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The Educational Values of Peace in Qur'an 2:208 from the Perspective of Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd

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Abstract. This article examines the construction of the meanings of Islam and peace in Qur'an 2:208 through the hermeneutical perspective of Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd. It begins with the concern that religious interpretation may shift in function when a human understanding of scripture is presented as the only legitimate meaning and used to restrict interpretive differences. This raises questions concerning the relationship between textual authority, interpretive authority, and the social use of meaning. The study employs a qualitative library-based method and a critical hermeneutical approach. Its primary sources are Qur'an 2:208 and Abu Zayd's works, while its secondary sources include classical Qur'anic commentaries, studies of Qur'anic hermeneutics, and literature on ideology and religious authority. The analysis proceeds through three layers: textual meaning, interpretive construction, and ideological appropriation. The findings indicate that interpreting *al-silm* as Islam has a substantial basis in the classical exegetical tradition. Peace is therefore not treated as the sole replacement for the verse's lexical meaning, but as an ethical orientation developed through contextual reading. Abu Zayd's perspective helps explain how textual understanding is mediated by language, history, and the interpreter's activity, making interpretive claims subject to reasoned evaluation. The article concludes that the potential for exclusivism should be examined through the ways interpretations are constructed, legitimized, and employed, rather than by automatically attributing the problem to the Qur'anic text or the entire exegetical tradition. It proposes an analytical model that can be developed in future studies of Qur'anic verses in contemporary religious discourse.

Keywords: Appropriation of Meaning; Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd; Qur'an 2:208; Qur'anic Hermeneutics; Religious Exclusivism.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Qur'an occupies a central position in Muslim life as a source of guidance, a moral foundation, and a guide for shaping religious life. However, the relationship between human beings and the Qur'an is established not merely through the existence of the text, but also through the activities of reading, understanding, interpreting, and applying its messages. These activities involve language, knowledge, scholarly traditions, historical experience, and the social circumstances of readers. Therefore, Qur'anic studies concern not only the normative content of the text but also the processes through which human beings construct an understanding of it (Zayd, 2005; Triastuty et al., 2026).

Problems arise when the outcome of an interpretation is treated as though it were entirely identical to the text being interpreted. Under such circumstances, an interpreter's opinion may acquire a status that is difficult to question, while alternative readings are deemed illegitimate before their arguments have been examined. Interpretive differences, which should be open to discussion through scholarly methods, may consequently become disputes over legitimacy and authority. Criticism of this situation is important because religious understanding can serve as a source of moral orientation, but it can also be used to establish

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social boundaries, preserve authority, or reject differing perspectives (Zayd, 1992; Dahlan et al., 2025).

One verse relevant to examining this issue is Qur'an 2:208:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ادْخُلُوا فِي السِّلْمِ كَافَّةً وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ

"Believers, enter into Islam wholeheartedly, and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is your manifest enemy."

The verse commands believers to enter into *al-silm* in its entirety and prohibits them from following Satan's footsteps. The term *al-silm* is central to this discussion because it raises questions concerning the meaning and application of the verse's message. In the classical exegetical tradition, the term is generally associated with Islam or submission to God. Peace can be developed as an ethical reflection on the application of Islamic teachings, but it should not automatically replace the meaning established in the exegetical tradition (al-Ṭabarī, 2001; Siregar et al., 2026).

This distinction determines the direction of the present study. The article does not seek to prove that *al-silm* means only peace, nor does it reject interpretations that understand the term as Islam. Instead, it asks how the textual meaning is explained, how an interpretation gains legitimacy, and how an interpretation is employed in social life. The central issue is therefore not merely the choice between alternative lexical meanings, but the distinction between textual meaning, the activity of interpretation, and the use of an interpretation to serve particular interests.

To address these questions, this study draws on the thought of Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, a contemporary scholar of Qur'anic studies who paid considerable attention to the relationship between text, language, culture, and interpretation. In *Mafhūm al-Naṣṣ*, Abu Zayd examines the Qur'an in relation to language and culture and emphasizes the importance of studying the process of textual understanding through scholarly inquiry. This approach enables researchers to investigate how meaning is constructed without automatically equating every interpretive conclusion with the meaning of the text itself (Zayd, 2005).

Abu Zayd's thought is also important because of his criticism of the ideologization of religious discourse. An interpretation can become problematic when the interpreter's interests are no longer distinguished from the message of the text, causing a particular interpretation to be presented as though it were beyond evaluation. Moch. Nur Ichwan explains that Abu Zayd's criticism of ideological interpretation is related to efforts to reduce the dominance of the interpreter's interests in the process of meaning-making (Ichwan, 2000). This criticism does

not imply that all exegesis is manipulative. Rather, it means that every interpretive claim should be examined in terms of its sources, methods, and arguments.

Previous studies have examined Abu Zayd's thought from several perspectives. Ichwan discusses Abu Zayd's hermeneutical theory and his criticism of ideological interpretation. Muhammad Alfian examines Abu Zayd's concept of hermeneutics, including the relationship between context and meaning. Ismail Suardi Wekke and Acep Firdaus explore Abu Zayd's contribution to the development of Qur'anic studies. Imam Subchi also discusses Abu Zayd's hermeneutical ideas in the context of Qur'anic interpretation (Alfian, 2018; Wekke & Acep Firdaus, 2018; Subchi, 2019). These studies provide a foundation for understanding the theoretical framework. The present study, however, focuses specifically on Qur'an 2:208 and the relationship between the interpretation of the verse, claims to interpretive authority, and the possibility of ideological appropriation.

Studies of religious authority provide an additional comparative perspective. Khaled Abou El Fadl, for example, discusses questions of authority and tendencies toward authoritarianism in religious reasoning. His perspective helps distinguish recognition of the authority of normative sources from human claims made in the name of those sources (Fadl, 2001). In the present study, this distinction is important to ensure that criticism of the monopolization of meaning is not misconstrued as a rejection of the authority of the Qur'an or of Islamic scholarly traditions.

Based on previous research, this article develops a more specific focus through three questions. First, how is the meaning of *al-silm* in Qur'an 2:208 explained within the exegetical tradition, and how can peace be situated as an ethical implication of the verse? Second, how does Abu Zayd's thought help explain the relationship between the text and the activity of interpretation? Third, how can ideological appropriation be understood when an interpretation is used to monopolize religious legitimacy or close off opportunities for dialogue?

This article argues that the potential for exclusivism should be analyzed by distinguishing the text from the process of interpretation and its social use. To this end, the study develops a three-layer analytical model: textual meaning, interpretive construction, and ideological appropriation. This model is the author's analytical construction, inspired by Abu Zayd's thought; it is not a formal term explicitly formulated by Abu Zayd himself. The article's contribution lies in applying this model to a critical reading of Qur'an 2:208 without disregarding the exegetical tradition or claiming that all interpretations possess the same degree of validity.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative method based on library research. This approach was selected because the research objects consist of the Qur'anic text, Qur'anic commentaries, works on hermeneutics, and academic literature concerning ideology and religious authority. The study does not employ interviews or field observations. Accordingly, its discussion of exclusivism is conceptual and is not intended to present empirical findings about any particular group or individual (Poth, 2018).

The primary sources consist of Qur'an 2:208 and the works of Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, particularly *Mafhūm al-Naṣṣ: Dirāsah fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* and *Naqd al-Khiṭāb al-Dīnī*. The first work is used to examine the relationship between text, language, and culture, while the second is used to investigate Abu Zayd's criticism of religious discourse and ideological tendencies in the interpretive process (Zayd, Mafhūm al-Naṣṣ: Dirāsah fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān, 2005) (Zayd, Naqd al-Khiṭāb al-Dīnī , 1992).

The secondary sources include classical Qur'anic commentaries, particularly *Jāmi' al-Bayān* by *al-Ṭabarī, Al-Jāmi' li Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by *al-Qurṭubī,* and *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm* by *Ibn Kathīr*. These works are used to examine the interpretation of *al-silm* and the context of Qur'an 2:208. Additional sources include scholarly articles on Abu Zayd's hermeneutics, contextual approaches, religious authority, and discourse theory. The literature is selected according to its relevance to the research (al-Ṭabarī, 2001) (Kathīr, 1999) (al-Qurṭubī, 2002).

Data were collected through documentation and critical reading. First, the researcher identified the Qur'anic verse and examined exegetical explanations of the terms *al-silm* and *kāffah,* as well as the relationships between the clauses. Second, the researcher identified Abu Zayd's concepts concerning text, context, interpretation, and the ideologization of religious discourse. Third, the findings were classified according to the research questions. Fourth, the data were compared to formulate the relationship between textual meaning, interpretive construction, and the use of meaning in social contexts.

The analysis proceeded through three layers. The first was textual analysis, which examined the verse in terms of language, sentence structure, context, and the exegetical tradition. The second was interpretive analysis, which investigated how the verse's meaning is explained through particular methods and sources. The third was ideological-appropriation analysis, which conceptually examined how an interpretation might change its function when used to monopolize meaning or restrict dialogue. These three layers constitute an analytical

framework developed by the author in response to the research questions and inspired by Abu Zayd's criticism of ideological (Ichwan, 2000).

To maintain analytical accuracy, the study distinguishes between information derived from the text and commentaries, concepts originating in Abu Zayd's thought, and conclusions developed by the author. The meaning of *al-silm* is not immediately equated with peace but is first examined through the exegetical tradition. Similarly, claims about the use of the verse by particular groups are not made without empirical evidence. These limitations are intended to ensure that the conclusions remain consistent with the sources and research method.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Meaning of *Al-silm* in Qur'an 2:208

Qur'an 2:208 commands believers to enter into *al-silm* in its entirety and prohibits them from following Satan's footsteps. The structure of the verse contains two interrelated elements: a positive command and a negative prohibition. The phrase *udkhulū fī al-silmi kāffah* emphasizes the command to enter into *al-silm* completely, while *wa-lā tattabi'ū khuṭuwāti al-shayṭān* identifies the conduct that must be avoided (Indonesia, 2019).

In the classical exegetical tradition, *al-Ṭabarī* records interpretations that associate *al-silm* with Islam. This explanation demonstrates that interpreting the term as Islam has a substantial foundation in the history of Qur'anic exegesis. The interpretations of al-Qurṭubī and Ibn Kathīr also provide comparative perspectives for examining how the verse has been understood within the exegetical tradition (al-Qurṭubī, 2002; al-Ṭabarī, 2001; Kathīr, 1999). Contemporary readings should therefore not disregard this tradition merely to align the verse with the theme of peace.

The phrase *kāffah* emphasizes the comprehensive nature of the command. However, the scope of this term must be explained on the basis of linguistic structure and exegetical context, rather than assumptions detached from the text. The command to practice Islam comprehensively does not automatically authorize every interpreter to impose a particular human formulation of religious understanding on all readers. The application of religious norms in social life still requires its own explanations and arguments.

Methodologically, the verse should be examined by distinguishing three elements. First, there is the linguistic meaning, which establishes the initial boundaries of interpretation. Second, there are the exegetical explanations that reveal the historical reception of the verse within Islamic scholarship. Third, there are the ethical implications developed by readers in contemporary contexts. These elements are related, but they are not identical. This distinction

allows contextual interpretation to develop without erasing meanings supported by the exegetical tradition (Izutsu, 1964).

In this study, peace is not treated as the sole translation of *al-silm*. Instead, it is understood as an ethical orientation that can be developed through reflection on Islamic teachings and their application in social life. Accordingly, this research does not unilaterally alter the verse's lexical meaning. Rather, it examines how an understanding of Islam as a comprehensive way of life can be discussed in relation to social responsibility, respect for human beings, and the rejection of using religion to justify arbitrary actions.

This approach avoids two tendencies. The first is a reading that confines the verse to the repetition of established meanings without considering questions of application. The second is a reading that expands the meaning excessively, leaving the relationship between the text and the resulting conclusions uncontrolled. Responsible interpretation must preserve the relationship between language, context, tradition, and argumentation (Saeed, 2006).

Abu Zayd's Hermeneutics: Text, Language, and Context

Abu Zayd's thought provides a foundation for examining the relationship between a text and the process of understanding it. In Mafhūm al-Naṣṣ, he discusses the Qur'an in relation to language and culture. This approach encourages researchers to understand the text through linguistic tools and historical context while examining how meaning emerges through the activity of interpretation (Zayd, Mafhūm al-Naṣṣ: Dirāsah fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān, 2005).

This approach is important because readers never encounter a text in a vacuum. They approach it through particular languages, bodies of knowledge, experiences, and methods. In Qur'anic exegesis, choices concerning transmitted reports, linguistic analysis, historical context, and theoretical frameworks can influence the resulting explanation. Human understanding of a text must therefore be distinguished from the text itself.

Nevertheless, Abu Zayd's position should not be simplified into the claim that readers are entirely free to determine the meaning of the Qur'an. The text retains a linguistic structure and context that constrain the range of possible interpretations. Recognizing the reader's involvement in interpretation requires stronger argumentation; it does not justify every possible reading. Interpreters must explain their sources, methods, and reasons for considering one conclusion stronger than its alternatives (Gadamer, 2004).

In relation to Qur'an 2:208, Abu Zayd's perspective enables researchers to investigate the basis for interpreting *al-silm*, the use of exegetical sources, and the relationship between the interpretation of the verse and the reader's context. These questions are not intended to

reject classical exegesis, but to demonstrate that respect for scholarly tradition can coexist with academic evaluation.

Abu Zayd's criticism of religious discourse also helps explain the risks that arise when an interpretation is presented as the sole representation of God's will. Under such circumstances, the distance between the text and human understanding becomes invisible. An interpretation that should be open to evaluation through argument acquires a status that is difficult to question because it has been framed as an entirely sacred claim (Zayd, Naqd al-Khiṭāb al-Dīnī , 1992).

A distinction must therefore be made between the authority of the Qur'an as a sacred text for Muslims and the authority of human beings who interpret it. An interpreter may possess extensive knowledge, but their conclusions remain open to examination in terms of sources, methods, and argumentative coherence. Recognizing scholarly authority does not require the uncritical acceptance of every opinion expressed by a particular interpreter.

This criticism has a limited point of convergence with Abou El Fadl's discussion of authority and authoritarianism in religious reasoning. Abou El Fadl highlights the problem that arises when someone exercises religious authority without providing sufficient room for interpretive accountability (Fadl, 2001). Although his approach is not identical to Abu Zayd's, both perspectives can be used comparatively to emphasize that claims made in the name of religion must be accompanied by argumentative responsibility.

The Appropriation of Meaning and the Ideologization of Interpretation

In this article, the appropriation of meaning refers to the use of an understanding of a text within a particular context. This process is not inherently negative. Interpretation is necessary for the Qur'an's message to be understood and applied in life. Problems arise when the use of meaning is accompanied by claims that prevent evaluation or turn an interpretation into an instrument for maintaining particular interests without adequate argumentation.

To explain this problem, the study develops a three-layer analytical model. This model is the author's own construction, inspired by Abu Zayd's criticism of ideological interpretation. First, the textual layer identifies linguistic elements, sentence structure, the context of the verse, and exegetical explanations. In Qur'an 2:208, this involves examining the terms *al-silm* and *kāffah*, as well as the relationship between the command to enter into *al-silm* and the prohibition against following Satan's footsteps. This layer ensures that the analysis remains grounded in the text.

Second, the interpretive layer examines how the verse's meaning is explained through particular methods and traditions. For example, interpreting *al-silm* as Islam should be examined through linguistic arguments and exegetical sources. Contemporary readings that develop the ethical implications of peace must likewise explain their logical relationship with the text. Interpretive differences should therefore be evaluated according to the quality of their arguments and methodological rigor, rather than merely according to their conformity with dominant views (Rahman, 1982).

Third, the ideological-appropriation layer examines how an interpretation is used beyond the activity of explaining the text. An interpretation may acquire an ideological function when it is used to reinforce the claim that only one group or interpreter has legitimate access to the meaning of a verse, while alternative readings are rejected without argumentative examination. At this level, attention is directed not only to the content of an interpretation but also to how it gains legitimacy and is employed within social relationships.

Not every firm interpretation constitutes exclusivism. An interpreter may conclude that one meaning is stronger on the basis of linguistic evidence, transmitted reports, or a particular method. Problems arise when argumentation is replaced by claims that cannot be evaluated, or when interpretive disagreement is immediately treated as a threat to religion. The three-layer model therefore does not seek to treat all interpretations as equivalent. Instead, it provides a means of distinguishing textual explanation from ideological use (Eagleton, 1991).

Critical discourse analysis can serve as a complementary tool for examining the relationship between language and social practice. Norman Fairclough, for example, situates discourse in relation to social structures and social change. Michel Foucault, meanwhile, discusses the relationship between knowledge and power in the formation of discourse (Fairclough, 2010; Foucault, 1980). These perspectives are not identical to Abu Zayd's hermeneutics, but they can help formulate questions about how an interpretation acquires influence and legitimacy in social life.

Nevertheless, ideological analysis must be applied proportionately. Not every use of religious evidence constitutes manipulation, not every authority figure seeks domination, and not all interpretations possess the same argumentative strength. Ideological analysis should serve as a means of examining the structure of claims and practices of meaning-making, rather than replacing one form of judgment with another.

Exclusivism and the Monopoly of Interpretive Authority

In this study, exclusivism refers to a tendency to close off acceptance of alternative readings, particularly when this closure is based on the claim that one interpretation is the only

legitimate understanding. This definition must be distinguished from a person's conviction that their religion is true. Strong religious conviction does not automatically entail the rejection of dialogue. The issue examined here is how claims to truth are used to restrict evaluation and interpretive disagreement.

The monopolization of meaning can occur through several mechanisms. First, an interpreter equates their own reading with the entire meaning of the text, thereby failing to acknowledge the process of interpretation. Second, the interpreter selects only sources that support their conclusion while disregarding relevant sources that offer different perspectives. Third, religious authority is used to shut down questions that should be answerable through argumentation. Fourth, differences in interpretation are immediately classified as deviations without examining the reasons behind them.

Abu Zayd's thought helps critique these mechanisms by encouraging readers to examine how religious discourse is constructed. When a particular interpretation is repeatedly communicated through dominant authorities, it may acquire a powerful position within a social environment. However, social dominance does not automatically establish the validity of an interpretation. The strength of an interpretation must still be evaluated through accountable sources and methods (John B. Thompson, 1990).

In the context of Qur'an 2:208, criticizing the monopolization of meaning means rejecting the automatic use of the verse to close off disagreement. The verse may be understood as a command to practice Islam comprehensively, but applying this command in a social context requires additional argumentation. Quoting the verse alone is insufficient to prove that a particular opinion, group, or social strategy necessarily represents God's will.

Thus, the exclusivism criticized here is not the existence of religious norms, but the tendency to turn human interpretation into a claim immune to evaluation. This criticism can strengthen religious accountability because interpreters are required to explain the basis of their conclusions, consider a diversity of sources, and distinguish their own opinions from the text they interpret (Zayd, 2018).

Islam and Peace as an Ethical Orientation

Discussing peace in relation to Qur'an 2:208 requires conceptual care. The exegetical tradition that associates *al-silm* with Islam should not be disregarded merely to align the verse with the theme of peace. Accordingly, this article does not present peace as the sole lexical meaning of *al-silm*. Instead, peace is discussed at the level of ethical implications and the practical realization of values.

This distinction is important because contextual interpretation must not become a justification for disregarding linguistic structure. If someone claims that *al-silm* in this verse means peace alone, that claim requires adequate linguistic evidence and exegetical argumentation. Conversely, if the verse is understood as a command to enter into Islam comprehensively, the interpreter must still explain how this understanding can be applied in social life without turning human interpretation into an instrument for justifying arbitrary actions (Hirschkind, 1995).

In this article, peace is an ethical orientation discussed through the social consequences of religious understanding. As an ethical orientation, peace relates to the development of social relationships that are not based on coercion, hostility, or the suppression of dialogue. This relationship is not established by simply equating terms, but through argumentation about how religious commitment can be expressed responsibly.

Abdullah Saeed's contextual approach emphasizes the relationship between the text, the context of revelation, and the circumstances of contemporary readers. Fazlur Rahman also stresses the importance of considering the relationship between the Qur'an's message and historical as well as contemporary issues (Rahman, 1982) .These approaches are used as comparative literature rather than treated as identical to Abu Zayd's theory.

Within this framework, Qur'an 2:208 can be read in a way that preserves the meaning of *al-silm* as Islam while also developing reflections on social responsibility. Peace is not imposed as the single meaning of the word in the verse. Rather, it becomes one ethical orientation formulated through contextual reasoning. This distinction allows an open reading while maintaining linguistic and methodological rigor.

The Interpreter's Responsibility and the Use of Meaning in Social Life

Qur'anic interpretation enters various social settings, including education, law, sermons, media, and public debate. When an interpretation moves from the reading of a text into the social sphere, it may acquire a function different from its initial function as an explanation of the text. It is therefore necessary to distinguish what the text states, what the interpreter concludes, and what people do on the basis of that conclusion.

The appropriation of meaning can help make religious messages relevant to the problems of everyday life. However, such use must be accompanied by accountability. Several questions should be asked: Is the application of the meaning consistent with the text? Is the conclusion supported by adequate argumentation? Does its application take the relevant social circumstances into account? These questions help distinguish responsible application from the use of a verse as an unquestionable source of legitimacy (Saeed, 2006; Saeed, 2014).

The interpreter's responsibility comprises at least three dimensions. First, textual responsibility means maintaining consistency between the interpretation and the language and context of the verse. Second, epistemic responsibility means explaining the sources, methods, and reasons that support a conclusion. Third, social responsibility means recognizing that interpretations can affect human relationships and should therefore not be used to suppress dialogue without an adequate argumentative basis.

These three dimensions do not require all interpretations to produce identical conclusions. Differences may arise from variations in methods, sources, and contextual considerations. What is required is a mechanism for evaluating such differences academically. An interpreter may reject another opinion because it is considered inconsistent with the evidence, but that rejection must be accompanied by reasons that can be examined, rather than merely by a claim that those who disagree lack legitimacy.

Because this study is based on library research, its discussion of ideological appropriation remains conceptual. It cannot establish that a particular group has used Qur'an 2:208 for exclusivist purposes. Such a claim would require empirical research involving sermons, religious publications, social media, or interviews with relevant parties. This limitation is necessary to ensure that criticism of exclusivism does not become an unsupported accusation (Miles & Saldaña, 2014).

Analytical Synthesis: Reading the Text Critically without Monopolizing Meaning

The discussion produces three principal findings. First, fidelity to the text requires readers to consider its language, verse structure, context, and exegetical tradition. In this study, the meaning of *al-silm* as Islam is not discarded to support an argument about peace. Peace is instead positioned as an ethical orientation developed through contextual reading (Mutiullah, 2023).

Second, awareness of the interpreter's involvement requires interpretive conclusions to be presented as claims supported by evidence and method, rather than as statements automatically identical to the entirety of the text's meaning. This awareness does not negate the truth of the text. Rather, it requires interpreters to explain their reasoning and allow their conclusions to be evaluated.

Third, the use of meaning in social life must be accompanied by accountability. Interpretations applied in society require clear justification, particularly when they are used to determine the boundaries of acceptance for alternative views. When an interpretation is used to close dialogue or monopolize legitimacy, the interpreter must explain the basis of that claim and remain willing to subject it to examination.

These three principles demonstrate that interpretive openness does not mean that all meanings are equally valid. Interpretations can still be evaluated according to textual evidence, argumentative coherence, and methodological rigor. Openness means that human claims about religious meaning are not exempt from evaluation merely because they are expressed in religious language (Ichwan, 2000; Zayd, 2005).

The article's contribution lies in its use of a three-layer model textual meaning, interpretive construction, and ideological appropriation to analyze the relationship between the meaning of Qur'an 2:208 and the possibility of interpretive monopolization. This model can serve as an initial analytical tool for future research, particularly empirical studies of how Qur'anic verses are used in contemporary religious discourse. However, the model still needs to be tested and developed through its application to concrete social data.

The Educational Values of Peace in Qur'an 2:208

The interpretation of Qur'an 2:208 through the hermeneutical perspective of Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd provides a basis for identifying several educational values of peace. These values are not derived from equating *al-silm* exclusively with peace, but from understanding the ethical implications of entering into Islam comprehensively and applying its teachings responsibly in social life (Zayd, 2004). From this perspective, peace becomes an educational orientation that shapes individual character, social relationships, and attitudes toward religious differences.

First, the value of religious commitment and moral integrity. The command *udkhulū fī al-silm*i *kāffah* emphasizes the importance of embracing Islamic teachings comprehensively. In educational contexts, this principle can be translated into the integration of religious knowledge, moral awareness, and everyday behavior. Religious education should not be limited to the transmission of doctrinal knowledge but should also encourage students to demonstrate honesty, responsibility, justice, and respect in their interactions. The educational objective is to develop individuals whose religious commitment is reflected in ethical conduct rather than merely expressed through verbal claims (al-Ṭabarī, 2001; UNESCO, 1996).

Second, the value of tolerance and respect for diversity. Awareness that human understanding is mediated by language, historical circumstances, and interpretive activity encourages students to recognize the existence of differences in religious understanding. This recognition does not mean that all interpretations are equally valid, nor does it eliminate the importance of established religious principles. Instead, students are encouraged to evaluate different perspectives through knowledge, evidence, and reasoned discussion. In this regard,

Islamic education can develop an attitude of respect toward differences without requiring individuals to abandon their own religious convictions (UNESCO, 1996).

Third, the value of dialogical and critical thinking. Abu Zayd's distinction between the text and human interpretation provides an important educational foundation for developing critical literacy in religious studies. Students should be encouraged to examine the sources, methods, and arguments underlying religious claims rather than accepting every interpretation without examination. Dialogue becomes an educational instrument through which differences can be discussed constructively. Such an approach develops intellectual independence, openness to scholarly criticism, and the ability to distinguish between religious texts and human interpretations of those texts (Zayd, 2004).

Fourth, the value of non-coercion and respect for human dignity. The prohibition against following Satan's footsteps can be considered within the broader ethical responsibility to avoid destructive conduct. In educational practice, this principle encourages teachers and students to reject intimidation, humiliation, discrimination, and the imposition of opinions through coercive means. Religious learning should take place in an environment that recognizes human dignity and provides opportunities for students to express questions and arguments responsibly. Peaceful educational relationships are therefore built through mutual respect rather than the domination of one individual over another (UNESCO, 1995).

Fifth, the value of social responsibility and cooperation. The ethical implications of comprehensive religious commitment should extend beyond individual piety toward constructive participation in society. Students need to understand that religious values should encourage cooperation, mutual assistance, justice, and concern for others. These values can be cultivated through collaborative learning, community service, and activities that promote social solidarity. Consequently, peace is not merely an abstract concept but an ethical orientation expressed through concrete actions that contribute to the common good (UNESCO, 1996).

Sixth, the value of conflict resolution and peaceful communication. Interpretive differences are inevitable in social and educational environments. However, differences do not necessarily lead to hostility when individuals possess the ability to communicate respectfully and evaluate arguments fairly. Islamic education should therefore develop students' capacity to resolve disagreements through deliberation, listening, empathy, and evidence-based reasoning. This educational orientation helps transform differences into opportunities for learning rather than sources of division.

These six educational values demonstrate that peace can be developed as a practical ethical orientation within Islamic education without disregarding the exegetical understanding of *al-silm* as Islam. They also illustrate the relevance of Abu Zayd's hermeneutical perspective for education: awareness of the interpretive process encourages intellectual responsibility, while criticism of ideological appropriation promotes openness, accountability, and respect for human dignity (Zayd, 2004).

Accordingly, the educational implications of Qur'an 2:208 can be formulated through three interconnected dimensions: individual character formation, dialogical intellectual development, and social responsibility. Individual character formation emphasizes religious commitment and moral integrity. Dialogical intellectual development encourages critical thinking, tolerance, and respect for differences. Social responsibility promotes cooperation, non-coercion, and peaceful conflict resolution. These dimensions indicate that the educational values of peace are not separate from religious commitment but represent ethical expressions of its responsible application in contemporary social life.

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Qur'an 2:208 can be examined through the hermeneutical perspective of Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd by considering the relationship between the text, the activity of interpretation, and the use of meaning in social life. In the classical exegetical tradition, *al-silm* is generally associated with Islam or submission to God. This meaning remains an important foundation for the present study. Peace is not positioned as the sole replacement for the verse's lexical meaning, but as an ethical orientation developed through contextual reading.

Abu Zayd's thought helps explain that textual understanding takes place through language, context, and human interpretive activity. This awareness does not mean that all interpretations possess equal validity. Rather, it emphasizes that interpretive claims must be justified through sources, methods, and arguments. Problems arise when an interpretation is equated absolutely with the text and then used to prevent evaluation or monopolize religious legitimacy.

Through its three analytical layers textual analysis, interpretive analysis, and ideological appropriation this article argues that criticism of exclusivism should focus on how meaning is constructed, legitimized, and used, rather than automatically attributing the problem to the Qur'anic text or the entire exegetical tradition. The model is an analytical framework

developed by the author and inspired by Abu Zayd's thought. It can serve as a starting point for further research.

The limitation of this study lies in its library-based nature. The article cannot yet determine how Qur'an 2:208 is used by particular groups, figures, or institutions in social practice. Future research could develop this analysis through the examination of sermons, religious publications, digital media, or interviews to investigate how the appropriation of meaning operates in actual contexts.

Therefore, a critical reading of Qur'an 2:208 should preserve fidelity to the text, remain open to interpretive evaluation, and recognize social responsibility in the application of meaning. This approach does not negate belief in religious truth. Rather, it emphasizes that human claims concerning religious meaning continue to require argumentation and accountability.

Furthermore, this study identifies six educational values that can be developed from the ethical implications of Qur'an 2:208: religious commitment and moral integrity, tolerance and respect for diversity, dialogical and critical thinking, non-coercion and respect for human dignity, social responsibility and cooperation, and peaceful conflict resolution. These values can be translated into Islamic educational practices through character formation, critical engagement with religious interpretations, respectful dialogue, collaborative learning, and responsible participation in society. Thus, the educational significance of the verse lies not in replacing the lexical meaning of **al-silm** with peace, but in developing peace as an ethical orientation arising from the comprehensive and responsible application of Islamic teachings.

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