

# Rereading Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd's method of interpreting religious texts



## Authors:

Abdul Mufid<sup>1</sup>   
 Abd. Kadir Massoweang<sup>2</sup>   
 Mujizatullah Mujizatullah<sup>2</sup>   
 Abu Muslim<sup>2</sup>   
 Zulkarnain Yani<sup>3</sup> 

## Affiliations:

<sup>1</sup>Department of Hadith Studies, Faculty of Theology, Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Khozinatul Ulum Blora, Blora, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Research Center for Religious Treasures and Civilizations, National Research and Innovation Agency, Jakarta, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>National Research and Innovation Agency, Jakarta, Indonesia

## Corresponding author:

Abdul Mufid,  
 mufid.prof@gmail.com

## Dates:

Received: 09 Sept. 2022  
 Accepted: 19 Oct. 2022  
 Published: 31 Jan. 2023

## How to cite this article:

Mufid, A., Massoweang, A.K., Mujizatullah, M., Muslim, A. & Yani, Z., 2023, 'Rereading Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd's method of interpreting religious texts', *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 79(1), a8102. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v79i1.8102>

## Copyright:

© 2023. The Authors.  
 Licensee: AOSIS. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution License.

## Read online:



Scan this QR code with your smart phone or mobile device to read online.

The contemporary Qur'anic studies have been marked by amazing development. Various methods and approaches to understand the Qur'an are offered by the scholars. One of the prominent figures in this field is Nashr Hamid Abu Zayd. Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd (1943–2010 M) is a highly controversial contemporary thinker. He is an Egyptian scholar who is accused of being apostate, because of his theory of Qur'anic hermeneutic (the textual of Qur'an). This is reflected in his stances towards contemporary religious discourse and the approach to reading religious texts, especially the Quran, which requires reading according to a hermeneutic mechanism. His books 'Naqd al-Khitab al-Dini (Criticism of Religious Discourse)' and 'Al-Takfir fi Zaman al-Takfir (Thinking in the Time of Atonement)' caused a great uproar in the early nineties of the last century. Abu Zayd was accused of criticising atheists because of their stances on the text. Therefore, this study aimed to discuss Abu Zayd's position on contemporary religious discourse and his new approach to reading religious texts, and also aims to discuss why Abu Zayd's theory has been string up Islamic world and ending by his expulsive from his native country. To deal with this problem, this article discusses Abd Zayd's biography and some cultural framework of his people. The methodology of Qur'anic hermeneutic is the least his. Having examined the topic, the author finds that Abu Zayd believes that modern literary theory and criticism denote the way to understand and interpret the Qur'an 'objectively'. The contribution of this research is discussing Abu Zayd's contemporary religious discourse and his new approach to reading religious texts.

**Contribution:** The contribution of this research is discussing Abu Zayd's contemporary religious discourse and his new approach to reading religious texts.

**Keywords:** religious texts; Qur'anic studies; hadith studies; hermeneutic; interpretation.

## Introduction

Abu Zayd occupies a distinguished position in the contemporary religious discourse. This distinction is based on his method of studying religious texts and his involvement in intellectual and judicial conflicts with contemporary Egyptian men. The case started when a fatwa was issued to expiate Abu Zayd's writings after publishing his important book, *Naqd al-Khitab al-Dini* [Criticism of Religious Discourse]. In this book, he laid the foundations and principles of the approach to reading religious texts. According to some clergymen and professors affiliated with the religious trend, the book was incompatible with Islamic teachings. Therefore, some punitive measures were taken against Abu Zaid, such as expelling him from the university and subjecting him to an investigation. Several charges were directed against him, including denying the principle of oneness. In addition, some people called for a separation between him and his wife because he became an apostate from the Islamic religion.

Abu Zayd remained committed to his positions and intellectual views despite the pressures exerted on him. He stated: 'The endeavor to silence my speech justifies the extent of the danger that this speech represents, in contrast to the *al-Khitab al-Dini* (religious discourse), on revealing the ideology of the term it tries to hide under the guise of religious, but on a deeper level than mere ideological exposure'. This opposite discourse presents a different but for practical religious awareness (Abu Zayd 1998:60, 1995b:58).

The book '*Naqd al-Khitab al-Dini* [Critique of Religious Discourse]' directly critiques the social and political existence of the dominant religious discourse represented by clergymen, imams, and the spokesmen of Islam. The first chapter, entitled '*al-Khitab al-Dini al-Mu'ashir: Aliyatuhu wa Muntalaqatuhu al-Fikriyyah* [Contemporary Religious Discourse: Its Mechanisms and Intellectual Startings]', discusses several errors and contradictions of contemporary religious thought,

especially about reading religious texts. Nasr's goal in this book and other publications within the framework of this topic is to expose this discourse and dismantle its structure. His greatest defect is the reliance on takfir to negate his opponents. Therefore, Abu Zayd rejected dialogue and relied on the transmission mechanism without understanding or interpretation. The two characteristics appeared in his infidelity case, and he rejected his call to exercise reason in reading the religious text. This is because religion is distinguished from religious thought. Furthermore, the contemporary religious discourse's lack of awareness of this difference made it misunderstand religion just as it misunderstood Abu Zayd's position.

## Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd and contemporary religious discourse

Following the late Russian semiotist Jurij M. Lotman, Abu Zayd developed a theoretical communication model in which the Qur'an, like any other message (*risala*), be it signs (*ayat*) that are verbal or non-verbal, depicts 'a communicative relationship between the sender (*mursil*) and receiver (*mustaqbil*), based on a code (*shifra*) or linguistic system'. Abu Zayd, who translated two of Lotman's works into Arabic, embraced the Russian semiotist's concept of the text. Lotman contended that art was 'a special means of communication, a language organized in a particular manner'. According to this premise, each work of art conveys information through a system of signs. This places it as a 'text' within a specific language system, despite the fact that works of art include both verbal and non-verbal texts. Hence, each artistic text 'behaves as a kind of living organism, which has a feedback channel to the reader and thereby instructs him'. It conveys 'different information to different readers in proportion to each one's comprehension' (Kermani 1996).

Turning to the Qur'an, Abu Zayd points out that if the information conveyed by the text varies according to the reader's personal as well as his cultural and social horizons, then the essence of the message conveyed by the Qur'an to a 20th century reader must vary from the information conveyed to a Muslim in the 7th, 8th or 11th century. Accordingly, any interpretation based on the corpus of classical exegesis, or on the legacy of the Prophet and his companions, which is essentially based on an earlier interpretation (given that the hadith are nothing other than Muhammad's interpretation of the divine message, that is, the Qur'an), cannot trace the specific message of the Qur'an for each age. Abu Zayd strongly condemns belief in one single, precise and valid interpretation of the Qur'an handed down by the Prophet for all times (Kermani 1996).

Such a claim (that the Prophet's understanding is sacred) leads to a kind of polytheism, because it equates the Absolute with the relative and the constant with the transient and more specifically, because it equates the divine intent with the human understanding of this Intent, even in the case of the Messenger's understanding. It is a claim that leads to an idolisation of a conferral of sainthood upon the Prophet, by

concealing the Truth that he was a human and by failing to present clearly enough the fact that he was merely a prophet (Abu Zayd 1992).

According to Abu Zayd, the great civilisational role of the Qur'an is to make Arabic culture a text culture. He goes so far as to describe it as a pre-eminent text culture. Arab culture, he argues, is generated by human debates with reality, and by dialogue with texts (Abu Zayd 1990). But to define Islamic Arab civilisation as a culture of the text implies that it is also a culture of interpretation (*hadarat at-ta'wil*) (Abu Zayd 1990). According to him, the language of the Qur'an cannot explain itself. Therefore, the understanding of the text and its contents is highly dependent on the intellectual level and culture of the reader (*intaj dalalatih*) (Abu Zayd 1992).

Therefore, text messages can only be revealed by the translators. If the Qur'an presupposes someone who interprets, or in linguistic terms is translating the text and interpretation of the text, *nash* and *ta'wil*, surely cannot be separated, each other is related to each other as stated by Abu Zayd, that interpretation is the other side of the text (Abu Zayd 1992).

Abu Zayd used a theory to interpret the Qur'an, as he wrote in his book *Iskaliyyat al-Qira'ah wa Aliyat at-takwil* [The Problematic of Text Interpretation and Mechanism of Hermeneutics]: 'We must accept, as Louis Althusser stated, that none of the readings was objective (all of subjective, depending on the reader of each)'. In this way, Abu Zayd consciously tried to divert the essence of meaning, which had original clues in the Qur'an in order to immediately develop and progress according to the spirit of the times. He also cited a concept from David Hirsch who successfully applied it in literary studies to the concept of productive hermeneutics by Hans-Georg Gadamer (Wekke, Amiruddin and Firdaus 2018).

Starting from this understanding, for Abu Zayd, a study must start from empirical facts accompanied by analysis of the existing facts. Thus, a study is expected to be able to arrive at a scientific understanding of the phenomenon of the text. From this point, he first entered the gate of the study of the Qur'anic text, namely by placing the Qur'an as a cultural product. The text is formed in the cultural reality in the span of more than 14 centuries, and God's election of Arabic shows that revelation does not depart from empty space. Because language is the most important social tool in capturing and organising the world. Therefore, at this stage, the Qur'an then transformed itself as a cultural producer, because it revealed a hegemonic discourse that became the basis and reference for other religious texts.

## Criticism of the contemporary religious discourse mechanisms

It is impossible to discuss Abu Zayd's religious text reading method without exploring his criticism of the approach used

in contemporary religious discourse, specifically the mechanisms underlying the reading methodology represented as follows:

### Unity between thought and religion

The religious discourse since the revealed stage has recognised that religious text fields are distinguished from worldly fields governed by human experience and reason. Regarding the negative consequences of this perception, Abu Zayd (1994) stated:

Here the religious discourse cancels the cognitive distance between the 'subject' and the 'object', and acclaims 'inevitable' by transcending all existential and epistemological conditions and obstacles to reach the divine purpose inherent in these texts. (p. 65)

Contemporary discourse makes religious texts a reference in issuing judgements in all fields, including thought and knowledge, which have specifics, even when people cannot deny their connection with religious texts. The discourse makes judgements related to these fields. This confusion and contradiction occur because contemporary religious discourse does not distinguish between religion and religious thought.

Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd (1994) asserted that:

The call for liberation from the authority of the texts and their comprehensive reference aims to free the human mind to argue with nature in natural sciences. The human mind should also be free to argue with social and human reality in human sciences, arts, and literature. This call for liberation is not based on the abolition of religion or its privacy but a scientific understanding of religious texts. (p. 65)

### Reducing phenomena to a single principle

Abu Zayd received a lot of blasphemy from the scholars in Egypt. According to him, the hostility of Muslim clerics to secularism is because secularism robs the contemporary Islamic religious discourse of its basic influence mechanism. Therefore, it is most important to strip him of his sacred authority derived from God, the principle to which all the natural and life phenomena are referred. This talk is not a victory for secularism but an attempt to show the contradictions in the contemporary religious discourse that links God and the world, and he manages his affairs. The perception stems from this discourse in Abu Zayd's religious text reading belief. Consequently, this perception resulted in the abolition of human activity.

### Mental certainty and intellectual decisiveness

Decisiveness resulted from the previous two mechanisms, especially the unification between thought and religion, implying the connection of the contemporary religious discourse with fixed principles or intuitions. It identified some issues that only religious men could engage in, such as extremism. Abu Zayd diagnosed this situation by stating that, therefore, when religious discourse claims to possess it alone, no difference of opinion is acceptable, except in the

particulars and details. In this statement, his tolerance and broad chest are evident and impressive as extremism expands. However, when the dispute goes beyond the surface to the depths and roots, the religious discourse becomes protected under the pretext of the comprehensive and absolute truth it represents, resorting to the language of certainty and decisiveness. This dissolves the inevitable membrane that some think separates moderation and extremism (Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd 1994; Mahfuzh 1999).

The most important shortcomings of contemporary religious discourse represented in its claim to possessing the truth and certainty become clear. This was reflected in Abu Zayd's exclusion of the other opinion by refusing to engage in dialogue and stating that Islam is the solution without justification or application. He stated that this discourse does not address the problems posed. Therefore, he developed the model of an Arab Muslim human being whose soul is attached to Islam but depends on Western civilisation for material needs.

### Wasting the historical dimension

The historical dimension means *asbab an-nuzul*, namely the context in which the Koran was revealed and dangerous mechanism for contemporary discourse in its reading of religious texts. The history between the interpreter and the time of the text makes the interpreter delude himself that he could reach the divine meaning of the religious text.

The biggest mistake made by contemporary religious discourse in reading texts is the inability to link the present problems and the religious text. This is because the discourse presupposes the validity of past solutions to present problems. Abu Zayd believed that: 'Relying on the authority of the ancestors and heritage and making their texts primary intensifies the mechanism of wasting the historical dimension, deepens human alienation, and covers up the problems of reality. The response to social crises is a reality in Islam and all of humanity. Therefore, removing from the way of God is an inability to deal with historical facts' (Abu Zayd 1994, 2000).

Nasr rejected the transcendent view of reality and the absolute separation between its problems originally related to human life. Human beings are directed to understand its relationship and the religious text. They cannot serve man unless contemporary religious discourse realises him when reading the religious text.

This text could only be read on the horizon of history to interpret and take from it what serves the present because its emergence was linked to realistic historical events, referred to by the jurists as the reasons for the revelation (*asbab al-nuzul*). Contemporary discourse could not understand the relationship between the religious text and the historical dimension. Thus making contemporary discourse unable to read this religious text properly and use it in human relations with reality. Consequently, this made the Muslim alienate

from his reality, manifested by the illusion of congruence between the past and the present.

## The new mechanism for reading religious texts

### Reading the religious text between the jurisprudence of the text and reality

In the classical concept among Muslim scholars, the text is everything that refers to the Qur'an and the hadith because they use various terms that are synonymous with the word text. For instance, the book, *al-tanzil*, the Qur'an, and others refer to the Qur'anic text, hadith, and Sunnah refer to the hadith text, while *al-tanzil* refers to all of them. However, the concern is not the terms used to express the religious text but their significance revolving around the linguistic structure intolerable of multiple meanings.

The religious text studied by Nasr's new methodology contradicts the traditional concept. This is because the heritage concept is based on the fact that religious discourse raises reason and diligence. The principle 'There is no diligence in what is in the text' implies a cunning ideological deception because the meaning in the text is different from heritage, which is clear and rare. Defining a text and distinguishing it from what it is not is a matter of controversy and diligence in the history of Islamic culture. Although the Qur'an is a religious text fixed in its pronunciation, what it exposes to the human mind becomes 'understandable' and loses stability, making its significance expand (Abu Zayd 1994, 1995a).

The reading methods and mechanisms of contemporary religious discourse have forgotten that this is linguistic with a specific cultural structure. Therefore, religious texts have a socio-cultural dimension, as stated by Abu Zayd that the text meaning represents the historical significance in the context of their formation. It is the sign that does not raise much disagreement between the first recipients and its readers, but the meaning implies freezing the text at a specific stage and transforming it into a historical witness or trace (Abu Zayd 1994, 1998).

This explains why contemporary religious discourse raises questions related to lived reality. Nasr's new approach to reading emphasises the need to consider the requirements of reality in interpreting religious texts: 'Through the jurisprudence of the text and the reality, the alignment is made between the legal ruling and the presented incident with its elements and circumstances (Mahfuzh 1999; Falyouna 2020)'. This was confirmed by Abu Zayd (2005), stating that reading problems do not stop with discovering semantics in its historical, cultural, and intellectual context. They go beyond trying to reach the contemporary 'meaning' of the heritage text.

Reading a religious text does not start from a vacuum but stems from questions or problems related to the lived reality.

It goes from the present to the past and returns to the present in constant motion.

### The historical dimension of religious texts

Abu Zayd's criticism of the mechanism of reading the text in contemporary religious discourse showed that the main issue is the historical dimension of the text. His diagnosis of the religious view indicated that the text is ancient and eternal, a characteristic of the divine self, meaning that whoever says it is modern and not old has violated the faith. The Qur'an issue is old and controversial among Muslim thinkers, specifically the Ash'aris and the Mu'tazilites.

Abu Zayd supported the view that the Qur'an came to pass. It goes back to the distinction made by the Mu'tazila between divine and divine action. Capability means absolute verifiable possibility and its concrete verification. Abu Zayd stated that historicism means happening in time, even the opening and beginning of time. It implies the moment of separation and distinction between the transcendent absolute or divine existence and conditional temporal existence. When the first divine act of creating the world was the opening time, all the actions following this inaugural act are historical (Abu Zayd 1995a, 1983).

Based on this conception, religious texts are divine or historical acts. The historical dimension in religious texts is what Nasr's new methodology attempts to return to by stating: 'The historical dimension we are exposed to relates to the historicalness of the concepts presented by the texts. This is a natural result of the texts' grammaticalization' (Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd 1994; Kermani 2004).

The significance of the text phrase is that religion is not a fully-built entity but is characterised by the semantic richness that varies between social and historical. It is not proven and is not a ready-made template to be projected to every time and place, as the contemporary religious discourse believes. Nasr's new method shows that religious texts are subject to continuous renewal for understanding and differing *ijtihad*. In line with this, Nasr stated: 'Human thought, including religious thought, is a natural product of his historical conditions and social realities' (Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd 1994; Kersten 2010; Moch 2017).

Abu Zayd recognised the relationship between religious and human thought and his social realities. Religious thought is not intended for sacred texts but requires diligence in reading and understanding these texts. This reading should not be outside the social and historical framework. Therefore, religious thought should be employed to understand religious texts' utterances and reality to solve problems.

The important thing about reading religious texts is the new mechanisms related to reality and the criticism it addresses to the approach that may not transcend the

religious discourse. Abu Zayd wrote that religious thought begins with doctrinal conceptions of the divine and human nature, and their relationship to each other. It then deals with religious texts, making them spring from those concepts and beliefs. The meaning imposed on the texts is found from outside, which is necessarily a historical human meaning. Religious thought always metaphysically dresses up the historical meaning to give it the character of eternity (Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd 1994; Najjar 2000).

### Interpreting the utterances of religious texts

The mechanism of reading the religious text in the contemporary religious discourse considers it a fixed entity and isolates it from its historical dimension and semantic diversity. Abu Zayd stated that the interpretation of the Qur'an and the Prophet's hadith is one of the most important mechanisms of religious discourse in presenting its concepts, ideas, and perceptions. The real productive interpretation of the texts requires discovering the significance through analyzing their context. However, religious discourse often ignores these levels to search for a predetermined sign (Abu Zayd 1995a, 1991).

The most important of these contexts is the linguistic context. Linguistics extends beyond the verbal because language is part of a broader cultural-social structure. Therefore, it does not perform its communicative function as a semantic structure except through the broader structure (Abu Zayd 1991).

Contemporary religious discourse believes that the text is linguistically and semantically different from the other texts. However, religious texts are never paradoxical to the culture in which they were formed but expand in their language to include all events, facts, and phenomena. This means it is important to deal with the text in the comprehensive semiological sense (Abu Zayd 1994; Tamer 2011).

Interpretation works on understanding the significance of the textual utterances. This is because the texts derive their reference from the language and its laws or culture, no matter how numerous and varied their patterns are. Moreover, they exploit the laws of semantics to influence the culture (Abu Zayd 1995a; Wekke et al. 2018).

It is also linked to an understanding based on the mind's effectiveness. This makes the interpreter more influential on the text, as shown by Abu Zayd's analysis of the relationship between the text and the mind. There is a decline in the authority of the mind versus that of the texts. The hegemony and holiness surrounding religious thought mean that the intellect should be the reference in understanding religious texts: 'Since most legislation is a group of texts brought by the Qur'an, where the Wise is on the highest and finest model of rhetoric and inimitability'. Therefore, one of the means of understanding the text is a language without stopping at the apparent language or literalness of the text (Mahfuzh 1999; Hielmann 2003).

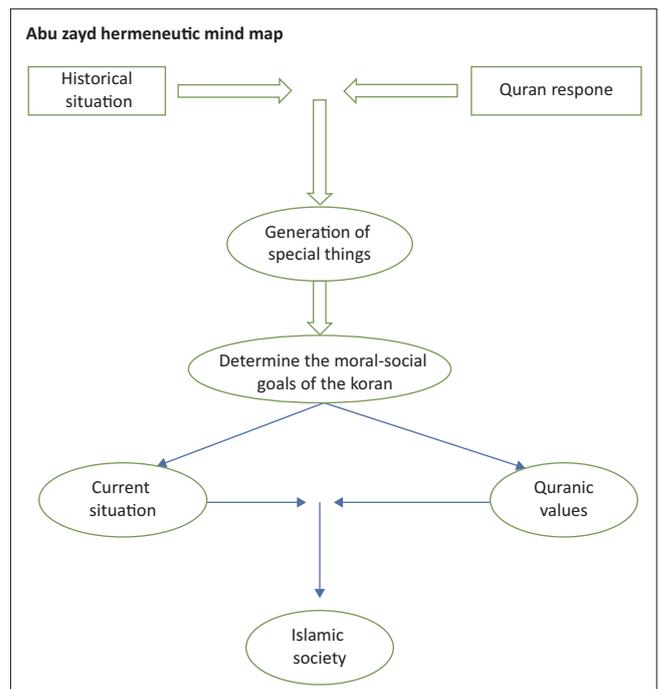
Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd showed that religious texts should be interpreted from historical and social sides. He stated that dealing with or interpreting texts must proceed from two angles not mutually exclusive, especially traditional texts. The first angle is the history of putting the texts in context to discover their original significance. This includes the historical context and the special linguistic context of those texts. The second angle is the current social and cultural context representing the motive to interpret the texts (Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd 1994). To understand the text correctly, these two perspectives help to overcome the chasm left by contemporary religious discourse between heritage and reality, or the past and the present.

Abu Zayd showed that interpretation helps to understand the significance of the religious text. The connotation is original, and the meaning is its goal or purpose of reading the text that this implies the interpretation of repetitive movement between the dimensions of 'origin' and 'purpose' or between 'significance' and 'meaning'. The movement starts from reality or meaning to discovering the significance of the text or past (Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd 1994, 2005).

**TABLE 1:** Different methods used by the *ulama* of *ushul* and the Abu Zayd's contextual reading.

Number	Abu Zayd's thought
1	The continuity context of revelation ( <i>siyaq tartib an-nuzul</i> ) that is historical chronology of the revelation context. This is extremely different from the sequence of reading in the surah and verses of the Quran.
2	The narrative context ( <i>siyaq as-sard</i> ). In the contextual reading method, taking into consideration of the narrative context is something that cannot be neglected.
3	The language structural context ( <i>mustawa at-tartib al-lughawi</i> ). This context is more complex than language grammatical sequences because it will analyse the relation such as the seclusion, connectivity, concealment, appearance, designation, elimination, repetition, and so on.

Source: [https://www.academia.edu/39729906/Na%E1%B9%A3r\\_Ab%C5%AB\\_Zayd\\_A\\_Critical\\_Rereading\\_of\\_Islamic\\_Thought](https://www.academia.edu/39729906/Na%E1%B9%A3r_Ab%C5%AB_Zayd_A_Critical_Rereading_of_Islamic_Thought)



**FIGURE 1:** Abu Zayd hermeneutic mind map.

This new methodology is based on the fact that the text's significance is inseparable from the conditions and circumstances in which this text appeared. Abu Zayd emphasised the importance of interpretation in his writings. The religious text, with all its explanatory heritage, is a specific reality in daily life and contemporary culture. Also, it is formed interpretatively according to different conflicting conditions in this reality. Studying interpretation could reveal many origins of the interpretative positions that the press reads every day in religious books or magazines and those that the media inform us of in their religious programs (Abu Zayd 1983).

## Conclusion

This study arrived at several results related to Abu Zayd's criticism of the prevailing method of reading the religious text. Abu Zayd objects to contemporary religious discourse's claim to possess the truth, which has distorted the concept of Islam.

Contemporary religious discourse is distinguished by its quest for the absence of dialogue, possessing the absolute truth, and the right to atone for others. This made Nasr offer several alternatives to reform religious thought in general and the approach to reading religious texts in particular. This resulted in: (1) evaluating the Qur'an as being no different from other texts, especially from a semantic perspective, (2) the necessity of relying on interpretation as a method for reading religious texts, (3) reading religious texts according to some criteria, especially the historical and social dimension, and the reasons for revelation, (4) emphasis on the dialectical relationship between religious texts and reality, (5) the shift from a closed religious to a new discourse that rejects fanaticism and blasphemy, and relies on diligence, creativity and tolerance.

## Acknowledgments

### Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

### Authors' contributions

A.M., A.K.M., M.M., A.M. and Z.Y., contributed to collection of data, data documenting and analysis, and manuscript preparation. A.M. was the senior author for this study. All authors have critically reviewed and approved the final draft and are responsible for the content and similarity index of the manuscript.

### Ethical considerations

This article followed all ethical standards for carrying out a research without direct contact with human or animal subjects.

## Funding information

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

## Data availability

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

## Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated agency of the authors.

## References

- Abu Zayd, N.H., 1983, *Falsafat Al-Takwil: Dirasah Fi Takwil Qur'an 'Inda Muhyi Al-Din Ibn Al-'Arabi (The Philosophy Interpretation: Study in The Interpretation of The Qur'an by Muhyi al-Din Ibn al-Arabi)*, Dar al-Tanwir, Cairo.
- Abu Zayd, N.H., 1990, *Mafhum Al-Nass: Dirasah Fi 'Ulum Qur'an*, Al-Markaz al-Thaqāfi al-'Arabī, Cairo.
- Abu Zayd, N.H., 1991, *Mafhum Al-Nass: Dirasah Fi 'Ulum Qur'an*, Al-Markaz al-Thaqāfi al-'Arabī, Cairo.
- Abu Zayd, N.H., 1992, *Naqd al-Khitab ad-Dini*, Sina li an-Nasyr, Cairo.
- Abu Zayd, N.H., 1994, *Naqd Al-Khitab al-Dini [Criticism of religious discourse]*, Dar Sina, Cairo.
- Abu Zayd, N.H., 1995a, *Al-Nas, al-Sultah, al-Haqiqah: Al-Fikr al-Diniy Bain Iradah al-Ma'rifah Wa Iradah al-Haimanah [Text, Power, Truth: Religious Thought Between The Will to Know and The Will to Dominate]*. Maghrib: Al-Markaz al-Tsaqafi al-'Arabi, al-Dar al-Baida.'
- Abu Zayd, N.H., 1995b, *Al-Takfir Fi Zaman al-Takfir Didda al-Jahl Wa al-Zaif Wa al-Khurafah [Thinking about the Time of Atonement Against Ignorance, Falsehood, and Superstition]*, Maktabah Madbuli, Cairo.
- Abu Zayd, N.H., 1998, *Al-Takfir Fi Zaman Al-Takfir*, Al-Markaz al-Thaqāfi al-'Arabī, Cairo.
- Abu Zayd, N.H., 2000, *Al-Khitab Wa al-Ta'wil*, Al-Markaz al-Thaqāfi al-'Arabī, Cairo.
- Abu Zayd, N.H., 2005, *Isyaliyat Al-Qira'ah Wa Aliyat al-Ta'wil [Reading Problems and Interpretation Mechanisms]*, Al-Markaz al-Tsaqafi al-'Arabī, al-Dar al-Baida., Maghrib.
- Falyouna, N., 2020, 'Analytical study on Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd's understanding of religious texts in Islam', *J Al-Tamaddun* 15(2), 45–55. <https://doi.org/10.22452/JAT.vol15no2.4>
- Hielmann, J., 2003, *Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd Und Die Wiedererfundene Hisba: Sari'a Und Qanun Im Heutigen Agypten*, Ergon, Germany.
- Kermani, N., 1996. *The Aesthetic Reception of the Qur'an as Reflected in Early Muslim History. Literary Structures of Religious in the Qur'an*, Curzon, Great Britain.
- Kermani, N., 2004, *From revelation to interpretation: Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd and the literary study of The Qur'an*, Oxford University Press, London.
- Kersten, C., 2010, 'Islam, cultural hybridity and cosmopolitanism: New Muslim intellectuals on globalization', *J Int Glob Stud* 1(1), 89.
- Mahfuzh, M., 1999, *Al-Fikr al-Islamiy al-Mu'asir Wa Rahanat al-Mustaqbal [Contemporary Islamic Thought and Future Bets]*, Al-Markaz al-Tsaqafi al-'Arabi, Beirut.
- Moch, M., 2017, *Nasr Abū Zayd a critical rereading of Islamic thought*, Drukarnia Cyfrowa UKW, Druk.
- Najjar, F.M., 2000, 'Islamic fundamentalism and the intellectuals; the case of Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd', *British J Middle East Stud* 27(2), 177–200. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13530190020000529>
- Tamer, G., 2011, 'Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd', *Int J Middle East Stud* 43(4), 193–195. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743810001558>
- Wekke, I.S., Amiruddin, A.A. & Firdaus, F., 2018, 'Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd and the hermeneutical of Qur'an', *Epistémé* 13(2), 483–507. <https://doi.org/10.21274/epis.2018.13.1.483-507>