

Sayyid Qutb's Interpretation of Jihad in Q.S An-Nisa Verse 94: A Study of the Tafsir Fi Zhilal Al-Qur'an

Syitaul Fuadiah¹, Novali Kholid,² Izza Muhtafidz,³ Andi Rosa⁴

^{1,2,3,4} UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten, Indonesia

Article Info

Article History:

Received: 18 December 2024

Revised: 20 January 2025

Accepted: 03 March 2025

Published: 29 March 2025

*Corresponding Author:

Name: Syitaul Fuadiah

Email: fuadiahsyita@gmail.com

Keywords

Abstract

This study analyzes Sayyid Qutb's interpretation of Surah An-Nisa: 94 in *Fi Zhilal Al-Qur'an*, focusing on the concept of jihad he presents. Surah An-Nisa: 94 emphasizes the principle of caution in warfare and the importance of justice and morality in human relations. Sayyid Qutb interprets this verse by highlighting that jihad is not limited to physical warfare, but also a struggle to uphold justice and moral values in social life. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with textual and thematic analysis to explore the meaning of jihad in Qutb's contextual perspective. The findings show that Qutb views jihad as an ethical struggle, not mere violence. Qutb's thinking offers a new perspective on jihad that is more moderate and relevant to the current social-religious challenges, emphasizing the principles of justice, morality, and humanity in the struggle for Islam.

Jihad Verses, Sayyid Qutb, *Fi Zhilal Al-Qur'an*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menganalisis penafsiran Sayyid Qutb terhadap Surah An-Nisa: 94 dalam *Fi Zhilal Al-Qur'an*, dengan fokus pada konsep jihad yang dia ajukan. Surah An-Nisa: 94 menekankan prinsip kehati-hatian dalam peperangan dan pentingnya keadilan serta moralitas dalam hubungan antarumat manusia. Sayyid Qutb menafsirkan ayat ini dengan menggarisbawahi bahwa jihad tidak hanya terbatas pada perang fisik, tetapi juga merupakan perjuangan untuk menegakkan keadilan dan nilai-nilai moral dalam kehidupan sosial. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan analisis teks dan tematik untuk menggali makna jihad dalam perspektif kontekstual Qutb. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Qutb menempatkan jihad sebagai perjuangan yang beretika, bukan sebagai kekerasan semata. Pemikiran Qutb memberikan pandangan baru mengenai jihad yang lebih moderat dan relevan dengan tantangan sosial-keagamaan masa kini, dengan menekankan prinsip keadilan, moralitas, dan kemanusiaan dalam perjuangan Islam.

Kata Kunci: Ayat-ayat Jihad, Sayyid Qutb, *Fi Zhilal Al-Qur'an*

INTRODUCTION

Jihad constitutes one of the pivotal concepts within Islam, frequently emerging as a central theme in the Qur'anic discourse. Etymologically, the term jihad is derived from the root word jahada, which signifies striving earnestly (Ulya and Hafizzullah 2020). Within the framework of Islamic law (*sharia*), jihad carries a broad and multifaceted meaning, encompassing all forms of struggle in upholding the faith. This includes personal endeavors to combat one's base desires, as well as collective efforts to promote justice and defend the rights of the oppressed (Rahman 2018). The Qur'an positions jihad as an integral component of a Muslim's commitment to devoting

oneself to Allah and fulfilling His commandments. Consequently, jihad is not solely confined to physical struggle but extends to spiritual, intellectual, and social dimensions (Junaidi 2020).

Nevertheless, the concept of jihad is often subject to misinterpretation, both within segments of the Muslim community and in the global arena. In contemporary times, the understanding of jihad has undergone significant shifts and has become the subject of considerable controversy. Certain extremist factions have narrowly construed jihad as a justification for violence and radical actions under the guise of religious obligation (Wiktorowicz 2005). Simultaneously, non-Muslim societies frequently perceive jihad as synonymous with violence and a threat to global peace (Matusitz 2020). In reality, the Islamic conception of jihad is expansive and deeply rooted in ethical principles such as justice, compassion, and social responsibility. Thus, scholarly inquiry into the Qur'anic values underpinning the concept of jihad is of critical importance, particularly in addressing the evolving challenges of the modern era.

Among the prominent figures who have extensively explored the notion of jihad in their exegetical works is Sayyid Qutb. As a leading contemporary Islamic thinker, Sayyid Qutb is renowned for his seminal work, *Fi Zhilal Al-Qur'an* (In the Shade of the Qur'an) (Hidayat and Nasir 2022). This tafsir is not merely a textual interpretation of the Qur'an; it is imbued with ideological and contextual dimensions, reflecting Qutb's life experiences and worldview (Huda and Pajriah 2022). Within *Fi Zhilal Al-Qur'an*, Qutb presents jihad as an essential struggle of the Muslim ummah to establish justice and liberate humanity from all forms of oppression, whether physical or spiritual (Hadi, Muhajirin, and Kusnadi 2021). His perspectives on jihad are often shaped by the political and social circumstances he encountered, particularly his experiences under the repressive regime in Egypt (Yati and Kusmana 2021).

Surah An-Nisa: 94 is among the Qur'anic verses that address jihad, specifically emphasizing the ethical parameters of warfare. The verse reads as follows::

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَتَبَيَّنُوا وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ ءَلْفَىٰ إِلَيْكُمْ السَّلَامَ لَسْتَ مُؤْمِنًا تَبْتَغُونَ عَرَضَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فَعِنْدَ اللَّهِ مَغَانِمٌ كَثِيرَةٌ ۗ كَذَلِكَ كُنْتُمْ مِّن قَبْلُ فَمَنْ ءَلْفَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ فَتَبَيَّنُوا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا

O believers! When you struggle in the cause of Allah, be sure of who you fight. And do not say to those who offer you 'greetings of' peace, "You are no believer!" seeking a fleeting worldly gain. Instead, Allah has infinite bounties 'in store'. You were initially like them then Allah blessed you 'with Islam'. So be sure! Indeed, Allah is All-Aware of what you do.

This verse provides a clear directive regarding the importance of exercising caution and avoiding hasty judgments, particularly within the context of warfare. Through this verse, Allah underscores the necessity for Muslims to uphold ethical standards in jihad and to refrain from being driven by worldly motivations, such as the pursuit of material gain.

Sayyid Qutb's interpretation of Surah An-Nisa: 94 in *Fi Zhilal Al-Qur'an* offers a compelling subject for deeper examination, as Qutb places particular emphasis on the moral and social dimensions of jihad. In his exegesis, Qutb highlights the significance of prudence and justice in the conduct of jihad, while also reminding believers that the ultimate purpose of jihad must remain devoted to the worship of Allah, free from personal or group interests. This interpretation is especially pertinent in contemporary times, as the concept of jihad is frequently exploited to justify

actions that stand in stark contrast to the core values of Islam. By engaging with Qutb's interpretation of this verse, one may attain a more comprehensive understanding of jihad in accordance with Islam's universal message of mercy and compassion (*rahmatan lil 'alamin*).

The relevance of this study is further amplified by the current state of the Muslim ummah, which is often confronted with both internal and external challenges. Internally, the community grapples with a lack of in-depth understanding of religious teachings, including the concept of jihad. Externally, Muslims face global stereotypes and stigmatization, as Islam is frequently and unfairly associated with violence. Within this context, a sound and accurate understanding of jihad becomes critical in fostering a positive narrative and dismantling misconceptions (Sule 2020).

This research is guided by two primary questions: first, how does Sayyid Qutb interpret Surah An-Nisa: 94 in *Fi Zhilal Al-Qur'an*? Second, what is the relevance of this interpretation in the current socio-religious context? Through this inquiry, the study aims to offer a clear depiction of Qutb's conceptualization of jihad as presented in this verse, as well as how the ethical values embedded in his interpretation may be applied to address contemporary challenges.

By analyzing Sayyid Qutb's exegesis of Surah An-Nisa: 94, this research aspires to contribute to the development of a more moderate and contextually grounded understanding of Islam. Furthermore, it seeks to serve as a valuable reference for scholars, religious leaders, and the wider public in comprehending jihad in alignment with Qur'anic principles. In addition, this study endeavors to broaden the perspective on how contemporary exegeses, such as *Fi Zhilal Al-Qur'an*, can function as a bridge between the authentic teachings of Islam and the demands of the modern world. As such, this research holds significance not only within academic discourse but also in its practical implications for fostering socio-religious harmony within pluralistic societies.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method with a contemporary exegetical approach to analyze Sayyid Qutb's interpretation of Surah An-Nisa: 94 as presented in *Fi Zhilal Al-Qur'an* (Nazhifah 2021). Data collection was conducted through documentary research by gathering primary sources, specifically the works of Sayyid Qutb, alongside relevant supporting literature. Data analysis was carried out using textual analysis and thematic analysis to explore the concept of jihad within Qutb's exegesis and to examine the relevance of his interpretation within both the socio-political context of his time and contemporary life (Fauzan, Mustofa, and Masruchin 2020). To ensure the validity of the findings, this study applied source triangulation by comparing Qutb's interpretation with other exegetical works and related scholarly literature. A hermeneutical approach was also employed to investigate the historical and social contexts that shaped Qutb's interpretation, thereby providing a comprehensive understanding of the notion of jihad from Qutb's perspective (Malik 2019).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Interpretation of Sayyid Qutb on Surah An-Nisa: 94

Surah An-Nisa: 94 discusses the principle of caution during warfare and the ethics that must be upheld in inter-human relations, particularly within the context of physical struggle or war. In *Fi Zhilal Al-Qur'an*, Sayyid Qutb interprets this verse by emphasizing the importance of justice and

moral awareness in every action taken during warfare. According to Qutb, this verse not only prohibits hastily judging someone as an enemy but also underscores the need for careful assessment before taking any action. Qutb writes that many people are swayed by emotions and hatred, leading them to easily declare others as enemies, even when they might not be true adversaries. Therefore, Qutb stresses that Muslims should avoid hastily labeling fellow human beings as enemies merely because of differing views or political situations.

In his commentary, Qutb also connects this verse to fundamental principles of justice and compassion in Islam, demonstrating that jihad is not solely intended as physical warfare, but also as a means to uphold higher moral and social values. According to him, jihad in this context must be seen as a just and ethical struggle, rather than mere violence. This indicates that jihad in Islam carries a broader humanitarian dimension beyond the narrow connotation of warfare.

Surah An-Nisa: 94 serves as a guideline on ethical principles in jihad, which is often misunderstood in the context of violence. This verse teaches the importance of prudence and thoughtful consideration in acts of war and in inter-human interactions. In *Fi Zbilal Al-Qur'an*, Qutb provides a deep interpretation of this verse, emphasizing that jihad in Islam is not limited to physical combat but also encompasses broader moral and ethical dimensions. Qutb's interpretation of Surah An-Nisa: 94 conveys an important message about justice, honesty, and the necessity of righteous intentions in Islamic struggle, especially in situations of war or conflict.

Generally, Surah An-Nisa: 94 reminds Muslims not to be hasty in judging or declaring someone as an enemy, especially due to differences in opinion or political circumstances. Most scholars link this verse to wartime situations where tension and hostility often arise between Muslim and non-Muslim groups. In war, it is possible for someone to offer greetings or show peaceful intentions but still be misjudged or wrongly accused due to external appearances or deep-seated animosity.

In *Fi Zbilal Al-Qur'an*, Qutb strongly emphasizes the importance of justice in warfare. He interprets this verse as a warning to Muslims against hastily judging someone as an enemy based merely on differing opinions or hatred. According to Qutb, many people are driven by negative sentiments and emotions during war or conflict, leading to rash decisions that could wrongly label someone as an enemy, even if they are not directly involved in hostility.

Qutb notes that war often sharpens polarization between differing groups. Therefore, it is crucial for Muslims to avoid becoming trapped in disputes rooted in hatred or prejudice. He asserts that Islamic principles emphasize that anyone who extends greetings or displays peaceful behavior should not be automatically seen as an enemy. In Qutb's view, Islam upholds justice, both in war and in general social interactions (Wulandari, Rostandi, and Kosasih 2017).

Sayyid Qutb also relates this verse to the importance of intention in jihad. In his view, legitimate and righteous jihad can only be achieved if undertaken with pure intentions to uphold truth and justice, not for personal or group gain. Jihad is not merely a physical fight against enemies but a struggle to improve social order and uphold higher moral values. Therefore, Qutb warns that Muslims must always maintain sincere intentions when engaging in war or struggle.

In this regard, Qutb underscores that jihad must always be based on noble objectives, namely to champion truth and uphold the values present in the Qur'an and Islamic teachings. He strongly

criticizes the notion of jihad being used merely as a tool for gaining power, wealth, or personal benefit. In his perspective, true jihad is one conducted to eliminate injustice, oppression, and wrongdoing in this world.

Qutb also emphasizes the need for careful and thorough assessment before taking action. In his interpretation of Surah An-Nisa: 94, he reminds Muslims not to rush into decisions that could have fatal consequences. In times of war, hasty decisions can result in unnecessary losses. Therefore, before declaring someone an enemy, Muslims must conduct in-depth and accurate investigations to identify who is truly involved in hostility and who is not.

Qutb believes that many historical mistakes in warfare were caused by decisions made without proper consideration, leading to the victimization of innocent people. In light of this verse, Qutb calls on Muslims to remain calm in difficult situations and always act thoughtfully to avoid wrongful actions.

Furthermore, Qutb interprets jihad in Islam as encompassing more than just physical warfare. He sees jihad as a struggle to establish a just and prosperous society grounded in Islamic moral principles. In his view, jihad is an effort to serve the public interest, uphold justice, and fight all forms of oppression experienced by humanity.

Jihad, according to Qutb, is a struggle that must involve all aspects of life, physical, social, and moral. This means that jihad is not limited to the battlefield but also includes everyday efforts to eliminate injustice and tyranny. In other words, jihad, from Qutb's perspective, is a struggle to advocate for human rights and create a better world.

Sayyid Qutb's interpretation of Surah An-Nisa: 94 holds significant relevance in today's socio-religious context. Amidst the rising political and social tensions across various regions of the world, this verse serves as a reminder for Muslims to refrain from falling easily into conflicts or hostilities driven by hatred or sectarian sentiments. Qutb emphasizes that Muslims must exercise caution not only in the context of warfare but also in their daily social interactions.

Furthermore, Qutb highlights the importance of pure and sincere intentions in every form of struggle, which extends beyond physical jihad to include the pursuit of justice and moral integrity. In a world often marked by injustice and discord, Qutb's interpretation offers a broader perspective on how jihad should be understood and practiced as a commitment to upholding truth and promoting the well-being of humanity as a whole.

Sayyid Qutb's Perspective on Ethical Principles in Jihad

In *Fi Zbilal al-Qur'an*, Sayyid Qutb articulates that jihad in Islam is not an act to be undertaken carelessly or without deep consideration. One of the key principles emphasized by Qutb is the prohibition of hastily declaring someone as an enemy. This aligns with the message of Surah An-Nisa: 94, which cautions Muslims against rushing to label or judge a person without thorough investigation. In Qutb's view, such impulsive actions only exacerbate hardship and destruction, ultimately harming all parties involved.

Qutb advocates that every act of jihad must be carried out with full awareness and elevated moral consciousness, given that Islam is a religion rooted in values of morality and ethics. In this light, jihad is more than a physical struggle; it is a commitment to preserving the social and moral

integrity of the ummah. He stresses that jihad should be undertaken with a clear understanding of its ultimate purpose: to establish justice and defend the rights of the oppressed, rather than serving personal or group interests.

As one of the most influential contemporary Islamic thinkers, Sayyid Qutb places significant emphasis on the ethical dimensions of jihad. In his exegesis *Fi Zbilal al-Qur'an*, he frames jihad not merely as physical combat but as a struggle grounded in noble moral and ethical values. For Qutb, jihad is a manifestation of profound faith, motivating Muslims to strive for justice, truth, and the collective welfare of humanity. He insists that jihad must be conducted with moral awareness and must never be carried out impulsively or under the sway of uncontrolled emotions. Hence, for Qutb, the ethical principles of jihad are essential.

Qutb views jihad not simply as a call to arms but as a deeply moral endeavor. In *Fi Zbilal al-Qur'an*, he asserts that genuine jihad is an effort to realize high moral values such as justice, compassion, and truth. Accordingly, the first principle to be understood is that this struggle must never violate Islamic moral and ethical norms.

He underscores that in Islam, jihad is about promoting goodness, not causing destruction or violence for its own sake. A fundamental ethical guideline in Qutb's conception of jihad is the prohibition of harming or killing non-combatants, such as women, children, and those uninvolved in the conflict. This demonstrates that jihad is not solely a physical struggle but must always be carried out while upholding moral principles that safeguard individual rights, even during warfare.

Moreover, Qutb asserts that jihad must always be guided by a sincere and righteous intention. It should never be exploited as a means to achieve personal gains or worldly benefits. True jihad, in Qutb's eyes, is a genuine endeavor to uphold truth and justice, and to resist all forms of oppression and injustice faced by humanity. Therefore, jihad pursued without a strong moral foundation is, for Qutb, an action unworthy in Islam.

One of the key ethical principles highlighted by Qutb is the rejection of hastily judging others as enemies. Interpreting Surah An-Nisa: 94, Qutb points out that Muslims are warned against prematurely declaring someone an enemy, especially based solely on differing viewpoints or certain political circumstances. He critiques the prevailing tendency in society to easily label others as adversaries merely because of ideological differences, without first engaging in deep and fair assessment.

For Qutb, such rash judgment constitutes a violation of the Islamic principle of justice. He contends that hasty decisions often lead to grave errors and further harm. Therefore, Muslims must act cautiously and exercise wisdom when navigating situations of conflict, always performing careful and judicious evaluations before making consequential decisions. This principle is highly relevant in contemporary settings where hatred and division are often fueled by a failure to assess situations justly.

Qutb further reminds Muslims to avoid engaging in conflicts driven by hatred or base desires. Instead, every action must be grounded in the moral teachings of the Qur'an. Thus, jihad involves not only physical strength but also moral intelligence the ability to objectively understand situations and act with full responsibility.

Qutb's perspective on the ethical principles of jihad is also closely linked to the concept of public welfare (*maslahah*). He views jihad as a struggle not solely for personal or group interests but for the benefit of humanity as a whole. According to Qutb, jihad is part of a broader effort to rectify societal decay and to establish a more just and prosperous social order. Therefore, jihad should be perceived within this larger framework as a commitment to social and moral reform that ultimately serves the collective good of humankind.

He also recognizes that many societies are entrenched in injustice and oppression. In this context, jihad entails more than just physical resistance; it includes fighting against all forms of injustice, whether within Muslim societies or globally. For instance, Qutb identifies authoritarian regimes and foreign occupations as manifestations of injustice that Muslims are obliged to resist. For him, jihad is a struggle to establish the greater public good and to prevent the harm caused by systemic oppression.

Qutb's ethical framework for jihad is unequivocal: every action must aim for the common good, and violence must be strictly accountable and employed only as a last resort when no other avenue for justice remains. Thus, jihad, in Qutb's understanding, is a noble endeavor deeply infused with humanitarian values.

Additionally, Qutb asserts that, in the context of warfare, legitimate jihad in Islam is one that defends religion and fundamental human rights. He places significant emphasis on upholding justice in all actions, including during armed conflict. According to Qutb, war must not be waged indiscriminately or recklessly, and Muslims are forbidden from harming non-combatants such as children, women, the elderly, farmers, and laborers uninvolved in hostilities.

Qutb also draws upon several hadiths and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), which instruct Muslims to avoid harming those not participating in war. In this regard, genuine jihad is one that safeguards justice and the protection of individual rights, even in the most severe circumstances. This principle highlights that jihad in Islam must always adhere to the highest humanitarian standards, preventing unnecessary bloodshed and destruction.

For Sayyid Qutb, jihad carried out with a strong ethical foundation is the true expression of sincere faith. Deep belief inspires Muslims to strive for justice and morality in daily life and to resist all forms of injustice and oppression. For Qutb, jihad is not merely a physical or military action but also a part of spiritual and social struggle aimed at improving the world. True jihad, in his perspective, must be based on genuine faith and sincere intention to seek the pleasure of Allah, rather than personal or factional gain.

The Meaning of Jihad in the Contextual Perspective of Sayyid Qutb

Sayyid Qutb perceives jihad through a highly contextual lens, rooted in the social and political realities of his time. He composed *Fi Zbilal al-Qur'an* against the backdrop of societies afflicted by injustice, oppression, and authoritarian brutality, both within and beyond the Islamic world. For Qutb, jihad is not merely about physical violence; it is a broader struggle against all forms of oppression that strip individuals of their fundamental human rights, especially regarding religious freedom and social justice. In his exegesis, Qutb portrays jihad as a moral obligation to

resist injustice and to strive for the establishment of a just and prosperous society, as exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad and his companions.

However, Qutb does not frame jihad as an unlimited or indiscriminate war. He consistently underscores that jihad must operate within a strict ethical framework and should only be waged in defense of religion and the community from imminent threats. While Qutb places significant emphasis on resistance in the face of oppression, he simultaneously stresses the importance of preserving humanitarian values, firmly rejecting violence for its own sake.

Qutb's conception of jihad encompasses broad and profound dimensions, extending beyond mere physical warfare. It includes moral, social, and spiritual struggle. In his monumental work *Fi Zbilal al-Qur'an*, Qutb offers a contextual interpretation of jihad, linking it to the socio-political and spiritual conditions faced by Muslims during his time, as well as its relevance to the modern era. For Qutb, jihad is a struggle rooted in sincere intentions to uphold justice, truth, and the collective welfare of humanity, while promoting the moral and spiritual values taught by the Qur'an.

From Qutb's perspective, jihad is not confined to the notion of armed struggle to defend religion, although he acknowledges that in certain contexts, physical combat may constitute a part of jihad. Nonetheless, Qutb views jihad more expansively, incorporating internal (spiritual) struggle to conquer one's ego and pursue closeness to God. In other words, jihad is a continuous endeavor to cultivate faith, morality, and spiritual discipline—elements essential to the life of a committed Muslim.

Beyond its spiritual aspect, jihad also encompasses social struggle to establish a more just and prosperous society. Qutb stresses that true jihad involves striving for a social order founded on justice and the well-being of humankind. Consequently, jihad is not limited to physical confrontation with enemies but also involves combating social injustice, political oppression, and poverty that burden countless people.

Qutb pays special attention to the prevailing social and political conditions of his era, particularly the widespread injustice and oppression across many parts of the Muslim world. In Qutb's view, numerous Muslim-majority countries were under the grip of colonial powers or oppressive regimes. Within this context, Qutb articulates jihad as a struggle to liberate Muslims from colonization, injustice, and tyranny.

For Qutb, jihad is a form of resistance against all manifestations of injustice—whether originating from external forces like colonialism or internal forces such as authoritarian regimes. He envisions jihad as a means of breaking free from the shackles of both political and economic injustice. Importantly, Qutb emphasizes that jihad should not be narrowly interpreted as armed resistance against external enemies but also as a fight against all oppressive systems that subjugate the Muslim community.

In *Fi Zbilal al-Qur'an*, Qutb associates jihad with the broader concept of human emancipation from injustice. He believes that Muslims are morally obligated to strive for a socio-political system grounded in Islamic principles of justice. Hence, for Qutb, jihad represents a struggle aimed at driving social and political transformation to elevate humanity toward a more just and civilized condition.

Beyond combating social injustice, Qutb also defines jihad as a battle against moral decay and falsehood within society. His exegesis highlights jihad as a resistance to all forms of wrongdoing and corruption whether in the form of ideological deviation, immoral social norms, or the abuses of tyrannical rulers. According to Qutb, Islam commands its followers to oppose all manifestations of oppression, both external and internal. Jihad, in this sense, includes efforts to address societal vices such as immorality, ignorance, and tyranny, which undermine the moral fabric of the community. Qutb views jihad as a means of restoring social ethics in line with the Qur'anic ideals of truth and justice.

He further argues that jihad should be viewed within the broader context of social renewal. For Qutb, Islam is a comprehensive religion that governs not only the spiritual lives of individuals but also the social, economic, and political affairs of society. Thus, jihad, in his conception, is a struggle to bring positive change to every facet of life, ensuring that Muslim societies are built upon justice, equality, and freedom.

Qutb calls on Muslims to work toward creating a world free from oppression and injustice, where every human being can live with dignity and honor. This is in line with Qutb's idea of *mujahadah* a combined spiritual and social struggle that every Muslim must undertake to reform society in accordance with Islamic teachings. Within this framework, jihad assumes two complementary dimensions: first, as an external struggle against forces that oppress Muslims, and second, as an internal endeavor to reform society and the self. In Qutb's understanding, jihad is not solely about physical warfare or revolution; it also involves fighting for justice, eradicating poverty, and promoting transparent and equitable governance.

Qutb's concept of jihad is also intrinsically linked to the upholding of *tawhid* (the oneness of God) and the rejection of all forms of idolatry. For Qutb, the spiritual dimension of jihad involves purifying oneself from any form of *shirk* (associating partners with God) and deviations from Islamic teachings. He maintains that every action in a Muslim's life should be motivated by a sincere intention to follow the path of God and uphold the principles of *tawhid* in daily life.

Qutb asserts that one of the greatest forms of jihad is the struggle to revive the truth of Islam by instilling *tawhid* within society. This form of jihad seeks to eradicate falsehood in all its manifestations whether ideological, political, or social. In this sense, jihad becomes an effort to resist all systems or ideologies that divert humanity from the worship of God alone and from the principles of divine truth found in Islam. Sayyid Qutb's interpretation of jihad retains its relevance within contemporary socio-religious contexts. Amidst the challenges of globalization, social injustice, and various humanitarian crises, his broad and comprehensive understanding of jihad urges Muslims to go beyond mere physical conflict. It calls them to champion justice, human dignity, and societal well-being.

In the modern context, Qutb's vision of jihad extends to struggles against global injustice, poverty, and social inequality not merely against external invaders or oppressive rulers. Therefore, Qutb's conception of jihad is fundamentally a call for social transformation and renewal grounded in the universal principles of Islam: justice, freedom, and the brotherhood of humankind.

Sayyid Qutb's Interpretation of Jihad in Surah An-Nisa: A Perspective from *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an*

In Islam, jihad holds a position of great significance. Sayyid Qutb argues that jihad does not always equate to warfare; rather, warfare is one of the consequences or manifestations of jihad. Fundamentally, jihad is a struggle to liberate Islam from forces that seek to undermine it, as Islam is a faith that calls for submission to the One and Only God, thereby freeing humanity from all forms of bondage imposed by *thâghûât* (forces of ignorance or *jâbiliyyah*) systems. Regarding jihad, Sayyid Qutb emphasizes the method employed by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), who initiated his mission by privately calling his closest family members, then openly preaching to the broader community, before ultimately expanding his message to all of humanity. According to Sayyid Qutb, Islamic movements should grasp the importance of gradual stages and strategic processes while considering the available means and contemporary realities (Saladin 2018).

Sayyid Qutb further asserts that the primary objective of jihad is to combat *jâbiliyyah*. He contends that Muslims have regressed into the same *jâbiliyyah* from which the Prophet had once delivered them, falling back into polytheism whether in belief and worship, or in matters of obedience and authority, or both. Thus, Islam reintroduces the verses on jihad to return humanity to the sovereignty and laws of Allah, just as the cosmos itself submits to His divine order. Therefore, humankind must not deviate by adopting systems, authorities, or legislations other than those established by the Creator of the universe. In this life, Muslims are called to return to Islam with full awareness and conscious commitment.

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَتَبَيَّنُوا وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ ءَلْفَىٰ إِلَيْكُمْ ءالسَّلَامُ لَسْتَ مُؤْمِنًا تَبْتَغُونَ عَرَضَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فَعِنْدَ اللَّهِ مَغَامٌ كَثِيرٌ ۚ كَذَلِكَ كُنْتُمْ مِّن قَبْلُ فَمَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ فَتَبَيَّنُوا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا

O believers! When you struggle in the cause of Allah, be sure of who you fight. And do not say to those who offer you 'greetings of' peace, "You are no believer!" seeking a fleeting worldly gain.¹ Instead, Allah has infinite bounties 'in store'. You were initially like them then Allah blessed you 'with Islam'. So be sure! Indeed, Allah is All-Aware of what you do."

Muslims, according to Sayyid Qutb, must never allow worldly wealth to influence their participation in *jihad fi sabilillah*. Material gain should never serve as their motivation or driving force for engaging in jihad. He draws an analogy to the rash act of shedding blood without clear evidence, warning that such haste could result in the killing of a fellow Muslim, whose life is sacred and must not be violated without just cause.

Sayyid Qutb further elaborates that jihad, in essence, serves as the *al-Dhâbith al-Tashbrî* 'a legal framework governing the relationship between Muslim and non-Muslim societies. The overarching principle of jihad is embodied in the slogan "*Islām rahmatan li al-'ālamīn*," meaning that Allah's mercy must extend to all of humanity (Sabri and Shehu 2021). No barriers whether rooted in political regimes, capitalist powers, or any other force should obstruct this principle. Should any force oppose this divine mercy, Muslims are obligated to confront it until the threat is neutralized or the opponent admits defeat.

- a) According to Sayyid Qutb, Islamic jihad is fundamentally offensive rather than defensive. This offensive character reflects the mission of Islam, which aims to spread its message universally,

regardless of race or geography (Saladin 2018). Furthermore, Qutb maintains that the sword—and by extension, the use of force—is a legitimate means to bring about a complete transformation of any system or government that denies the supremacy of Islam, both locally and globally. This position is grounded in the concept of *ḥākimiyyah*, which asserts that the implementation of Allah's law on Earth is paramount, and that ultimate sovereignty belongs solely to Allah, not humankind. In Qutb's view, contemporary Muslims exist in a condition akin to, or worse than, the pre-Islamic *jābiliyyah* society (Firman Hidayat and Malki Ahmad Nasr, 2022).

- b) Sayyid Qutb also contends that if jihad is to be categorized merely as a defensive movement (*difā'ī*), then the term *difā'* (self-defense) should be redefined as “defense of humanity” (*difā' an 'an al-insān*) (Albar, Darmawan, and Solehudin 2023). This reframing signifies a struggle against all forms of oppression that inhibit individual freedom and prevent people from pursuing their will. These forms of oppression are deeply embedded in belief systems and political structures rooted in caste, ethnicity, and economic domination. According to Qutb, such systems were globally entrenched at the advent of Islam and persist in contemporary manifestations of *jābiliyyah*.
- c) In Sayyid Qutb's view, “*Jihad: A Liberation Movement to Establish the Sovereignty of Allah and the Religion of Islam*” is a declaration that human beings on Earth must be liberated from submission to other creatures including subservience to their own base desires and must exclusively submit to Allah and His control over the universe. This declaration represents a total upheaval of human authority in all its forms systems, rules, and creations and aims to eradicate human arrogance in worldly affairs. The establishment of Allah's dominion on Earth necessitates the dismantling of human dominion and the reclamation of power from those who usurped it. Such a mission, according to Qutb, cannot be realized through mere rhetoric or discourse, as those entrenched in positions of power will not relinquish their authority willingly. Hence, for the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), this struggle was essential to spreading Allah's message throughout the world.

Sayyid Qutb thus regards jihad as more than mere words. To achieve the goal of implementing Allah's laws which will ultimately manifest the sovereignty of Allah on Earth Muslims must be in constant motion, actively striving. This is the embodiment of *al-dīn kulluhu lillāh*, meaning absolute dependence, submission, adherence, and worship directed solely to Allah Almighty.

CONCLUSION

Sayyid Qutb's interpretation of Surah An-Nisa: 94 in *Fi Zhilal al-Qur'an* emphasizes the importance of caution, justice, and morality within the concept of jihad. Qutb asserts that jihad is not merely a physical battle but also a moral and social struggle to uphold justice and combat injustice, whether on a personal, societal, or political level. In this context, jihad must be understood as a just, ethical endeavor grounded in the highest humanitarian values. Qutb's interpretation holds significant relevance in today's world, given the ongoing social and political challenges faced by the Muslim community, such as injustice, oppression, and social inequality.

For Qutb, jihad is not solely about violence or warfare; it is equally about pursuing just social transformation and liberation from all forms of oppression. Thus, Sayyid Qutb's thought offers a holistic and moderate framework for understanding jihad, one that calls Muslims to actively uphold truth and justice in their daily lives.

REFERENCES

- Albar, Deni, Dadang Darmawan, and Solehudin Solehudin. 2023. "Deradicalizing Interpretation of Jihad Verses by Sayyid Qutb." *Jurnal Iman Dan Spiritualitas* 3 (1): 61–70. doi:10.15575/jis.v3i1.23798.
- Fauzan, Fauzan, Imam Mustofa, and Masruchin Masruchin. 2020. "Metode Tafsir Maudu'i (Tematik): Kajian Ayat Ekologi." *Al-Dzikra: Jurnal Studi Ilmu al-Qur'an Dan al-Hadits* 13 (2): 195–228. doi:10.24042/al-dzikra.v13i2.4168.
- Hadi, M. Maskun, Muhajirin Muhajirin, and Kusnadi Kusnadi. 2021. "Makna Hijrah Dalam Tafsir Fi Zhilal Al-Qur'an Karya Sayyid Quthb." *Jurnal Semiotika-Q: Kajian Ilmu al-Quran dan Tafsir* 1 (2): 161–73. doi:10.19109/jsq.v1i2.10385.
- Hidayat, Firman, and Malki Ahmad Nasir. 2022. "Perbandingan Konsep Politik Dakwah Sayyid Qutb Dan Hassan Hanafi." *Jurnal Riset Komunikasi Penyiaran Islam*, December, 85–92. doi:10.29313/jrkpi.vi.1249.
- Huda, Nana Najatul, and Siti Pajriah. 2022. "Metode Umum Dan Khusus Dalam Tafsir Fi Zhilal Al-Qur'an Karya Sayyid Qutub." *Jurnal Iman Dan Spiritualitas* 2 (1): 69–78. doi:10.15575/jis.v2i1.16105.
- Junaidi, Didi. 2020. "Menafsir Makna 'Jihad' Dalam Konteks Kekinian." *Mawaizh: Jurnal Dakwah Dan Pengembangan Sosial Kemanusiaan* 11 (1): 1–25. doi:10.32923/maw.v11i1.1203.
- Malik, Rifatul Khoiriah. 2019. "Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an Dan Debat Tafsir Modern: Implementasinya Dengan Masa Kini." *AT-TURAS: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 6 (1): 56–76. doi:10.33650/at-turas.v6i1.583.
- Matusitz, Jonathan. 2020. *Global Jihad in Muslim and Non-Muslim Contexts*. Cham: Springer International Publishing. doi:10.1007/978-3-030-47044-9.
- Nazhifah, Dinni. 2021. "Tafsir-Tafsir Modern Dan Kontemporer Abad Ke-19-21 M." *Jurnal Iman Dan Spiritualitas* 1 (2): 211–18. doi:10.15575/jis.v1i2.12302.
- Rahman, Amri. 2018. "Memahami Jihad Dalam Perspektif Islam (Upaya Menangkal Tuduhan Terorisme Dalam Islam)." *J-PAI: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 4 (2). doi:10.18860/jpai.v4i2.5427.
- Sabri, Hakimah Ahmad, and Fatmir Shehu. 2021. "Exploring the Ethical Dimensions and Principles of Raḥmatan Lil-Ālamīn in Contemporary Context." *Al-Itqan: Journal Of Islamic Sciences And Comparative Studies* 5 (1): 101–19.
- Saladin, Bustami. 2018. "Jihad dan Radikalisme Menurut Qur'āsh Sihab Dan Sayyid Quthb." *Nuansa: Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu Sosial dan Keagamaan Islam* 15 (2): 439–50. doi:10.19105/nuansa.v15i2.2066.
- Sule, Babayo. 2020. "The State of the Muslim Ummah in Contemporary World." *Randwick International of Social Science Journal* 1 (2): 152–64. doi:10.47175/rissj.v1i2.40.
- Ulya, Risqo, and Hafizzullah. 2020. "Konsep Jihad Dalam Tafsir Al-Maraghi (Studi Tafsir Tematik Tentang Jihad Dalam QS. At-Taubah)." *Ishlah: Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin, Adab Dan Dakwah* 2 (2): 274–303. doi:10.32939/ishlah.v2i2.34.
- Wiktorowicz, Quintan. 2005. "A Genealogy of Radical Islam." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 28 (2). Routledge: 75–97. doi:10.1080/10576100590905057.
- Wulandari, Wulandari, Usep Dedi Rostandi, and Engkos Kosasih. 2017. "Penafsiran Sayyid Quthb Tentang Ayat-Ayat Ishlah (Studi Tafsir Fā' Zhilāl Alquran)." *Al-Bayan: Jurnal Studi Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 2 (1): 78–83. doi:10.15575/al-bayan.v2i1.1811.

Yati, Nur Fadli, and Kusmana Kusmana. 2021. "Radikalisasi Makna Jihad di Era Modern: Studi Kasus Penafsiran QS. Al-Taubah: 73 Menurut Sayyid Qutb dan Abu A'la al-Maududi." *Journal of Qur'an and Hadith Studies* 10 (2): 223–44. doi:10.15408/quhas.v10i2.19579.