FROM TEXTUALITY TO DISCURSITY; THE HERMENEUTICS OF QUR'AN NASR HAMID ABU ZAYD

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Abstract

The agenda of Islamic renewal has declined due to the stagnation of the Al-Qur'an reading model that has occurred for thousands of years. Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, an Egyptian intellectual, sees this happening because of the overlap between text and meaning as a consequence of the sanctification of the verses of the Qur'an as the word of God which contains absolute truth and creates the impossibility of interpretation beyond the literal meaning of the text. Responding to these conditions, Abu Zayd presents a thesis regarding the textuality of the Qur'an or that the Muslim holy book is a cultural product that contains objective meaning which must be revealed through an understanding of horizontal interactions with the socio-historical world. The implication is that the Qur'an is a textus receptus (received text/mushaf) which must be approached by borrowing various methodologies such as hermeneutics, semiotics and language. Only then, according to Abu Zayd, can the objective meaning of the text free from ideology and subjectivism be achieved. This paper will elaborate on the phenomenon of impasse in the meaning of the Qur'an along with Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd's methodological-hermeneutical proposal regarding both the textuality and the discoursiveness of the Qur'an. Next, some application of Abu Zayd's hermeneutics in usury, polygamy and hakimiyat will be elaborated.

Keywords: Hermeneutics, Qur'anic Discourse, Textus Receptus

A. Introduction

Since the Abyssinian period, mu'tazilite intellectuals endorsed the view that the Qur'an was *makhluq* a creation by God. This view rests on the argument that God's substance is different from His actions and that the Qur'an itself is the result of God's actions that are not one with the all-perfect God.[1] This view was opposed by traditional clerical groups who later became dominant among Sunnis. That according to them, the Qur'an is the word of God which between Himself and His word is one entity.

An important point that Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd highlighted was the hermeneutical consequences of that view.[2] The dominant Sunni view resulted in the belief that the Qur'an was a perfectly composed text and that it could be found based on the structure and internal coherence of the Qur'anic verses. On the contrary, the mu'tazilite view results in an approach to the Qur'an as well as other human texts that require an understanding of the socio-historical sphere, the horizon of the text, the author (God) and the interpreter, along with the linguistic meaning.

Abu Zayd's position, as he admits, was a response to the views of Muslim thinkers of his time.[3] One of the most important is Amin Al-Khulli. However, it is interesting that the views of other figures such as Muhammad Abduh and Thaha Hussein also influenced Abu

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[1] Zayd, Nasr, *Teks otoritas kebenaran*, (Yogyakarta: LKIS, 2003), Hal. 30

[2] Zayd, Hal. 33

[3] Kusmana, *Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an: Sebuah Pendekatan Praktis Aplikasi Hermeneutik Modern dalam Penafsiran Al-Qur'a*n, (Jakarta: UIN Jakarta Press, 2004), hal. 160-161

Zayd. This is why it is these two figures who explicitly postulate the Qur'an as beings. Unfortunately, both figures later revised their views in the latest edition of their respective works due to the insistence of various parties.

According to Abu Zayd, there is no other way to achieve Islamic renewal than by reconstructing the Qur'an as a text or in other terms as 'textus receptus'.[4] So far, the Qur'an as His word can only be accessed through hadith and ijtihad ulama. Thus, it is problematic for Abu Zayd to position the text of the Qur'an as a secondary source, while the hadith and ijtihad ulama are the primary.[5] However, Abu Zayd realized that this was because there was an ideological interest on the part of the interpreters to regulate the meaning of the Qur'an. So, it is not surprising that then the position of the Qur'an was degraded secretly in the hands of Imam Shafi'I and the disciples of Ahmad bin Hanbal.

From that explanation we can conclude that there are two main problems in the interpretation of the Qur'an that occur because of the acceptance of the Qur'an as the word of God. First, it fails to reveal the objective meaning of the Qur'an because of the political intervention of the early interpreters. Second, those early interpreters also injected their subjectivism into that meaning. As a result, the meaning revealed from the Qur'an is a biased meaning. To go beyond

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[4] Kusmana, 'Some Implications of Hermeneutical Readings for the Study of the Qur'an', *Quran and Hadith Studies*, 2: 2 (2013), 267.

[5] Ichwan, Moch, *A New Horizon in Qur'anic Hermeneutics: Naṣr Ḥâmid Abû Zayd's Contribution to Critical Qurânic Scholarship*, (Leiden: Leiden University, 1999)

these two things, Abu Zayd presents the offer of another methodology of exegesis that combines various text/language disciplines.

This paper will elaborate various ideas that influenced Abu Zayd's hermeneutic thinking so as to give birth to his theory of the textuality of the Qur'an. Not satisfied with this theory, Abu Zayd then sparked the discursity of the Qur'an to complement his hermeneutic method. Both methods will then be elaborated principles and then examples will be given of reading or applying Abu Zayd's hermeneutics on several issues, namely usury, polygamy and hakimiyat.

B. The Influence of Thought

Abu Zayd's thought can be more easily understood if we identify various traces of thought from other figures. These figures were widely cited by Abu Zayd in response, either in terms of approving or rejecting. These figures can also be categorized both in those from Muslim and outside Muslims.

1. Muslim Reformers

Muslim thought, for example, is Muslim reformist thinkers such as Thaha Husain, Rifaat Thantawi, Amin Al-Khuli, to Muhammad Abduh. They are among many thinkers who are equally involved in the agenda of reforming Islamic thought and contributing according to their expertise. One thing that unites their perception in Abu Zayd's eyes is that their offer tends to be eclectic and unable to reach the core of the problem of Qur'anic scholarly impasse. Until, rather than the renewal that occurred was the strengthening of the ideological orthodoxy and scholarship of the classical Qur'an.

The reformist thought that influenced Abu Zayd can also be traced back to the mu'tazilites to philosophers such as Ibn Rushd. In the first Abu Zayd took many positions on the textuality of the Qur'an while in the second Abu Zayd was inspired to adopt Western scientific methods relevant to the renewal of Islam. Just as Ibn Rushd's philosophy was seen as the method of attaining truth needed in his day, Abu Zayd also saw many methods of social science in the West that could answer the needs of Muslims in overcoming their impasse of thought.

Another Muslim thinker who attracted and influenced Abu Zayd's ideas was Ali Harb.[6] Through critiquing the neglect of meanings outside the Qur'anic text, Ali Harb encouraged Abu Zayd to revise his theoretical view of interpretation so as to cover all aspects of the Qur'anic and outer text. According to him, Abu Zayd has not been able to describe the objective and complete truth of the Qur'an because he failed to understand the discourse side of the Qur'an. It was Ali Harb's criticism that led Abu Zayd to spawn the view of the 'Qur'an as discourse' and specifically referred to as 'humanistic hermeneutics'.[7]

2. Hermeneutics and Semiotics Scholars

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[6] Kusmana, 'Hermeneutika Humanistik Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd: Al-Qur'an sebagai Wacana', *Kanz Philosophia*, 2: 2 (2012), 265-290.

[7] Kusmana, 'Hermeneutika Humanistik Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd: Al-Qur'an sebagai Wacana', *Kanz Philosophia*, 2: 2 (2012), 265-290. Serta lihat Zayd, Nasr, *Rethinking the Qur'ân: Towards a humanistic hermeneutics*, (Utrecht: Humanistics University Press, 2004).

There were various schools of hermeneutic and semiotic thought that influenced Abu Zayd with varying pressures.[8] In hermeneutics, for example, there are two schools, namely objectivist and subjectivist. The first school believes there is an objective truth of the text that can be retrieved while the second sees the impossibility due to the influence of human subjectivity in every moment of reading. The first group is represented for example by Schleimacher and Dilthey while the second group is represented by Gadamer to Ricoeur.

Abu Zayd's position is more likely to be in the objectivist school.[9] He believed that the reading of the text of the Qur'an could achieve its true meaning through the right stages. However, Abu Zayd also takes a partial subjectivist position, considering subjectivity as urgent and creating bias in interpretation. This shows that Abu Zayd had a firm search for objective meaning and sought to reduce the bias generated by subjectivity.

In addition to hermeneutics, Abu Zayd was also heavily influenced by semiotic thought as demonstrated by Roland Barthes and Ferdinand De Saussure.[10] Barthes, for example, conceptualized the distinction between action and text. Action is something that occupies space, is complete and quantifiable. While text is an open space

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[8] Ichwan, Moch, *A New Horizon in Qur'anic Hermeneutics: Naṣr Ḥâmid Abû Zayd's Contribution to Critical Quránic Scholarship*, (Leiden: Leiden University, 1999)

[9] Ichwan, Moch, *A New Horizon in Qur'anic Hermeneutics: Naṣr Ḥâmid Abû Zayd's Contribution to Critical Quránic Scholarship*, (Leiden: Leiden University, 1999)

[10] Ichwan, Hal. 52

for meaning. This distinction is important for Abu Zayd in seeing that the text of the Qur'an and the Muslim practice are two different but related things.

Finally, the semiotic thought of Saussure that inspired Abu Zayd was the distinction between parole or speech and langue or language.[11] Language is the totality of linguistic systems within a culture, while speech is a special or unique system that takes reference to the base language. Speech and language have been dialectical of each other throughout history. Similarly, in the context of the Qur'an, Abu Zayd saw that the Qur'an contains its own system of speech but still takes its various parts from the common language system (Arabic). Using this classification, Abu Zayd analyzes how Arabic became the producer of the language of the Qur'an but in the next chapter the language of the Qur'an influenced the Arabic language.

B. Textuality Hermeneutics

1. Textual Aspects of the Qur'an

Abu Zayd's scholarly efforts focused on two main objectives.[12] First, to build a bridge between the study of the Qur'an and text theory. Understanding the Qur'an must begin by positioning the holy book as a text and using the methodology of the text as well. Secondly, continuing from the first goal, he desired to present the Qur'an as an open text rather than a closed text. That is, action is

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[11] Ichwan, Hal. 53

[12] Ichwan, Moch, *A New Horizon in Qur'anic Hermeneutics: Naṣr Ḥâmid Abû Zayd's Contribution to Critical Quránic Scholarship*, (Leiden: Leiden University, 1999)

needed to enter into the meaning contained in the text rather than simply swallowing the surface meaning of the text.

The textuality of the Qur'an as understood by Abu Zayd has actually been expressed by many earlier Muslim scholars implicitly. This is in contrast to Western scholarship which reveals and encounters the textuality of the Qur'an explicitly. However, for Abu Zayd the difference was more due to paradigm differences. That the old paradigm of exegesis made theological speculation the basis (i.e.: the Qur'an as His word whose meaning must be clear). According to Abu Zayd, Muslims must shift to a new paradigm that emphasizes critical scientific research.

This critical paradigm was justified by Abu Zayd through his analysis of the mu'tazilite views. That the origin of language is a socio-cultural product makes the Qur'an itself a text that must be understood with the socio-cultural lens that forms it. After all, the Qur'an is also addressed to cultural beings (humans). Thus, the sacred divine message inevitably has to enter the text through the cultural device (language) of man as well.

Abu Zayd directly quotes the views of Al Jurjani, an Ash'ari scholar on the textuality of the Qur'an. They both argue that the Qur'an is a speech (kalam) that must be subject to the rules of human speech. The rules of speech must first be understood before the meaning of the text can be explored by someone. This is why Abu Zayd requires that the encounter with the meaning of the Qur'an

must be done through text/linguistic sciences such as hermeneutics and semiotics.

Another interesting point of Abu Zayd's Qur'anic textuality thesis is the dynamic-historical process that took place between the Qur'an and Arab socio-culture. That the Qur'an was originally present in a pre-Islamic setting where classical Arabic customs existed as references to the original meaning. But later, after the Qur'an came down, he also reconstructed the Arab socio-culture. This means that there are two socio-cultural contexts, namely pre and post revelation. Abu Zayd considered that many Muslims misunderstand the meaning of the Qur'an because it focuses on socio-cultural or post-revelation meaning. In fact, many things must also be considered from the meaning or socio-cultural background of pre-Islam in interpreting the Qur'an.

2. Variety of Text Reading Practices

Abu Zayd understood differently the various practices of recitation of the Qur'an.[13] The rawest reading is qiro'ah. Here one merely reveals the sound and external meaning of the text. One has enough Arabic language skills and reciting hijaiyah letters to attain qiro'ah. The results of this reading have not produced a concrete law or meaningful message for the reader.

Next is tafseer in which one has far understood the meaning of the text through cross-quotation with other texts in the Qur'an

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[13] Ichwan, Moch, *A New Horizon in Qur'anic Hermeneutics: Naṣr Ḥâmid Abû Zayd's Contribution to Critical Quránic Scholarship*, (Leiden: Leiden University, 1999)

itself or to the direct explanatory hadith of the Prophet Muhammad. Here a reader goes deeper into the skin of the text so as to get a more perfect understanding than just qiro'ah. Through interpretation one will uncover knowledge, produce laws and reason upon them.

Next is the practice of recitation called ta'wil. For Abu Zayd, ta'wil reveals the deepest and hidden meaning in the Qur'an that is not observed in the external recitation of tafsir (zahir). Through ta'wil one can reveal the unwritten commandments of God that lead to the social transformation of Islamic society. Even through ta'wil one can capture the philosophy, spirit or soul that surrounds all the teachings of Islam in the Qur'an.

The last type of reading practice is talwin. In particular, Abu Zayd categorizes this recitation practice as a refraction of the meaning of the Qur'an. The refraction is to satisfy the pragmatic interests of a particular ideology. Abu Zayd was critical of all talwins, both secular-liberals and Islamist-conservatives. This is why Abu Zayd emphasizes the importance of reading to refer to an epistemology or objective means of truth-telling, rather than an ideology or a specific belief in a particular worldview that reduces reality.

The objectivity that Abu Zayd refers to is not absolute objectivity where there is truth that stands alone is not connected to a particular socio-cultural context. Precisely the correct objective for the understanding of the text is cultural objectivity.[14] Abu Zayd's point is

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[14] Ichwan, Moch, *A New Horizon in Qur'anic Hermeneutics: Naṣr Ḥâmid Abû Zayd's Contribution to Critical Quránic Scholarship*, (Leiden: Leiden University, 1999)

that cultural objectivity refers to a truth constructed by a particular socio-cultural sphere. That the truth of the meaning of the text as a cultural product can be traced by understanding its producer, namely culture.

3. Meaning and Significance

Another central principle of Abu Zayd's hermeneutics is understanding and the distinction between meaning and significance.[15] He continued the views of E.D. Hirsch, an objectivist who understood that meaning is what the text represents. In other words, meaning is the intention or message that the author wants to convey. Significance is a relationship of meaning to a person that includes both perception and situation. Here it can be seen that meaning is a meaning that is fixed based on historicity, while significance is relative based on subjectivity.

However, Abu Zayd differed from E.D. Hirsch in the context of his interpretation of the Qur'an.[16] Rather than trying to understand the intentions of the author of the Qur'an, Abu Zayd was more interested in understanding the meaning that the text represented for the recipients of revelation or early Muslims. This is because God as an author is difficult for people to access because of their limitations. Focusing on the author will lead to deadlocks or confusions over the meaning that the text represents. While the recipients of revelation

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[15] Ichwan, Hal. 58

[16] Ichwan, Moch, *A New Horizon in Qur'anic Hermeneutics: Naṣr Ḥâmid Abû Zayd's Contribution to Critical Quránic Scholarship*, (Leiden: Leiden University, 1999)

are individuals who have a socio-historical scope so they are more likely to be scrutinized by an interpreter.

Finally, Abu Zayd also modified Hirsch's meaning-significance dualism with three layers of meaning. The first layer is historical facts or text messages that reveal clearly what things in the past are. This layer cannot be interpreted except literally. Second, there is the symbolic layer. Here the messages of the Qur'an use various concepts that need to be interpreted metaphorically or alegorically. Lastly is the significance or relationship created between the meaning and the subject of the interpreter. In this last layer, Abu Zayd said, it must first be revealed the objective meaning of the text so that significance can be drawn. However, that significance must not violate the meaning that the text contains.

In particular, the third layer can be interpreted to mean that Abu Zayd sees an objective-subjective space in a text. That objective space is represented by the original meaning bound by the socio-historicity of the text. Subjective space is a special meaning for a reader. A meaning does not necessarily lead to a significance but significance always requires justification of a meaning.

4. Context Level

Ichwan in his thesis revealed that there are five levels of reading context that must be considered as well as an interpreter when

encountering the Qur'an.[17] Thus it appears in all the works of Abu Zayd both *Al-Nass, Al-Sulta and Al-Haqiqa.*

The first context is the socio-cultural context. This context refers to all the socio-cultural rules contained in the customs and traditions of the language of the text. That language refers to a cultural context. Thus, it is impossible to understand the language of text without understanding the culture that produced the text. The second context is the revelatory (external) context. What is meant in this context is the relationship that arises when verses are revealed to man by God. One example for example in this context is the *asbabun nuzul* of the verse.

The third context is the thematic (internal) context. That the Qur'an can be understood as a whole theme consisting of subthemes. Understanding the Qur'an requires understanding the general theme of the Qur'an as a religious text along with the specific theme of the verse to be interpreted. The fourth context is the implied context. The point is that the Qur'an also contains other meanings that must be explored more deeply. That meaning is often overlooked because of the tendency of interpreters to simply be content to achieve the outer or explicit meaning of the text.

The fifth or final context is the reading context. That each act of reading has a specific context created because each reader reaches a unique reading phase. A reading may differ at times or in others. Suppose someone who reads with the assumption of extracting the

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[17] Ichwan, Moch, *A New Horizon in Qur'anic Hermeneutics: Naṣr Ḥâmid Abû Zayd's Contribution to Critical Qurânic Scholarship*, (Leiden: Leiden University, 1999)

philosophical meaning of the Qur'an will produce a different interpretation from others who seek to explore the legal aspects of the Qur'an.

C. Discursive Hermeneutics

1. Discursity Aspects of the Qur'an

The next phase of Abu Zayd's thought was to go beyond the idea of Qur'anic textuality. He understood that textuality was an important aspect of the Qur'an that had been neglected by Muslim scholars and thinkers. However, a decade before his death he received criticism from Ali Harb who then realized there were other aspects that had to be revealed in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the Qur'an.[18]

Kusmana mentioned that there are two meanings of discourse or discourse understood by Abu Zayd [19]. First, discourse as a bigger picture of each verse that can mean the overall message of the Qur'an. Second, discourse is a meaning that arises outside the text as understood by the recipients of the early text as well as Muslims in general.

This discourse on the second meaning has a social function that shows that the text manifests itself in the concrete life of the daily Muslim. That the Qur'an influences various dimensions of life ranging from worship, social-philanthropic culture, to male-female

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[18] Kusmana, 'Hermeneutika Humanistik Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd: Al-Qur'an sebagai Wacana', *Kanz Philosophia*, 2: 2 (2012), 265-290.

[19] Kusmana, Hal. 280

gender roles. The two directions of discourse are described as two sides of the Qur'an. The first side is the vertical side where the Qur'an is understood as the interaction of Allah to man. While on the second side is the interaction between the Qur'an and man.
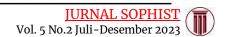
At its peak Abu Zayd saw the need for a humanistic herme-neutic approach to the Qur'an.[20] This humanistic category is seen as key by Abu Zayd to understand the meaning of the Qur'an carried out by various individuals. That understanding the Qur'an is a product of dialectics, affirmations to human adaptations. Thus, it is natural that there are various variations of understanding that can then be captured as sides of discourse and hu-manism Al-Qur'an secara sekaligus.

2. Discursity and Textuality of the Qur'an

Abu Zayd also saw the difference between the Qur'an as dis-course and the Qur'an as text. The Qur'anic beliefs appear in the form of meanings created by the Qur'an which are then lived by Muslims. This discourse is different from what is explicitly stated in the text of the Qur'an.

The historical basis explaining the difference between the two is referred to by Abu Zayd to the story of Ali's war with Muawiya. At that time Muawiyah had lost and was cornered. According to the text, Ali had a basis for demanding obedience and fighting Muawi to the point of punishing him as in Sura Al Hujurat verse 9:

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[20] Zayd, Nasr, *Rethinking the Qur'ân: Towards a humanistic hermeneutics*, (Utrecht: Humanistics University Press, 2004).

And if two classes of believers are at war, then reconcile between them. If one of the two acts of cruelty against the other, then fight the one who committed the tyranny, so that the group returns to Allah's command.

However, rather than implement the text, Ali chose to negotiate with Muawiya. The negotiations eventually made Muawiya. From this, Abu Zayd saw that the Qur'an had a side of discourse that Ali used on the one hand and used by Muawiya for his political interests on the other.

Abu Zayd then concluded that the reading of the Qur'an must also anticipate the discourse. Because, this side of the discourse may contain biases that can deny the textuality of the Qur'an or the true discourse contained in the Qur'an.

D. Application of Abu Zayd's Qur'anic Hermeneutics
1. Bank interest is not *riba*

Allah warns believers: fear Allah and forsake the riba you took before it was forbidden if you truly believe in Allah and His messenger. That is, leave the rest of your usury that is still left. If you do not do so, then declare war from Allah and His Messenger. But if ye repent, then ye are entitled to the principal of the guests' property. (Al Baqarah, 278-279)

Using the above verse, Islamists present a strong zeroe on bank interest. They think that bank interest is the same as usury which is strictly forbidden by the Qur'an. His followers then became antipathic towards the bank and all its derivative products. This is of concern to Abu Zayd because according to him there is a

misunderstanding in the rejecters of bank interest because rashly and hastily analogy (*qiyas*) of bank interest against riba which was haram in the time of the Prophet Muhammad.
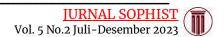
Abu Zayd then traces the original meaning of riba that prevailed in the time of the revelation of the Qur'an.[21] Apparently the usury imposed is completely different from bank interest. Usury at that time was the multiplication of debt by the debtor. Usury also then causes a debtor to lose his independence and become a slave to the debtor. According to Abu Zayd, this is clearly different from bank interest which is regulated by regulation. Bank interest is not a tyranny to the debtor, but justice to the lender because the value of the currency continues to fall.

Abu Zayd then highlighted also that usury in the age of revelation was usury in kind. This is completely different from bank interest in the form of a certain currency. So, Abu Zayd concludes there is no problem with someone borrowing and earning interest because bank interest is not the same as usury as Islamists think. Abu Zayd also did not provide an alternative to bank interest because he did not see the need to refuse bank interest.

2. Polygamy versus Monogamy

Another interesting topic discussed by Abu Zayd was polygamy. In Abu Zayd's words, Salafis affirm polygamy as something that can be done because it refers to the following verse:

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[21] Ichwan, Moch, *A New Horizon in Qur'anic Hermeneutics: Naṣr Ḥâmid Abû Zayd's Contribution to Critical Quránic Scholarship*, (Leiden: Leiden University, 1999)

"And if ye fear that ye will not be able to do justice to the fatherless (if ye marry her), then marry those (other) women whom you please; two, three, or four. Then if you fear that you will not be able to do justice, then (marry) only one, or the slaves you have. Such is closer to not persecuting." (An-Nisa, Verse 3).

Unlike the proponents of polygamy, Abu Zayd holds that polygamy is precisely something that Islam wants to abandon. For that he revealed several things. First, historically pre-Islamic Arab culture allowed an unlimited number of men to marry women. That's because women don't have the same rights as men. That women were only 'objects' that could even be inherited and they had no inheritance rights in that era. The verse on polygamy is here to limit it to four, not encourage polygamy.

Second, Abu Zayd sees an implicit message from the Qur'an about monogamy. This he concluded from the fact that the above verse of polygamy requires justice towards all wives while there is another verse that states the impossibility of doing justice:

And you will not be able to do justice among (your) wives, though you are eager to do so, therefore do not be so inclined (to the one you love), that you may leave the other adrift. (An-Nisa, Ayat 129).

Abu Zayd then concluded that if the condition for fair behavior alone was declared impossible by God to be man-to-do, then polygamy itself was implicitly forbidden. So, rather than supporting polygamy, Abu Zayd declared that Muslims should be quite monogamous as the verse An Nisa..."... Then if you fear that you will not be

able to do justice, then (marry) only one, or the slaves you have. That is closer to not persecuting."

3. Hakimiyat

Abu Zayd responded to the theory of hakimiyat because it considers the significance of the theory which is often the basis or one of the ideological elements of radical movements such as ISIS and Al-Qaeda.[22] The two main figures of the theory of hakimiyat are Maududi and Sayid Qutb. They presented hakimiyah in the mid to late 20th century as an alternative to answer the needs of the form/ideology of the post-colonial Muslim state. The two main characteristics of hakimiyat are basing the law on God's law and that God has the best judgment/the best law for man.

Other authors demonstrate that the root ha-kimiyah i.e., h-k-m (hukm) has many meanings [23]. It can mean wisdom or knowledge. The political connotation of the word hukm itself is only in Qutb and Mawdudi. Indeed, hukm can also mean authority, but the general meaning given by classical interpreters such as Suyuti and Tabari also has no political connotations. Authority there, according to both, means worship, which means that only God is God who can be worshiped by humans.

Mawdudi does not reject that meaning, but he extends its meaning to the idea that 'Only God's Will may reign'. He continued,

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[22] Zayd, Nasr, *Critique of Religious Discourse*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018)

[23] Ali Akbar, Abdullah Saeed, 'A Critique of the Concept of Ḥākimiyya: Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd's Approach', *Religions*, *13*: 11 (2022), 1100.

both Jesus and the Prophet Muhammad were present to carry out the revolution. The revolution aims to take away man's law and replace it with God's law. Here it is interpreted that Islam is a giant ideology and program that aims to change the social order and even the whole world.

According to Abu Zayd, proponents of the theory of ha-kimiyah ignore the fact that an exegesis is bound to a specific context and bound by the relationship between the interpreter and the text. Also, like Gadamer, there is a pre-understanding that precedes the conclusion of the theory of judgement.

Abu Zayd went on to add that both Maududi and Qutb failed to distinguish between their personal opinions and Islam and rashly claimed that their opinions were the truth of Islam. Abu Zayd also pointed out that Qutb did the same thing when he said that violent jihad is the truth of Islam. In fact, Qutb affirmed the prejudice against non-Muslims brought by Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyah which was later quoted by Qutb himself. In fact, according to Abu Zayd, there are many interpretations of jihad. Al-Jawziyah and Qutb are only one among many.

Abu Zayd concluded that hakimiyah cannot represent a power of God, but merely an interpretation of a human being. To apply ha-kimiyah is to impose a man-made political system that uses the cloak of religion to obscure its self-interest.

In Abu Zayd's analysis, which justifies Ali Abd-Raziq, the Qur'an does not cover the details of political affairs.[24] So it is in line with the history of revelation and prophethood. Even if forced to accept, hakimiyat clearly collides with the Apostle's hadith which reads, 'You know better about worldly affairs. That is, for Abu Zayd, political affairs are open to be governed by humans themselves as long as they remain grounded in the values set by the Qur'an, such as justice and equality.

Rather than accepting that God's power has been regulated since the time of the Prophet Muhammad, Abu Zayd holds that the discourse of God's power or legitimacy arose in the time of Muawiya. It happened when Muawiya raised the Qur'an before Ali ibn abi Talib, as a way to legitimize the political power of Muawiya who had lost any footing. The use of religion to legitimize politics continued to be used throughout the Umayah dynasty.

Unfortunately, the power of the Umayah dynasty was then legitimized by critical scholars. As an effort to survive, jabarism or predestination was created which explained that the power received by the Umayah dynasty was God's decision that could not be resisted. From here Abu Zayd later said that Maududi and Qutb did not base the theory of hakimiyat on the time of the Prophet, but actually on the discourse built by the Umayah dynasty.

Abu Zayd's criticism then proceeded to the implementation of sharia which is required in a state based on hakimiyat. In fact, the

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[24] Zayd, Nasr, *Critique of Religious Discourse*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018)

sharia itself contains many legal rulings of a scholar that were not found in the time of the Prophet. That is, the claim that the sharia itself is entirely derived from God or the Qur'an is a disregard for the history of the development of mahdzab in Sunni.

According to Abu Zayd, Sharia itself is based on history and a certain context. No sharia exists in a vacuum. For example, the punishment of chopping off hands came about by taking a law that had been in force before, as a way to show a legal logic that was in line with the dominant society of the time. Given that today's context is different from ancient times, it cannot be applied exactly the same as today. This criticism was mainly directed at the judge.

Abu Zayd's final criticism was directed at the jahiliyah-hakimiyah dichotomy. Maududi and Qutb dwarf the meaning of jahiliyah to a mental state and the imagination of hakimiyah and jahiliyah as two completely different poles. In fact, historical facts show a lot of cultural practices that Islam continued. The presence of Islam did not create an entirely new culture that created massive cracks in the culture. That is, the interpretation of the concept of jahiliyah is not based on facts but on the ideology of the interpreter.

E. Penutup

In response to the stalled agenda of Islamic renewal, Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd offered a hermeneutical proposal. The proposal is based on the classical view of the mu'tazila which states the conquest of the Qur'an. Abu Zayd then stated the textuality of the Qur'an which has implications for the necessity of accessing the socio-historical

dimension of the Qur'anic language in interpretation. This herme-neutical proposal then progressed from textuality to discursity in which Abu Zayd supplemented the interpretation with meaning that emerged from the side of the discourse that was alive and outside the text.

The hermeneutic methodology was then applied to several Islamic issues. It was revealed in Abu Zayd's study that riba is not the same as bank interest so qiyas-haram does not apply to the latter. Then the verse polygamy comes to limit the number of marriages with an unexpected direction or message about monogamy as an ideal value. Finally, Abu Zayd points out that the Islamists' ha-kimiyat is an interpretation characterized by an ideology that devi-ates from the basic or objective meaning of the Qur'an.

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