such a decisive step. There were different factors that came into play to cause such reluctance. The second section defines the final shape of relations between the Muslim community and the people of earlier revelations generally, also outlining their practical, historical and ideological bases. The passage also shows the independent nature of Islam, as well as the deviation of the people of earlier revelations from the divine faith, both in beliefs and behaviour. Hence, from the Islamic point of view, they are no longer following a divine faith. (Verses 29 35)

Qur'an 9:5

فَإِذَا ٱنسَلَخَ ٱلْأَشْهُرُ ٱلْحُرُمُ فَٱقْتُلُوا۟ ٱلْمُشْرِكِينَ حَيْثُ وَجَدتُّمُوهُمْ وَخُذُوهُمْ وَٱحْصُرُوهُمْ وَٱقْعُدُوا۟ لَهُمْ كُلَّ مَرْصَدٍ ۚ فَإِن تَابُوا۟ وَأَقَامُوا۟ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَءَاتَوُا۟ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ فَخَلُّوا۟ سَبِيلَهُمْ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ٥

Allegation

Thomas Ice states that anyone with even a casual acquaintance with Islam knows that the Koran is the authoritative scripture for the Muslim. Yet observe the many direct quotes from the Koran advocating militancy toward the non-Muslim. According to the author there are probably more that could be cited, but these are some that for him as an inexperienced in this field (as he states) was able to extract from Islam's Holy Book. But "But when the forbidden months are past, then fight and slay the Pagans wherever ye find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem (of war); but if they repent, and establish regular prayers and practise regular charity, then open the way for them: for Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful."[22]

[21] The politically incorrect guide to islam (and crusades) Robert spencers ,regnery publishing, INC pg 25

[22] (Qur'an 9:5, trans. Abdullah Yusuf Ali)

Denial

Abu Bakr As-Siddiq used this and other honourable Ayat as proof for fighting those who refrained from paying the Zakah. These Ayat allowed fighting people unless, and until, they embrace Islam and implement its rulings and obligations.[23]

Last part is reminding us that almighty will leave them alone. It means that if they repent from polytheism and fulfil the obligations prescribed for them by establishing prayer and giving zakah, then they should be left alone, and no harm or aggression should be directed against them. The verse concludes by affirming that Allah is All-Forgiving and Most Merciful toward those whosincerely repent and return to Him.[24]

قَٰتِلُواْ ٱلَّذِينَ لَا يُؤۡمِنُونَ بِٱللَّهِ وَلَا بِٱلۡيَوۡمِ ٱلۡأٓخِرِ وَلَا يُحَرِّمُونَ مَا حَرَّمَ ٱللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُۥ وَلَا يَدِينُونَ دِينَ ٱلۡحَقِّ مِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ حَتَّىٰ يُعۡطُواْ ٱلۡجِزۡيَةَ عَن يَدٖ وَهُمۡ صَٰغِرُونَ ٢٩

Qur'an 9:29

Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allah and His Apostle, nor acknowledge the Religion of Truth, even if they are of the people of the Book, until they pay the Jizya with will submission, and feel themselves subdued.[25]

Denial

The verse first points to the mistakes attributed to them and then prescribes the payment of jizyah for those who remain within Muslim society. It means that they are to pay the jizyah to the Muslim authority willingly and in submission, acknowledging its authority. The verse then proceeds to mention some of the beliefs and practices attributed to them.[26]

ٱنفِرُواْ خِفَافٗا وَثِقَالٗا وَجَٰهِدُواْ بِأَمۡوَٰلِكُمۡ وَأَنفُسِكُمۡ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِۚ ذَٰلِكُمۡ خَيۡرٞ لَّكُمۡ إِن كُنتُمۡ تَعۡلَمُونَ ٤١

Qur'an 9:41

Go forth, light armed and heavy armed, and strive and struggle with your goods and your persons, in the Cause of Allah.[27]

Fight against such of those who have been given the Scripture as believe not in Allah nor the Last Day. . . . Go forth, light armed and heavy armed, and strive with your wealth and your lives in the way of Allah! (Surah 2:29, 41)[28]

[23]Tafsir Ibn kathir,2246/6609

[24] Swafwathu thafaser,muhammed ali swabooni vol1/page22(521/607)

[25] Thomas D. Ice, "Islam Is NOT a Peaceful Religion," *Article Archives*, no. 102 (May 2009).

[26] Swafwathu thafaser,muhammed ali swabooni,vol1/page31(530/607)

[27] Thomas D. Ice, "Islam Is NOT a Peaceful Religion," *Article Archives*, no. 102 (May 2009).

[28] Thomas D. Ice, "Islam Is NOT a Peaceful Religion," *Article Archives*, no. 102 (May 2009).

Denial

In interpretation of this verse it is important to consider the Qur'anic context regarding fighting. The Qur'an permits fighting against those who initiate aggression against Muslims. The verse calls believers to mobilize and strive in the cause of Allah, whether lightly or heavily equipped, emphasizing that such commitment is better than becoming attached to worldly life and being content with its temporary enjoyments. As stated in *Al-Bahr*, this superiority is manifested in this world through victory over the enemy and inheriting the land, and in the Hereafter through the immense reward and the pleasure of Allah.[29]

In addition to the contextual misinterpretation, the citation itself is inaccurate, as the quoted text is from Qur'an 9:41 rather than "Surah 2:29, 41," as stated by the author.

إِنَّمَا جَزَٰٓؤُاْ ٱلَّذِينَ يُحَارِبُونَ ٱللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُۥ وَيَسۡعَوۡنَ فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِ فَسَادًا أَن يُقَتَّلُوٓاْ أَوۡ يُصَلَّبُوٓاْ أَوۡ تُقَطَّعَ أَيۡدِيهِمۡ وَأَرۡجُلُهُم مِّنۡ خِلَٰفٍ أَوۡ يُنفَوۡاْ مِنَ ٱلۡأَرۡضِۚ ذَٰلِكَ لَهُمۡ خِزۡيٞ فِي ٱلدُّنۡيَاۖ وَلَهُمۡ فِي ٱلۡأٓخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ٣٣

Qur'an 5:33

The infidel is to be “killed or crucified, or have their hands and feet on alternate sides cut off, or will be expelled out of the land . . . and in the hereafter theirs will be an awful doom.”[30]

Denial

The verse refers to those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger by opposing His religion and spreading corruption through crimes such as murder and armed robbery. It prescribes punishments including execution, crucifixion, amputation, or exile according to the nature of the offense. According to Ibn Abbas, one who kills is executed, one who kills and commits robbery is executed and crucified, one who commits robbery without killing has the right hand and left foot amputated, and one who only spreads fear is exiled. The verse concludes by exempting those who sincerely repent before being apprehended, for Allah is All-Forgiving and Most Merciful.[31]

Analysis

The problem with this misinterpretation is that the following verse, which provides the complete meaning and context, is not considered in such allegations. As a result, Islam is wrongly portrayed as promoting war against disbelievers.

[29] Swafwathu thafaser,muhammed ali swabooni,vol1/page37(536/607)
[30] Thomas D. Ice, "Islam Is NOT a Peaceful Religion," *Article Archives*, no. 102 (May 2009).
[31] Swafwathu thafaser,muhammed ali swabooni,vol1/page340(339/607)

وَقَٰتِلُواْ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلَّذِينَ يُقَٰتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوٓاْ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ ٱلْمُعْتَدِينَ ١٩٠ وَٱقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ ثَقِفْتُمُوهُمْ وَأَخْرِجُوهُم مِّنْ حَيْثُ أَخْرَجُوكُمْ ۚ وَٱلْفِتْنَةُ أَشَدُّ مِنَ ٱلْقَتْلِ ۚ وَلَا تُقَٰتِلُوهُمْ عِندَ ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْحَرَامِ حَتَّىٰ يُقَٰتِلُوكُمْ فِيهِ ۖ فَإِن قَٰتَلُوكُمْ فَٱقْتُلُوهُمْ ۗ كَذَٰلِكَ جَزَآءُ ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ ١٩١ فَإِنِ ٱنتَهَوْاْ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ١٩٢

Qur'an 2:190 92

Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you, but begin not hostilities. Lo! Allah loveth no aggressors. And slay them wherever you find them, and drive them out of the places whence they drove you out. . . . But if they desist, then lo! Allah is forgiving, merciful.[32]

Denial

The verse itself refutes this allegation. Its concluding section leaves little room for misinterpretation. It commands Muslims to fight only those who fight them and explicitly forbids aggression. It instructs them to fight their enemies wherever they encounter them and to expel them from where they had been expelled. It further explains that persecution and preventing people from practicing their faith are more serious than killing. Fighting near the Sacred Mosque is prohibited unless the enemy initiates hostilities there, in which case Muslims are permitted to fight in self-defence. The verse declares that if the enemy ceases its hostility, Muslims must also cease fighting, for Allah is All-Forgiving and Most Merciful.[33]

ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ يُقَٰتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ ۖ وَٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ يُقَٰتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱلطَّٰغُوتِ فَقَٰتِلُوٓاْ أَوْلِيَآءَ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنِ ۖ إِنَّ كَيْدَ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنِ كَانَ ضَعِيفًا ٧٦

Qur'an 4:76

Those who believe do battle for the cause of Allah; and those who reject the faith do battle for the cause of evil. So fight ye against the friends of Satan.[34]

Denial

It means that on one side believers fight for the noble purpose of supporting the religion of Allah and seeking His pleasure. On the other side, The disbelievers fight in the cause of Taghut (Satan, who calls to disbelief).believers are commanded to fight the allies of Satan, for Allah grants them victory. The verse contrasts fighting in the cause of Allah with fighting in the cause of Satan and concludes that Satan's plot is weak. Al-Zamakhshari explains that Satan's scheme against the believers is insignificant compared to Allah's support for them. [35]

[32] Thomas D. Ice, "Islam Is NOT a Peaceful Religion," *Article Archives*, no. 102 (May 2009).
[33] Swafwathu thafaser,muhammed ali swabooni,vol1/page126(125/607)
[34] Thomas D. Ice, "Islam Is NOT a Peaceful Religion," *Article Archives*, no. 102 (May 2009).
[35] Swafwathu thafaser,muhammed ali swabooni,vol1/page290(289/607)

Denial

Several verses were revealed concerning fighting (*qital*), but all of these verses were revealed in Madinah. This is because the Muslims in Makkah were in a state of weakness, and their struggle (*jihad*) against their enemies was carried out through speech rather than the sword.[36] They were not permitted to fight their enemies until after the Hijrah, when the Muslims had become stronger, increased in number, and established a state in al Madina al Munawwarah. At that point, permission to engage in fighting was granted. The first verse revealed concerning fighting is the statement of Allah, in Surat al Ḥajj:

"Permission [to fight] has been granted to those who are being fought because they have been wronged, and indeed Allah is Most Capable of granting them victory. Those who have been expelled from their homes without right, only because they said, 'Our Lord is Allah. Had Allah not repelled some people by means of others, monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques—in which the name of Allah is frequently mentioned—would surely have been destroyed. And Allah will surely support those who support His cause. Indeed, Allah is All Powerful, All Mighty." (Qur'an 22:39–40)

Analysis

As is evident from this noble text, it clarifies the wisdom behind the legislation permitting fighting. Fighting was prescribed only as a means of repelling oppression and aggression. It was legislated solely for the defense of the oppressed and the restraint of aggressors, as explicitly stated in the noble text.[37] 22:39–40

CONCLUSION

This study has examined selected Qur'anic verses frequently cited in Western writings and polemical narratives as evidence of Islamic intolerance and hostility toward non-Muslims. Through a qualitative library-based and comparative analysis of the Qur'an, *asbab al-nuzul* literature, and classical and contemporary works of *tafsir*, the study demonstrates that many such allegations arise from interpreting individual verses independently of their historical and textual contexts.The analysis shows that Qur'anic statements concerning religious difference, such as Qur'an 109:1–6, establish clear theological boundaries without prescribing hostility toward people of other faiths. Similarly, Qur'an 2:256 establishes the principle of non-compulsion in religion, while Qur'an 73:10–11 emphasizes patience and dignified conduct in response to opposition. Verses concerning conflict, particularly Qur'an 9:5, 9:29, 9:41, 5:33, and 2:190–192, must likewise be understood in relation to aggression, persecution, political circumstances, and the specific groups and situations addressed by the revelation. Qur'an 22:39–40 further identifies the initial permission to fight with the

[36]Nisrina Nur Afifah, The "Sword Verse" in Contemporary Tafsir Discourse: Analysis of Muhammad Abdel Haleem's Interpretation in Understanding the Qur'an and Exploring the Qur'an (undergraduate thesis, Department of Qur'anic Science and Tafsir, Faculty of Shari'ah, Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University Malang, 2024), 9.

[37] Muḥammad Ali al-Ṣabuni, *Al-Tibyan*, 1st ed. (Beirut: Alam al-Kutub, 1405 AH/1985 CE), 17.

experience of persecution, expulsion, and the need to defend religious communities and places of worship.

It can be concluded that a contextual reading of the Qur'an reveals an important distinction between **theological exclusivity and social intolerance, and between legitimate defensive warfare and unrestricted aggression**. The Qur'an maintains the distinctiveness of Islamic belief.simultaneously recognizes principles of justice, religious responsibility, peaceful coexistence, and the prohibition of coercion. That is why interpretations based primarily on isolated quotations do not correctly represent the broader Qur'anic framework of interfaith relations. A contextual and exegetical approach is therefore essential for a balanced academic understanding of Qur'anic teachings concerning religious diversity and relations with other communities.

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