



## Quranic Interpretation And Its Discourse: The Case Of Naṣr Hamīd Abū Zayd Commentary In Between *Tafsīr* And *Ta'wīl*

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### Abstract

*This study examines the interpretive discourse of Naṣr Ḥamīd Abū Zayd concerning the relationship between tafsīr and ta'wīl within contemporary Qur'ānic hermeneutics. Employing a non-empirical qualitative design, the research applies textual and qualitative content analysis to Abū Zayd's major works, *Mafhūm al-Naṣṣ: Dirāsah fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* and *al-Tajdīd wa al-Taḥrīm wa al-Ta'wīl: Bayna al-Ma'rifah al-'Ilmiyyah wa al-Khawf min al-Takfīr*. The analysis explores how interpretive terminology, authority, and textual meaning are constructed within the broader intellectual history of Qur'ānic interpretation. The findings indicate that Abū Zayd reconceptualizes ta'wīl as a critical hermeneutical practice that mediates between linguistic textuality, historical context, and human reasoning. Rather than rejecting the classical exegetical tradition, his framework situates tafsīr and ta'wīl within a complementary interpretive continuum. This reconstruction challenges rigid interpretive hierarchies and highlights the discursive nature of Qur'ānic interpretation. The study demonstrates that Abū Zayd's hermeneutical project contributes to contemporary debates on interpretive authority, contextual reading, and methodological pluralism in Qur'ānic studies, offering a conceptual model that bridges classical exegetical heritage with modern intellectual inquiry.*

**Keywords:** *Qur'anic Hermeneutics, Tafsīr, Ta'wīl, Naṣr Ḥamīd Abū Zayd, Interpretive Discourse.*



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## INTRODUCTION

Contemporary Qur'ānic studies have increasingly moved toward interdisciplinary engagements that combine philology, hermeneutics, literary theory, and intellectual history in order to revisit the epistemological foundations of scriptural interpretation within Islamic thought. Within this evolving scholarly landscape, the relationship between *tafsīr* and *ta'wīl* has become a particularly contested conceptual field, as modern Muslim intellectuals attempt to reconcile the authority of classical exegetical traditions with the demands of contemporary critical inquiry. Classical works of *'ulūm al-Qur'ān* established the foundational grammar of interpretation, systematizing the principles of textual explanation, linguistic analysis, and contextualization that shaped the dominant exegetical tradition for centuries (Az-Zarkasyi, 2008; As-Suyuti, 2008; As-Suyuti, 2019). These works, together with later syntheses in Qur'ānic sciences, constructed an interpretive paradigm in which *tafsīr* was positioned as the primary methodological framework for uncovering the meanings of revelation (Al-Qattan, n.d.). In contemporary scholarship, however, the renewed engagement with Arabic literary theory and textuality has generated a broader reconsideration of how Qur'ānic meaning is produced, negotiated, and historically mediated, particularly in light of modern critical approaches that emphasize discourse, enunciation, and interpretive plurality (Abdelmageed, 2022).

The growing body of research examining Qur'ānic hermeneutics has identified the historical predominance of *tafsīr* as both an intellectual tradition and a discursive authority within Islamic scholarship. Studies on early exegetical products demonstrate how classical interpreters constructed systematic models of textual explanation that privileged philological clarity, transmitted reports, and theological orthodoxy as the principal means of accessing Qur'ānic meaning (Afandi et al., 2023). At the same time, intellectual historians have highlighted the broader epistemological frameworks that shaped these interpretive practices, particularly the formation of the Arab intellectual tradition and its rational and textual orientations (Al-Jabiri, 2009a; Al-Jabiri, 2009b). Within this tradition, *ta'wīl* was not entirely absent; rather, it functioned as a supplementary interpretive operation often associated with deeper or allegorical readings of scripture. Classical discourse nonetheless positioned *tafsīr* as the

normative form of interpretation, while *ta'wīl* frequently appeared as a secondary or specialized hermeneutical practice, reflecting broader intellectual hierarchies within Islamic knowledge systems.

Recent scholarly debates have revisited these hierarchies by situating Qur'ānic interpretation within the wider intellectual transformations of modern Arab thought. The intellectual revival associated with the *Nahḍah* and subsequent reformist movements stimulated renewed reflection on the epistemic structures underlying Islamic scholarship, including the interpretive authority of classical exegetical traditions (Agbaria, 2022). Within this context, a number of contemporary scholars have re-examined the linguistic and discursive dimensions of Qur'ānic interpretation, arguing that the meaning of revelation cannot be fully understood without acknowledging the historical and textual processes through which interpretation is produced (Abdelmageed, 2022). Such perspectives have encouraged a shift from viewing *tafsīr* merely as a repository of authoritative explanations toward understanding it as a historically situated discourse shaped by intellectual, political, and cultural contexts. These developments have created new space for reconsidering the interpretive role of *ta'wīl*, particularly as a methodological tool capable of engaging the dynamic relationship between text, reader, and historical context.

Despite these advances, significant conceptual and analytical gaps remain within the existing literature on Qur'ānic hermeneutics. Much of the scholarship that discusses the distinction between *tafsīr* and *ta'wīl* continues to treat the two concepts as fixed terminological categories inherited from classical scholarship rather than as evolving discursive practices embedded in broader intellectual debates. Classical manuals of Qur'ānic sciences tend to define these concepts normatively, focusing on their linguistic derivations or methodological boundaries without critically interrogating the epistemological assumptions that sustain their hierarchical relationship (Az-Zarkasyi, 2008; As-Suyuti, 2008; As-Suyuti, 2019; Al-Qattan, n.d.). Contemporary analyses of classical exegetical traditions likewise tend to emphasize descriptive cataloguing of interpretive models rather than examining how these models shape the politics of meaning within Qur'ānic discourse (Afandi et al., 2023). As a result, the dynamic interaction between textual authority, interpretive agency, and ideological mediation within the discourse of Qur'ānic interpretation remains insufficiently theorized.

This unresolved tension becomes particularly visible in modern Muslim intellectual projects that seek to reconstruct Qur'ānic hermeneutics through critical engagement with textuality and discourse. Among the most influential figures in this debate is Naṣr Ḥamīd Abū Zayd, whose work reframes the Qur'ān as a linguistic and cultural text whose meanings emerge through historical processes of interpretation rather than through static doctrinal formulations. In his theoretical reflections on textuality, he argues that understanding the Qur'ān requires acknowledging the interactive relationship between revelation, language, and human interpretation, thereby challenging traditional assumptions about the fixed authority of exegetical discourse (Abu Zaid, 2016). This perspective resonates with broader intellectual efforts to rethink the structure of Arab reason and its interpretive frameworks (Al-Jabiri, 2009a; Al-Jabiri, 2009b), while also intersecting with contemporary discussions on literary theory and discursive analysis in Arabic studies (Abdelmageed, 2022). Yet the implications of Abū Zayd's hermeneutical project—particularly his attempt to reposition *ta'wīl* within the interpretive hierarchy—have not been fully examined as a discursive transformation within Qur'ānic interpretive traditions.

The present study addresses this analytical gap by examining how Abū Zayd conceptualizes the relationship between *tafsīr* and *ta'wīl* and how his writings reposition these two interpretive categories within contemporary Qur'ānic discourse. Rather than treating them as static terminological distinctions inherited from classical scholarship, the research approaches *tafsīr* and *ta'wīl* as discursive practices whose meanings are historically negotiated within broader intellectual and ideological contexts. By focusing on Abū Zayd's major works—*al-Tajdīd wa al-Taḥrīm wa al-Ta'wīl: Bayna al-Ma'rifah al-'Ilmiyyah wa al-Khawf min al-Takfīr* and *Mafhūm al-Naṣṣ: Dirāsah fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*—this study aims to analyze the conceptual logic through which he mainstreams *ta'wīl* while maintaining the relevance of *tafsīr* in Qur'ānic interpretation. Through a qualitative textual analysis grounded in discourse-oriented hermeneutics, the article seeks to clarify the theoretical foundations of Abū Zayd's interpretive framework and to contribute to broader discussions on the evolution of Qur'ānic hermeneutics in contemporary Islamic thought.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a non-empirical qualitative design situated within the field of textual and intellectual history in Qur'ānic studies. The research takes the form of library-based scholarship focusing on critical textual analysis of the interpretive discourse developed by Naṣr Ḥamīd Abū Zayd regarding the relationship between *tafsīr* and *ta'wīl*. The primary data consist of two major works authored by Abū Zayd, namely *al-Tajdīd wa al-Tahrīm wa al-Ta'wīl: Bayna al-Ma'rifah al-'Ilmiyyah wa al-Khawf min al-Takfīr* and *Maḥmūd al-Naṣṣ: Dirāsah fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, which represent the core theoretical articulation of his hermeneutical framework. Secondary sources include scholarly books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and studies related to Qur'ānic hermeneutics, modern Islamic thought, and the discourse on interpretation within Islamic intellectual history. The selection of sources follows purposive criteria emphasizing academic relevance, theoretical contribution to debates on Qur'ānic interpretation, and direct engagement with the conceptual distinction between *tafsīr* and *ta'wīl*. Data collection relies on documentation techniques, whereby textual materials are systematically compiled, categorized, and examined to identify the conceptual patterns and argumentative structures through which Abū Zayd formulates his interpretive position. The analytical framework combines textual analysis and qualitative content analysis, allowing the study to investigate how interpretive terminology is constructed, negotiated, and repositioned within the broader discourse of Qur'ānic hermeneutics.

The analytical procedure follows the qualitative data analysis model proposed by Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman, which consists of three interrelated stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. In the first stage, relevant textual segments from the primary works are selectively coded and organized according to thematic categories related to the conceptualization of *tafsīr*, *ta'wīl*, textuality, and interpretive authority. The second stage involves the systematic presentation of these categorized data to trace the argumentative logic underlying Abū Zayd's attempt to reposition *ta'wīl* within Qur'ānic interpretive discourse. The final stage consists of interpretive synthesis, in which patterns emerging from the textual evidence are critically examined in order to formulate an analytical account of how Abū Zayd constructs a proportional relationship between *tafsīr* and *ta'wīl*. To ensure analytical rigor, the study employs iterative reading, conceptual triangulation across primary and secondary sources, and reflexive interpretation aimed at minimizing interpretive bias while maintaining fidelity to the textual corpus under investigation.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Intellectual Formation and Hermeneutical Orientation of Naṣr Ḥamīd Abū Zayd

The intellectual trajectory of Naṣr Ḥamīd Abū Zayd reveals a distinctive synthesis between Arabic literary studies and Qur'ānic hermeneutics. His academic formation in Arabic language and literature provided the analytical tools necessary to approach the Qur'ān as a linguistic and cultural text embedded within historical discourse. Such an orientation diverges from classical exegetical traditions that tended to privilege transmitted authorities over discursive textual analysis. Contemporary Qur'ānic scholarship increasingly recognizes the significance of linguistic contextualization for interpreting sacred texts within evolving socio-historical settings (Saeed, 2026).

Abū Zayd's early academic work demonstrates a sustained engagement with Islamic intellectual history, particularly through his study of Sufi and philosophical hermeneutics. His doctoral dissertation on the interpretive philosophy of Ibn 'Arabī illustrates a methodological openness toward symbolic and allegorical interpretation. This intellectual exposure shaped his later critique of rigid exegetical orthodoxy within Sunni interpretive traditions. Discussions on interpretive pluralism in Qur'ānic studies similarly emphasize the dynamic relationship between textual meaning and interpretive communities (Supena, 2024).

The concept of textuality occupies a central position in Abū Zayd's hermeneutical framework. He conceptualizes the Qur'ān not merely as a static divine document but as a discursive text whose meanings emerge through continuous interpretive engagement. Such a position resonates with broader developments in literary theory that foreground enunciation and textual mediation within interpretive processes. Analytical approaches linking Arabic poetics with contemporary literary theory have highlighted the importance of discursive context in shaping textual interpretation (Abdelmageed, 2022).

This textual orientation also intersects with debates on the formation of Arab intellectual reason. Structural analyses of Arab epistemology reveal that classical interpretive traditions often relied on authoritative transmission rather than critical textual engagement. Abū Zayd's work challenges this

intellectual configuration by emphasizing interpretive agency and linguistic analysis. Critical examinations of Arab intellectual structures describe this shift as part of a broader transformation in modern Islamic thought (Al-Jabiri, 2009a).

Historical critiques of classical scholarship further illuminate the epistemological background of Abū Zayd's project. Classical manuals of Qur'ānic sciences established systematic interpretive frameworks that prioritized philological explanation and transmitted reports. These works shaped the methodological foundations of traditional *tafsīr* literature for centuries. Studies of early exegetical traditions demonstrate how such frameworks became institutionalized within Sunni scholarly authority (Afandi et al., 2023).

The methodological shift proposed by Abū Zayd becomes clearer when examined alongside contemporary debates on contextual interpretation. Modern scholars have increasingly argued that Qur'ānic interpretation must consider historical circumstances, linguistic nuance, and socio-political context. Interpretive models integrating historical context into Qur'ānic analysis illustrate the growing influence of contextual hermeneutics. Recent studies examining *asbāb al-nuzūl* highlight how contextual factors shape interpretive outcomes (Bayaqi et al., 2026).

The analytical coding conducted in this study identified recurring conceptual themes in Abū Zayd's major works. These themes include textuality, interpretive authority, ideological discourse, and the relationship between *tafsīr* and *ta'wīl*. The following table summarizes the principal thematic categories derived from the textual analysis process.

**Table 1. Conceptual Themes Identified in Abū Zayd's Hermeneutical Framework**

Theme	Description	Analytical Significance
Textuality of the Qur'ān	The Qur'ān as a linguistic and historical discourse	Emphasizes interpretive dynamism
Interpretive Agency	Role of the interpreter in meaning production	Challenges passive transmission
Ideological Mediation	Influence of politics and theology on exegesis	Reveals discursive contestation
Tafsīr-Ta'wīl Relationship	Reconfiguration of interpretive hierarchy	Central analytical focus

Source: Analytical synthesis of primary texts by the researcher.

The thematic patterns presented in Table 1 indicate that Abū Zayd consistently frames interpretation as a discursive activity shaped by intellectual and historical contexts. Such a perspective parallels broader discussions regarding ideological framing in contemporary religious debates. Studies analyzing theological discourse in digital media demonstrate how interpretive narratives often reflect underlying ideological positions (Amir et al., 2023).

Abū Zayd's intellectual project also intersects with modern philosophical reflections on religion and political authority. The tension between theological discourse and institutional power structures remains a recurring theme in modern Islamic thought. Philosophical analyses comparing modern religious thinkers illustrate how interpretive authority often becomes entangled with political legitimacy. Such dynamics are discussed extensively in comparative philosophical studies on religion and state authority (Kidhar, 2026).

Modern Qur'ānic scholarship increasingly situates Abū Zayd within a broader movement of intellectual reform that emerged during the twentieth century. This reformist current sought to reinterpret Islamic intellectual heritage through critical engagement with modern humanities and social sciences. Similar methodological transformations can be observed in contemporary reinterpretations of Islamic philosophical discourse in digital intellectual spaces (Humaidi et al., 2025).

The analysis conducted in this section indicates that Abū Zayd's hermeneutical orientation cannot be understood solely as an isolated theoretical proposal. His intellectual project reflects a broader transformation within modern Islamic thought that reconsiders the epistemological foundations of Qur'ānic interpretation. Such developments illustrate the continuing negotiation between tradition and modernity within contemporary Islamic scholarship. Reformist discussions on Islamic intellectual

transformation similarly emphasize the need to reconstruct interpretive traditions in dialogue with modern knowledge systems (Rahman, 1984).

### Discursive Contestation Between *Tafsīr* and *Ta'wīl* in Qur'ānic Interpretive Tradition

The discursive tension between *tafsīr* and *ta'wīl* emerges as a central analytical finding in the textual examination of Naṣr Ḥamīd Abū Zayd's interpretive framework. Classical Islamic scholarship historically treated the two concepts as distinct methodological categories, although their practical application often overlapped in exegetical literature. Traditional manuals of Qur'ānic sciences typically framed *tafsīr* as the authoritative explanation of Qur'ānic expressions grounded in linguistic clarification and transmitted reports (Al-Qattan, n.d.). Such a configuration established a hierarchical interpretive model in which interpretive authority remained closely tied to institutional religious knowledge (As-Suyuti, 2008).

Historical analysis of classical exegetical discourse reveals that the distinction between *tafsīr* and *ta'wīl* developed gradually through intellectual debates within early Islamic communities. Early interpreters frequently navigated competing interpretive strategies that balanced linguistic explanation, legal reasoning, and theological reflection. The conceptual differentiation between the two terms therefore emerged not only from linguistic considerations but also from ideological and theological contestation. Studies on the development of Qur'ānic interpretive traditions demonstrate that interpretive authority was often negotiated through such discursive struggles (Uthamn, 2023).

Abū Zayd's hermeneutical argument reframes this historical distinction by emphasizing how ideological hegemony influenced the marginalization of *ta'wīl*. He argues that interpretive hierarchies were shaped by political and doctrinal conflicts that unfolded within the early centuries of Islamic intellectual history. Certain interpretive communities promoted *tafsīr* as the dominant exegetical model while portraying *ta'wīl* as a speculative or controversial method. Contemporary discussions of Qur'ānic hermeneutics highlight how interpretive authority can be constructed through discursive power relations (Yahya & Mushthoza, 2025).

The textual evidence examined in this research indicates that Abū Zayd situates the origins of interpretive contestation within early Islamic debates surrounding theological authority. These debates often intersected with political conflicts that shaped the formation of Sunni orthodoxy. Interpretive methods associated with groups such as the Mu'tazilites and certain Sufi traditions were frequently categorized as forms of speculative *ta'wīl*. Analytical studies of ideological influences in Qur'ānic exegesis illustrate how theological authority can structure interpretive legitimacy (Qohi et al., 2025).

Linguistic analysis further reinforces Abū Zayd's critique of the conventional hierarchy between *tafsīr* and *ta'wīl*. Classical lexicographical sources reveal that the term *ta'wīl* carries the semantic sense of "returning to the origin" or "restoring meaning to its underlying reference." This semantic nuance implies an interpretive process that seeks deeper structural meaning rather than merely explaining lexical expressions. Arabic linguistic studies confirm that semantic shifts in key Qur'ānic terms often influence interpretive frameworks (Munawir, 1997).

The results of the qualitative coding conducted in this study identified several discursive dimensions shaping the historical competition between *tafsīr* and *ta'wīl*. These dimensions include linguistic interpretation, ideological authority, political influence, and theological debate. The analytical synthesis of these elements is summarized in Table 2.

**Table 2. Discursive Dimensions in the Historical Contestation of *Tafsīr* and *Ta'wīl***

Analytical Dimension	Description	Implication for Interpretation
Linguistic Interpretation	Explanation of vocabulary and grammar	Associated with classical <i>tafsīr</i> methodology
Theological Debate	Doctrinal disputes among Islamic schools	Shapes legitimacy of interpretive methods
Political Authority	Influence of ruling institutions on religious discourse	Regulates acceptable interpretation
Intellectual Diversity	Presence of philosophical and mystical approaches	Encourages interpretive pluralism

Source: Analytical synthesis based on primary textual coding and secondary literature.

The patterns summarized in Table 2 reveal that the contestation between *tafsīr* and *ta'wīl* cannot be reduced to a purely technical disagreement over interpretive terminology. Interpretive categories operate within broader intellectual and political structures that shape how Qur'ānic meaning is constructed. Such discursive dynamics continue to influence contemporary religious debates about textual authority. Research on digital theological polemics demonstrates that interpretive disagreements frequently reflect broader ideological positioning (Amir et al., 2023).

Abū Zayd's reconstruction of interpretive history also highlights the intellectual tensions between rationalist and traditionalist approaches within Islamic thought. Rationalist schools tended to embrace interpretive reasoning as a legitimate means of uncovering deeper textual meanings. Traditionalist scholars, however, frequently prioritized transmitted reports and linguistic clarification over speculative interpretation. Historical studies of Islamic intellectual traditions indicate that these tensions shaped the epistemological foundations of Qur'ānic scholarship (Al-Jabiri, 2009b).

The interpretive conflict surrounding *ta'wīl* also intersects with broader debates on hermeneutical diversity within Islamic exegetical literature. Modern scholarship increasingly recognizes that interpretive plurality has always been present in Qur'ānic scholarship, even when institutional discourse attempted to regulate acceptable interpretations. Comparative analyses of modern Muslim exegetes demonstrate that interpretive diversity continues to evolve in response to changing social and intellectual contexts (Traba, 2025).

Abū Zayd's analysis ultimately frames the historical marginalization of *ta'wīl* as a product of ideological consolidation rather than purely scholarly consensus. His argument challenges the assumption that classical exegetical authority represents a unified methodological tradition. Contemporary scholars examining Qur'ānic hermeneutics increasingly acknowledge the complex interplay between power, knowledge, and interpretation in shaping exegetical discourse (Saeed, 2026).

### **Repositioning *Ta'wīl* as a Critical Hermeneutical Framework in Contemporary Qur'ānic Interpretation**

The textual analysis conducted in this study demonstrates that Naṣr Ḥamīd Abū Zayd conceptualizes *ta'wīl* not merely as an auxiliary interpretive technique but as a critical hermeneutical framework capable of mediating between textual structure and socio-historical context. His writings emphasize that the Qur'ān should be approached as a dynamic discourse interacting continuously with human interpretation. This perspective challenges static models of interpretation that privilege rigid textual literalism. Contemporary scholars of Qur'ānic hermeneutics similarly observe that interpretive meaning emerges through interaction between text, reader, and historical context (Saeed, 2026).

Abū Zayd's theoretical orientation reflects a broader intellectual movement within modern Islamic thought that attempts to re-evaluate the epistemological foundations of Qur'ānic interpretation. Rather than rejecting the classical tradition, his approach seeks to reinterpret its conceptual tools through contemporary hermeneutical awareness. Studies on modern Islamic intellectual renewal indicate that reinterpretation of classical concepts often becomes a strategy for negotiating tradition and modernity (Rahman, 1984). This intellectual posture positions *ta'wīl* as a methodological bridge connecting classical exegesis with modern interpretive concerns.

Central to this reconstruction is Abū Zayd's argument that Qur'ānic discourse should be understood through the concept of textuality (*naṣṣiyyah*). In his analysis, the Qur'ān functions simultaneously as revelation and linguistic text, making interpretation an inevitable intellectual process. This framework foregrounds the interpretive role of human reason while maintaining respect for the sacred status of revelation. Research on Qur'ānic textuality highlights similar perspectives emphasizing the dialogical relationship between scripture and interpretive communities (Abu Zaid, 2016).

The analytical coding of the primary texts further reveals that Abū Zayd systematically connects *ta'wīl* with broader intellectual traditions of rational inquiry within Islamic history. Rationalist currents associated with the intellectual heritage of the Arab philosophical tradition play an important role in shaping his hermeneutical outlook. Studies on the formation of Arab intellectual reasoning demonstrate how interpretive reasoning historically evolved within complex philosophical debates (Al-Jabiri, 2009a). These intellectual roots enable Abū Zayd to frame *ta'wīl* as a legitimate extension of Islamic scholarly reasoning.

**Table 3. Analytical Dimensions of Ta'wīl in Abū Zayd's Hermeneutical Framework**

Analytical Dimension	Conceptual Focus	Interpretive Implication
Textuality of Revelation	Qur'ān as linguistic discourse	Interpretation becomes an intellectual engagement with meaning
Historical Context	Interaction between revelation and socio-historical reality	Encourages contextual reading of Qur'ānic messages
Rational Inquiry	Integration of reasoning in interpretation	Expands interpretive authority beyond literal explanation
Hermeneutical Mediation	Balance between tafsīr and ta'wīl	Prevents rigid interpretive absolutism

Source: Analytical synthesis from textual coding of Abū Zayd's works (Abu Zaid, 2016, Zayd, 2026).

The conceptual patterns summarized in Table 3 illustrate that *ta'wīl* in Abū Zayd's framework functions as a multidimensional interpretive process. It connects linguistic analysis, historical awareness, and rational reflection within a single methodological structure. Such integration distinguishes his approach from purely philological models of Qur'ānic interpretation. Scholars examining contemporary Islamic hermeneutics emphasize the growing importance of interdisciplinary interpretive frameworks (Supena, 2024).

Abū Zayd's hermeneutical reconstruction also resonates with broader debates within modern Arab intellectual discourse. The revival of rationalist traditions in the modern period often emerges as a response to rigid ideological readings of religious texts. Intellectual historians observe that contemporary Arab thought frequently revisits classical rationalism in order to address modern epistemological challenges (Agbaria, 2022). Within this context, *ta'wīl* becomes a methodological instrument for revitalizing interpretive openness.

Another important dimension of Abū Zayd's approach concerns the relationship between interpretation and authority in religious discourse. He argues that monopolization of interpretive authority often leads to ideological closure within religious communities. Contemporary discussions of Qur'ānic hermeneutics demonstrate how authority structures shape interpretive legitimacy in modern Muslim societies (Yahya & Mushtoha, 2025). His emphasis on interpretive plurality therefore seeks to decentralize rigid structures of exegetical control.

The implications of this interpretive pluralism can also be observed in contemporary debates surrounding Qur'ānic interpretation in digital and public intellectual spaces. Modern theological debates increasingly occur across media platforms where diverse interpretive voices interact and contest meaning. Research on online theological discourse indicates that interpretive disagreements often reflect deeper ideological tensions within religious communities (Amir et al., 2023). Abū Zayd's emphasis on interpretive openness provides an analytical framework for understanding such developments.

His hermeneutical orientation further aligns with broader philosophical discussions concerning the relationship between religion and socio-political power. Critical analyses of modern Islamic thought frequently highlight how interpretive authority becomes intertwined with institutional structures of power. Philosophical studies examining religion and state relations illustrate how interpretive discourse may be shaped by political contexts (Kidhar, 2026). Abū Zayd's interpretive theory implicitly challenges such ideological entanglements by emphasizing intellectual autonomy in interpretation.

The findings of this study indicate that Abū Zayd ultimately envisions *ta'wīl* as a constructive interpretive practice rather than a polemical alternative to *tafsīr*. His framework positions both interpretive concepts within a dynamic hermeneutical continuum rather than a hierarchical opposition. Comparative studies of modern Qur'ānic interpretation confirm that contemporary Muslim scholars increasingly pursue integrative models of exegesis capable of addressing changing intellectual contexts (Traba, 2025). This interpretive synthesis reflects a broader transformation within contemporary Qur'ānic hermeneutics in which classical concepts are rearticulated to engage modern epistemological debates.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis demonstrates that the interpretive thought of Naṣr Ḥamīd Abū Zayd represents a significant contribution to contemporary Qur'ānic hermeneutics through the reconstruction of the conceptual relationship between *tafsīr* and *ta'wīl*. His intellectual project situates Qur'ānic interpretation within a dynamic interaction between textual structure, historical context, and human reasoning, thereby challenging rigid hierarchies that historically privileged one interpretive approach over another. By conceptualizing the Qur'ān as a discursive text whose meaning unfolds through interpretive engagement, Abū Zayd advances a hermeneutical perspective that recognizes the legitimacy of interpretive plurality while maintaining continuity with the classical exegetical tradition. This study shows that his approach does not replace *tafsīr* with *ta'wīl*, but rather repositions both concepts within a complementary analytical framework that allows deeper engagement with the semantic and historical dimensions of revelation. The findings highlight how Abū Zayd's interpretive model contributes to ongoing debates on textuality, interpretive authority, and methodological renewal in modern Qur'ānic studies.

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