

The Cultural Environment Surrounding the Text, "The Reasons for Revelation," and its Impact on Guiding the Qur'anic Meaning

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Abstract

This study aims to elucidate the impact of the cultural environment surrounding the occasions of revelation on the interpretation of the Quranic text, by highlighting the close relationship between the Quranic discourse and the social and cultural context in which it was revealed. The Holy Quran addressed a society with its own customs, traditions, and issues, making understanding this environment crucial for comprehending the text's intent and grasping its true meaning. The occasions of revelation, with their inherent cultural and social context, contributed to clarifying Quranic objectives, correcting interpretations, and preventing uncontrolled misinterpretations. The study also revealed that considering the specificity of the cultural context does not limit the text's meaning to the time of revelation, but rather provides an entry point for understanding the relationship between the specific and the general, and between historical circumstances and the enduring relevance of Quranic guidance across time.

Keywords: Sociolinguistics, Text, Occasions of Revelation, Holy Quran, Context, Specific and General.

Received: 22/04/2025

Accepted: 02/03/2026

Published: 20/07/2026

Introduction

The non-linguistic environment surrounding a discourse has a profound impact on its meaning. The speaker must consider the environment when speaking, and the listener interprets the discourse according to their lived reality, taking into account the time and place of the conversation, the relationship between the speakers, their shared values, and previous discourse.

The cultural context encompasses all events, conversations between the speaker and the listener, the time and place in which the conversation took place, which guide the textual meaning, and the external atmosphere surrounding the speech, including the circumstances and conditions in which the text arises. Every era has its own social, political, and religious culture that distinguishes it from other eras, because some words or phrases may carry political, economic, or social connotations that change from one era to another. "Language has been influenced by society and has influenced it, and a strong relationship exists between them that no one can deny. Language is clearly influenced by all social phenomena. It is Bedouin in Bedouin society, with its limited vocabulary, structures, and imagination, and it lacks flexibility and cannot accommodate many forms of expression." It is urban in advanced urban society. Therefore, "language and its laws and development cannot be understood in isolation from the movement of the society that speaks it in a specific time and place, because it contains human thought and mental methods, and it contains the diversity and colors of the external world." This external factor, influential in understanding the text, paved the way for sociolinguistics to become a significant and influential element in all of this.

If we examine the efforts of Quranic commentators when determining meaning, we find that they considered all aspects of the circumstances surrounding the Quranic text when defining meaning and interpretive rulings. They also considered the components of the linguistic context, relying on the reasons for revelation, social customs, the rules of Arabic speech, and abstract Arabic grammar, along with theoretical pronouncements, accounts of past nations, the sayings and actions of the Prophet, and the opinions of earlier scholars, such as the Companions and others. Regarding time and place, they took into account the issues of Meccan and Medinan verses, and abrogation. Thus, the external context contributed to their comprehensive and precise determination of the meanings of the syntactic elements.

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Among the components of the external context that contributed to guiding the syntactic meaning for commentators are the reasons for revelation, which are among the important factors influencing the Quranic text, altering its meaning, and shaping its direction. First: Defining the Reasons for Revelation:

- Linguistically: A reason is anything that leads to something else. Its original usage referred to a rope used to reach water, and then it came to be used for anything that leads to something else.

Linguistically: The descent or falling of something. To descend from a high place to a low place means to go down. Descent also means to arrive or settle.

- Technically: The events during which a verse was revealed.

This definition focuses solely on the historical aspect and on a single event. However, al-Zarqani's definition is slightly more comprehensive. He stated, "The occasion of revelation is that which the verse, or verses, were revealed to address or clarify its ruling at the time of its occurrence." According to these two definitions, the occasion of revelation rests on two things:

First: An event occurs during the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), and a verse or verses are revealed concerning it.

Second: The Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him) asks a question, and verses are revealed clarifying its ruling, regardless of whether the question pertains to a past, present, or future matter. In modern studies, Dr. Dawood al-Attar defined it as "the science that undertakes the task of uncovering the historical events and occurrences that were the reasons for the revelation of the Quranic text." Al-Attar's definition also focuses on the historical aspect, as if the occasions of revelation are stories whose characters and events are more important than their objective, which is to clarify and reveal meanings and alter the apparent meaning of the verses.

In his research on Quranic sciences, Dr. Subhi al-Salih states, "The verse or verses were revealed because of an event, either addressing it, answering it, or clarifying the ruling of the time of its occurrence." Subhi comes very close to the objective of the reasons for revelation, as they clarify the ruling and answer questions not explicitly stated in the texts. This is because "the meaning of a word may be linked to historical events and people's behavior in the past. Therefore, referring to the study and verification of the documents related to the reasons for revelation is an important element in understanding the meaning of the text; it is a crucial mechanism in this field."

Muhammad Abdul Rahman Al-Akk said: "Knowing the reasons for revelation is essential for anyone seeking to understand the science of rhetoric and eloquence, through which the miraculous structure of the Quran is revealed. It is also crucial for understanding the intentions behind Arabic speech and the contextual requirements of the discourse, whether related to the discourse itself, the addressee, or both. A single statement can differ depending on the context, the addressee, or other factors. Knowing the reason means understanding the contextual requirements. The Holy Quran is a book that answered the questions that arose during the early days of the Islamic call, clarifying Islam's stance on those events and occurrences. The reasons for revelation represent the linguistic stage in all its elements: circumstances, conditions, and everything related to the message sent and received. Exploring this is a revival and a new understanding of the text's reality.

The Holy Quran is not detached from lived reality, and anyone studying the Quranic text must be aware of the pragmatic factors, including the reasons for revelation, in order to construct a suitable interpretation that aligns with the speaker's intention. The meaning of the words we seek is based on external factors, primarily the contextual requirements." If we consider external factors and the exigencies of the situation, we find that they constitute a parallel or prior existence to the framework of the completed or uttered discourse. In other words, as Halliday indicated, they are the other text or the text accompanying the apparent text, serving as the bridge that connects linguistic representation to its external environment.

This is precisely what exegetes and scholars of jurisprudence have explored, especially when examining the topics of the reasons for revelation and addressing the equation of the specific and the general, and the general and specific mechanisms, as the reasons for revelation are closely linked to this equation.

Secondly: The reality of the reasons for revelation: a historical account or a transformative influence on the text?

The reasons for revelation are of paramount importance due to their direct connection to the science of exegesis. They aid in understanding and interpreting the text and are a crucial means of accessing the meaning of the Quranic text. They reveal the relationship of the text to reality on the one hand, and the relationship of the reader and recipient to it on the other. If the Quranic text was revealed gradually over a period of twenty-odd years, then most verses were revealed in response to a specific reason that necessitated their revelation. This context defines the historical framework within which the verses and chapters of the text can be understood.

This particular reason is what gives the Qur'an its vitality in opening the field to non-apparent meanings and distancing it from the reasons for revelation, which are merely a history that is narrated and events that are recounted. This has led some to consider it an "epistemological function of inference, described as historical material that was not of a degree of control and accuracy, which caused the emergence of disagreement among the interpreters, Qur'an scholars, and even the scholars of Hadith regarding the authenticity of some narrations. However, it is unreasonable to extend the conjecture to everything that Qur'an scholars narrate in the chapter on the reasons for revelation, despite the possibility of the infiltration of fabrication, concoction, and error within this circle of traditional knowledge, which remains valid in light of different patterns of analysis and criticism." But if we limit ourselves only to what came from it authentically, we would notice that active dynamism in the Qur'anic text. For this reason, the early scholars wrote many books in which they narrated what was authentic of the occasions of revelation, such as Al-Suyuti and Al-Wahidi. They even considered this science to be one of the important sciences that reveal the intended meaning. It is not merely a passion for recording the historical facts that surrounded the formation of the text, but this knowledge aims to understand the text. Understanding its correct and accurate meaning is only possible if we know its story and context. Many scholars have emphasized the importance of knowing the reasons for revelation and explaining its semantic significance in understanding the depths of texts and enriching them.

Third: The Significance of the Reasons for Revelation

Undoubtedly, knowledge of the context outside the text influences its understanding, as the Quran was revealed in an environment that impacted its interpretation. Ibn Taymiyyah stated, "Knowing the reason for revelation helps in understanding the verse, for knowledge of the cause leads to knowledge of the effect."

Among the most precise statements regarding the importance of the reasons for revelation is Al-Shatibi's statement:

"Knowing the reasons for revelation is essential for anyone who wants to know the Qur'an. This is because the science of meanings and rhetoric, through which the miraculous nature of the Qur'an's structure is known, as well as the knowledge of the intentions of the Arabs' speech, is based on knowing the requirements of the circumstances. This is because the same speech can be understood differently according to the situation and the discourse." This is a reference to the context of the situation, which Western linguists have called for. If the Arabs' speech changes according to the situation they are in, then the Qur'an also changes in meaning according to the reason for the revelation of the verse and to whom it was revealed. "For example, a question has one word, but other meanings are added to it, such as affirmation, rebuke, and so on. Likewise, a command can add meanings of permission, threat, and challenge, and the like. Its intended meaning is not indicated except by external factors." "Knowing the occasions and reasons for revelation resolves every problem in this type of matter." It is essential for understanding the Quran, and knowing the reason is tantamount to understanding the context. From this stems the understanding that

ignorance of the reasons for revelation leads to ambiguity and confusion, and renders the apparent meanings of texts ambiguous, thus causing disagreement and potential conflict.

Al-Suyuti rejected the notion that the reasons for revelation are merely a recounting of events and devoid of meaning. He stated, "Knowing the reasons for revelation has benefits, and those who say it is useless because it is simply a historical record are mistaken." Moreover, scholars of Quranic exegesis went further, prohibiting any interpreter from delving into interpretation without considering the social and cultural aspects, or the context of usage, which is "the correspondence of the chosen expression to its context of use." This context is textual and situational, and the reasons for revelation (asbab al-nuzul) are the focus of interpreters in understanding the verse: what it was revealed about, to whom it was revealed, and where it was revealed. The Companions, the first to engage in understanding the Quranic text, paid close attention to these spatial and temporal contexts. Ali ibn Abi Talib said, "By God, there is no verse that was revealed except that I knew what it was revealed about, where it was revealed, and to whom it was revealed." Thus, the reasons for revelation are also related to reality, as they are considered among the most important sciences that reveal and indicate the relationship between the text and reality. Through the facts they present, they provide us with new material that shows the text as a response to reality, either in support or rejection.

Mentioning these benefits clearly demonstrates the interpreter's and jurist's endeavor to discover the text's significance and meaning through textual analysis. This involves extracting its meaning from all aspects, in accordance with the methodology of linguistic textual analysis in general, and also through not separating the text from the events it describes. The text is not divorced from its context, as the occasions of revelation provide the underlying reason for the rulings. By discovering this reason, the jurist can generalize the ruling to other similar cases. The reasons for revelation remain crucial for interpreters and those studying the Quran, helping to clarify any ambiguity or obscurity in a verse and revealing its intended meaning. In some instances, the reason for revelation may be the sole key to understanding and correctly interpreting a verse. It also guides the interpreter to the evidence and contextual clues that favor one interpretation or clarify its intended meaning.

Fourthly/Reasons for Revelation and the Dichotomy of Generality of the Wording and Specificity of the Reason:

This is a fundamental principle of Islamic jurisprudence (Is the determining factor the generality of the wording or the specificity of the reason?).

This means that if the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was asked about the ruling on a specific incident, and he answered with a general statement that encompasses this incident and others, or if someone swore to do something or not to do it, and then the circumstances of the oath changed, is that specific reason considered a restriction on the general statement, so that it is not applied outside of that specific reason? Or does the specific reason not restrict the general statement, so that the statement is applied in its generality to every similar incident? A verse is revealed for a specific reason or occasion for which it was revealed, clarifying, emphasizing, or prohibiting something, and then its ruling becomes general for all people. If what was revealed agrees with the reason in its generality or agrees with it in its specificity, then the general is interpreted in its generality and the specific in its specificity. These reasons are not the causes of legislation; rather, they are matters that accompanied the issuance of the text. Explaining the reason for revelation is a powerful tool for understanding the meanings of the Quran. Anyone wishing to delve into the science of the Quran and Sunnah must be familiar with the customs of the Arabs in their speech, actions, and circumstances at the time of revelation from God and the explanation from His Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him). Ignorance leads to difficulties from which it is impossible to escape without this knowledge. However, the reason may be specific, while the wording of the verse is general. Here, scholars of jurisprudence differed on whether the determining factor should be the generality of the wording or the specificity of the reason. The majority opinion is that the determining factor should be the generality of the wording, not the specificity of the reason. That is, the ruling applies to all instances of the general wording and is not limited to the person for whom the verse was revealed. For example, the verses concerning li'an (mutual imprecation) were revealed in the context of Hilal ibn Umayya accusing his wife of adultery. This was a specific reason that caused the verse to be revealed at that particular time, as God

Almighty says: {And those who accuse their wives [of adultery] when they have not [done] a thing}. They have witnesses except themselves. The testimony of one of them is equivalent to four testimonies by Allah that he is indeed among the truthful. (An-Nur 24:6-7)

However, the verse uses the general term "those" (alladhina), which is appropriate and negates the specificity of the reason. The relative pronoun is considered one of the words that indicate the generality of the statement. Relative pronouns have a direct relationship to the generality of the statement. Understanding the shift in the meaning of the verses from the level of specificity to the level of generality depends on the reader, interpreter, and jurist paying attention to this relationship and attempting to derive rulings from specific cases. This is done using mechanisms, contexts, and connections that do not require applying this ruling only to Hilal ibn Umayya, but extend to others.

Those who differed from the majority held that the determining factor is the specificity of the reason. This means that the wording of the verse is limited to the person for whom it was revealed. As for the ruling concerning others, their ruling is determined by other evidence, such as analogy. This is so that the transmission of the specific reason remains beneficial, and so that the cause and effect correspond, like the question and answer.

The more likely of the two opinions is that of the majority, due to the widespread practice of the Companions and others in many instances of citing the generality of verses revealed for specific reasons.

The ruling on li'an (mutual imprecation) in the verse is to be understood without being specific. Therefore, the ruling is general for individuals who accuse their spouses and find no witnesses other than themselves, whether they are Hilal ibn Umayya, the one who had the specific reason, or others.

Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to this duality—the generality of the wording and the specificity of the reason—with a semantic and textual coherence, not one at the expense of the other. This would hinder the discovery of the meaning and significance. The meaning of the text is nothing but the result of the interaction between the text's mechanisms that shape meaning. The text can respond to the changing realities in its evolving and developing movement throughout history. Undoubtedly, most of what is mentioned in the Holy Quran concerning rulings and legislation can be viewed through this duality (general and specific). This duality can... It depends on understanding many of the issues mentioned in the Holy Qur'an that were revealed for specific reasons and must be generalized by searching for occasions and evidence that prove this. This is what Ibn Taymiyyah proved when he said: "Many of these things may come from their saying: This verse was revealed for such and such, especially if the person mentioned is a person, such as the reasons for revelation mentioned in the interpretation. Those who said that did not mean that the ruling of the verse is exclusive to those specific people and not others. And even if people disagree about the general wording that came for a reason, whether it is specific to that reason or not? No one of the Muslim scholars said: The generalities of the Qur'an and Sunnah are specific to the specific person. Rather, the most that can be said is that they are specific to the type of that person, so they include what is similar to him, and the generality in them is not according to the wording."

This is similar to a proverb people use to describe a specific incident, which is then passed down through generations, providing lessons and insights. The reasons for revelation should not be considered in isolation from the duality of the general and the specific, through which interpreters strive to understand and comprehend the text. A text is merely the product of interaction and interrelation between context, language, the event in which it occurred, and the person to whom it applies. Neglecting any one aspect hinders the interpreter from discovering the significance and meaning. Focusing solely on linguistic structure without considering the internal and external cultural context of the text leads us into a labyrinth of closed analyses, while focusing on context without regard for the text's structure and composition returns us to mere imitation. A text is an integrated whole influenced by factors that precisely determine its understanding.

Further confirming the generality of the wording and the text's indication of it is what is stated in al-Itqan: "Among the proofs for considering the generality of the wording is the argument of the Companions and others in various events based on the generality of verses revealed for specific reasons, which were widely known and accepted among them. For example, Sa'id al-Maqburi, while discussing with Muhammad ibn Ka'b, said: 'In some parts of the Book of Allah, it says: "Servants whose tongues are sweeter than honey, and whose hearts are more bitter than aloe." Muhammad ibn Ka'b said: "This is in the Book of Allah: {And among the people is he whose speech pleases you in worldly life, and he calls upon Allah to witness what is in his heart, while he is the fiercest of adversaries.} [Al-Baqarah: 204]. Sa'id said: 'I know about whom it was revealed.' Muhammad ibn Ka'b said: "The verse..." It is revealed to a man, then becomes general. This is similar to proverbs that people use, originally spoken on specific occasions, but which transcend their original context to become common sayings passed down through generations and used in various situations. From this perspective, the reasons for revelation cannot be separated from the issue of generality and specificity. Interpreters rely on these reasons to understand the Quranic text and grasp its dimensions, considering the text to be the product of the interaction between the linguistic context and the event in which it was revealed. Neglecting either of these dimensions may prevent reaching the correct meaning and intended interpretation. Focusing solely on the linguistic structure of the text without considering its internal and external context may lead to flawed interpretations, while focusing only on the context and neglecting the linguistic structure of the text may lead to inaccurate conclusions. Therefore, a sound understanding of the text requires viewing it as an integrated whole in which multiple elements work together to determine its correct meaning.

Fifth: Abrogation of Texts and its Relation to the Reasons for Revelation

1/ Abrogation:

Abrogation is a function of context and one of its effects. It pertains to texts that are subject to abrogation, as some texts are not subject to abrogation, such as those related to creed or those accompanied by evidence supporting it. The function of the abrogating context is to determine which text came first and which came later, even those that appear contradictory. It is then determined that the later text abrogates the earlier one. The ruling is lifted and removed according to contextual clues and circumstances, such that the abrogated text's meaning is nullified under normal circumstances. Thus, a ruling is abrogated by another ruling due to numerous contextual factors. This is evident in:

A/ Abrogation based on precedence of revelation.

The waiting period for a woman whose husband has died was one year, but it was abrogated to four months and ten days. The abrogated text is the verse: {And those of you who die and leave widows behind - let them bequeath to their wives a maintenance for one year without turning them out. But if they leave, there is no blame upon you for what they do with themselves in an acceptable manner. And Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise.} [Al-Baqarah: 240]. This was abrogated by another abrogating verse. It was revealed afterward, even though the abrogating verse was revealed earlier, namely, the words of God Almighty: {And those of you who die and leave widows behind, they (the widows) shall wait four months and ten days. Then when they have fulfilled their term, there is no blame upon you for what they do with themselves in accordance with what is acceptable. And God is All-Aware of what you do.} [Al-Baqarah: 234]. It is known that the later verse was revealed before the earlier one. If a reader were to limit themselves to reading only the first verse, they would arrive at a legal ruling stating that the waiting period for a widow is a full year. However, a careful examination of the entire Quranic text, considering the harmony of its verses and chapters, reveals this abrogating verse, which was revealed later. Understanding abrogation, its timing, and circumstances is crucial for determining meaning and comprehending texts.

B) Abrogating Quranic Texts Based on Contextual Evidence.

An example of this is the verse: {O you who have believed, do not approach prayer while you are intoxicated until you know what you are saying} [An-Nisa: 43]. This verse indicates the permissibility of drinking alcohol if one has ample time to do so without approaching prayer while intoxicated and unaware of what one is saying. Therefore, some people drink alcohol while others abstain. The ruling was abrogated by another verse, namely, the Almighty's statement: {O you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone altars [to other than Allah], and idols are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful.} [Al-Ma'idah: 90]. Those who wish to cling to alcohol cite the first verse, ignoring the entire context and coherence of the Quran, and overlooking the concept of abrogation, which is crucial for accurately determining meaning by understanding the abrogating and abrogated verses, their time of revelation, and their abrogation.

C) The difference in time is an explanation of the abrogation of the prohibition against marrying women of the People of the Book.

God Almighty said: {And do not marry polytheistic women until they believe. And a believing slave woman is better than a polytheistic woman, even though she might please you.} [Al-Baqarah: 221] This applies generally to all polytheistic women, including the People of the Book. Then the words of God Almighty were revealed: "This day [all] good things have been made lawful for you. And the food of those who were given the Scripture is lawful for you and your food is lawful for them. And [lawful to you in marriage are] chaste women from among the believing women and chaste women from among the believing women and chaste women from among those who were given the Scripture." Before you, they were chaste, not committing fornication or taking lovers. And whoever denies the faith - his work has become worthless, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers. (5) [Al-Ma'idah: 5-5] This verse abrogates some of the general meaning of the verse in Surah Al-Baqarah, which prohibited all polytheistic women and restricted the permissibility to a specific day. This temporal term, which altered the meaning of the Quranic text, expresses its coherence and indicates that it cannot be read in isolation. If understanding were limited to fragmenting the text and not connecting it to other texts, understanding would be lost, and we would miss many of the meanings concealed by the dynamism of the Quran. This abrogation indicates that the food of the People of the Book and their women were not permissible for Muslims before the day this verse was revealed. This is evidence supporting the view that the verse in Surah Al-Ma'idah abrogates the previous prohibition, and it, in turn, indicates that the verse in Surah Al-Baqarah is abrogated in some instances of its general meaning. It does not mean that the permissibility of good things was not prohibited before the revelation of the verse in Surah Al-Ma'idah, because our situation was not that all good things were permissible, and the food of the People of the Book and their women was not permissible until after this announcement. Thus, abrogation is a contextual indicator from the external context that influences the Quranic text. It is not only for identifying the abrogating verses. The copying and narration of it only changes many meanings and environmental rules that govern society. Through copying, coexistence between Muslims and others was restored after contact and rapprochement had been prohibited.

*Sixth: The impact of the reasons for revelation on understanding the Quranic text – Quranic examples –**1/- Dispelling the misconception of permitting what is forbidden.*

If a text is read outside its external context, it may be understood differently, and what is explicitly forbidden may be made permissible, as in the verse where God Almighty says: "There is no blame upon those who believe and do righteous deeds for what they have eaten [in the past] if they fear God and believe and do righteous deeds, then fear God and believe, then fear God and do good. And God loves the doers of good." [Al-Ma'idah: 93]

This verse was a source of confusion for a group of people during the reign of Umar ibn al-Khattab (may God be pleased with him). They believed that wine was permissible and cited the verse as evidence. However, Umar ibn al-Khattab opposed them, and Ibn Abbas refuted their arguments regarding the verse's revelation. Qudamah said, "They witnessed him drinking wine, and he confessed to Umar ibn al-Khattab,

'Why didn't you flog me?' 'God is between you and me.' Umar asked, 'Which verse of God's law do you find that I shouldn't flog you?' He replied, 'God says in His Book: "There is no blame upon those who believe..." I am one of those who believe and do righteous deeds, then fear God and do good. I witnessed the battles of Uhud, the Trench, and other battles with the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him).' Umar asked, 'Why don't you refute his statement?' Ibn Abbas explained, 'These verses were revealed as an excuse for those who came before. The excuse for those who came before is that they met God before wine was forbidden to them, and as a proof for those who remain... those who, if they believe, fear God, and do good, should obey God's command regarding the prohibition of wine.'" Although Qudamah was a noble companion of the Prophet, eloquent in speech, and relatively new to the desert and the pure Arabs, his ignorance of the context of this verse's revelation led him to a legal error. He mistakenly believed that wine was permissible for those who believed and feared God. This oversight caused him to deviate from the intended meaning and the correct understanding of the verse. The reason for the verse's revelation clarified the ambiguity, specifying that it applied only to those companions who died while drinking wine before its prohibition. Ibn Abbas used this to refute those who misunderstood the verse. Had it not been for the reason for its revelation, they would have remained in their error, having understood the verse to be general.

Perhaps ignorance of the context of such verses makes it difficult to grasp the text's intentions and purposes, often leading to misinterpretations. Accurate understanding and the correct meaning cannot be achieved without familiarity with the context of revelation. 2- The reasons for revelation clarify problematic words.

For example: {O you who have believed, do not say, "Ra'ina," but say, "Unzurna," and listen. And for the disbelievers is a painful punishment.} [Al-Baqarah: 104]. This verse prohibits believers from saying "Ra'ina" to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), even though the word itself does not appear to be offensive or warrant prohibition. The intended meaning of "Ra'ina" here is different and is not apparent in the wording or the text of the verse except by considering the context of its revelation. This clarifies the reason for prohibiting this word. Abdullah ibn Abbas said: "The Arabs used to use this word, and when the Jews heard them using it to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), they were pleased by it." The word "Ra'ina" was considered a vile insult by the Jews. They said, "We used to insult Muhammad secretly, but now we can insult him openly because it is part of our language." So they would come to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and say, "O Muhammad, 'Ra'ina,'" and laugh. A man from the Ansar, Sa'd ibn 'Ubadah, who was knowledgeable in the Jewish language, noticed this and said, "O enemies of God, may the curse of God be upon you! By Him in whose hand is the soul of Muhammad, if I hear any of you say it, I will strike off his head!" They replied, "Don't you say it to him?" Then God revealed: "Do not say, 'Ra'ina,' but say, 'Unzurna,' and listen. And for the disbelievers is a painful punishment." (2:104)

The reason for this revelation became clear: to avoid any ambiguity. The word itself did not have a vile meaning among the Arabs, but... Among the Jews, it has a different meaning, which they exploited by mentioning it and mocking its meaning. Were it not for this pause, one of us might read the verse and be prohibited from using a particular word without knowing the reason for it, except by delving into the depths of the external text through the interpreter who played the role of the active reader, utilizing the semantic possibilities to understand the text.

3- The reason for revelation resolves the apparent contradiction between the two texts. Understanding the reasons for revelation helps to eliminate this apparent contradiction, as these reasons reveal the different meanings of the verses and give each verse its own specific context, thus negating any contradiction between it and other verses. An example of this is the Almighty's saying: Those who accuse chaste, unsuspecting, believing women are cursed in this world and the Hereafter; and they will have a great punishment. (23) [An-Nur: 23-23]. This verse includes a threat of curse and great punishment for everyone who accuses chaste women, and it does not differentiate between those who repent and those who do not, while we read the words of God Almighty: "And those who accuse chaste women and then If they do not produce four witnesses, then flog them with eighty lashes, and never accept their testimony. Those are the defiantly disobedient. Except for those who repent afterwards and correct themselves, for indeed, Allah is Forgiving

and Merciful. (4-5) Returning to the reason for revelation, we find that there is no contradiction between the two verses; the first verse was revealed concerning Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her). God forgive her – after the well-known incident of the slander. Ibn Jarir al-Tabari narrated on the authority of Umar ibn Abi Salama, on the authority of his father, who said: Aisha said: I was accused of what I was accused of while I was unaware, and it reached me later. While the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, was sitting with me, revelation came to him. When revelation came to him, he would be in a state of deep sleep. Revelation came to him while he was sitting with me, then he sat upright, wiping his face, and said: “O Aisha, rejoice!” She said: I replied: “Praise be to God, not to you.” Then he recited: “Indeed, those who accuse chaste, unaware, believing women are cursed in the Hereafter.” [This world and the Hereafter, and for them is a great punishment. (23)] [An-Nur: 23], until it reaches: [Those are innocent of what they say. For them is forgiveness and a noble provision. (26)]

[An-Nur: 26-26]. It was also narrated on the authority of Sa’id ibn Jubayr that he was asked: Is adultery worse or falsely accusing a chaste woman? He said: Adultery. So it was said to him: Does not God Almighty say: [Indeed, those who accuse a chaste woman]

4- The reason for revelation prevents misunderstanding.

A superficial reader of the text, without contextual knowledge of the reasons for revelation, might err. For example, in this verse, some people misunderstood the meaning of the condition, mistakenly believing that a woman who has reached menopause has no waiting period unless she doubts her menstruation. God Almighty says: {And those of your women who have despaired of menstruation, if you doubt, then their waiting period is three months. And those who have not menstruated. And for those who are pregnant, their term is until they deliver their burden. And whoever fears God...} {أَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ الْإِنْسَانُ عَلَىٰ غَلَبَةٍ يُسْرًا ۚ 4}

[At-Talaq: 4] This is a misunderstanding. However, by referring to the reason for its revelation, it becomes clear that the intended meaning of the condition is contrary to this understanding. The reason for its revelation is what Al-Hakim narrated from Ubayy ibn Ka'b: "When the verse in Surah Al-Baqarah concerning the number of women was revealed, they said that a number remained that was not mentioned, namely the number of young girls, old women, and pregnant women. So the verse was revealed." Thus, the reason clarifies that the intended meaning of the condition is: "If you have doubts about their ruling," not their menstruation, as is apparent from the verse.

5- The reason for revelation shifts the apparent praise to the purpose of mockery, ridicule, and threat.

Among the Quranic texts whose occasion and context of revelation must be understood is the verse: {Taste [this punishment]! Indeed, you are the mighty, the noble!} [Ad-Dukhan: 49]. The apparent meaning of the verse alone cannot reveal its intended meaning, as it contains a kind of punishment and at the same time some praise. Is it general or specific to a particular person? However, when referring to the reasons for its revelation, it is in fact addressed to Ubayy. He was ignorant when he said, "Does Muhammad promise me? By God, I am more powerful than the two mountains between them!" meaning the leaders of Quraysh, those with power and authority. But God, the Exalted, mocked him when He addressed him in this manner, as a form of ridicule, meaning, "You are neither powerful nor noble."

Regarding the reason for its revelation, it is also narrated from Ikrimah that he said: The Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, met Abu Jahl and said, "God has commanded me to say to you, 'Woe to you, and woe to you! Then woe to you, and woe to you!' (Al-Qiyamah 75:34-35)." He said, "So he withdrew his hand from his and said, 'Neither you nor your companion can do anything to me. You know that I am the most powerful of the people of the valley, and I am the mighty and noble one.' So God killed him on the day of Badr in the worst of deaths, humiliated him, and reproached him with His words, 'Taste it! Indeed, you are the one who...' {The Exalted in Might, the Generous} [Ad-Dukhan: 49]. After understanding the reason, the irony in the word "Al-Aziz" (the Exalted in Might) becomes clear and confirmed. It is used in a context where neither might nor honor is present, belonging to the category of repeated mockery and sarcasm, where the discourse is linked to a previous one.

This verse is a response to Abu Jahl's statement, "I am the Exalted in Might, the Generous." The Quran repeats and reiterates this with the emphatic particle "Inna" (you), addressing him with a name he does not deserve. "Al-Aziz" and "Al-Karim" are names of God alone. This contrast creates an exchange between the two functional positions, indicating the misguidance of the one being addressed and the authority of the sender, which is hinted at and alluded to within this ironic discourse.

6- The reason for revelation clarifies the wisdom behind the ruling.

This is because the reason for revelation recounts the circumstances, conditions, and situations people were in before the ruling was legislated. By referring to it, we can understand the wisdom intended by the Lawgiver. An example of this is: God Almighty said: }Your wives are a tilth for you, so approach your tilth however you wish, and put forth good for yourselves. And fear Allah and know that you will meet Him. And give good tidings to the believers. 223 {[Al-Baqarah: 223] "However" is a word that may come to mean when, where, how, or in what way, and thus its meanings have become mixed up and confused for the listener. Therefore, there must be one or more reasons that favor one of the meanings. The majority of scholars from among the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the followers after them, may Allah have mercy on them, have held that what is meant is in what way you wish if the intercourse is in the place of the tilth. They cited the occasion of revelation as evidence.

It has become clear from the commentators that the reason for the revelation of this verse is that the Jews used to say: "Whoever has intercourse with a woman from behind and then enters her vagina, the child will be cross-eyed." So God Almighty revealed this verse to refute their claim. Therefore, it is more appropriate to interpret the word in this way. As for the timing, it is irrelevant in this matter, because "how" can mean "when" or "how."

Conclusion

The reasons for revelation are considered part of the external context that influences the Quranic text and its understanding. Revisiting them and correcting many attributed narrations can change many semantic concepts, such as resolving contradictions between texts, clarifying the wisdom behind the legislation, shifting the apparent understanding of a verse to a precise, deeper understanding, eliminating errors in understanding verses, clarifying problematic terms, and so on.

The reasons for revelation are an invitation to pay attention to what lies outside the text and to broaden the scope to include many influential occasions such as society and its conditions, the psychology of the recipient, the context, and other factors that enhance the vitality of the Quranic text. And its flexibility.

As for the recommendations, we:

- We call for reading and studying the Holy Quran with an interpretive approach, taking into account the contextual circumstances of its revelation to establish rulings, enrich their meaning, or guide their application, without relying solely on the literal meaning.
- Renewing Quranic interpretation through a modern reading and by utilizing modern Western linguistic theories in a manner that aligns with the unique characteristics of the Holy Quran.
- Emphasizing that the Holy Quran is not a historical narrative of events, but rather a flexible text that is renewed when properly and contextually reread.
- The necessity of combining the sanctity of the Holy Quran with modern scientific research to keep pace with rigorous methodologies.
- Activating interpretive reading centers for the Quran to explore its hidden meanings.

This is the culmination of what has been achieved in this work, which I pray will be a contribution, however small, to scientific research and the field of understanding and interpreting texts. If there is any truth in it, it is by the grace of God; if there is any error, it is due to the author of this research.

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