

Living Qur'an and Contemporary Moral Crises: Actualizing the Qur'anic Values of Zuhud among Indonesian Muslims

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Abstract: This study examines the actualization of the Qur'anic values of zuhud through the living Qur'an approach as a response to the contemporary moral crises experienced by Indonesian Muslims. The study is motivated by the growing phenomena of consumerism, flexing culture, and digital materialism, which have gradually weakened the internalization of Qur'anic values in everyday life. Employing a qualitative library research design, this study integrates thematic (*maudū'i*) Qur'anic exegesis on verses related to zuhud with the living Qur'an framework as its analytical perspective. Primary data were obtained from the Qur'an and classical as well as contemporary exegetical works, while secondary data were drawn from scholarly literature on the Living Qur'an, zuhud, and contemporary social phenomena among Muslim communities. The findings reveal that zuhud should not be understood as poverty or the rejection of worldly life; rather, it represents a balanced ethical orientation manifested through three interconnected dimensions of spiritual (*inner*) zuhud, behavioral (*outer*) zuhud, and social zuhud. These dimensions provide practical guidance for responding to consumerist culture, fostering responsible digital behavior, and strengthening Muslim moral character. This study contributes to the development of living Qur'an scholarship by extending its focus beyond ritual practices toward the actualization of Qur'anic ethical values that remain highly relevant to the challenges faced by contemporary Muslim society.

Keywords: *Indonesian Muslims, Living Qur'an, Qur'anic Ethics, Exegesis, Zuhud*

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, Indonesian Muslim society has experienced a significant shift in moral and social values. One of the most visible manifestations of this transformation is the emergence of *flexing culture* the widespread practice of displaying wealth and luxurious lifestyles through social media which has increasingly become a new social norm, particularly among younger generations.¹ By 2025, Indonesia had approximately 180 million internet users, equivalent to 62.9% of its total population, further accelerating the normalization of digital self presentation as an integral aspect of contemporary social identity,² This rapid digital expansion has further accelerated the normalization of online self display, transforming it from a passing trend into an integral component of everyday social identity.

This phenomenon extends beyond a mere lifestyle trend rather, it reflects a deeper crisis of value orientation in which spirituality is increasingly overshadowed by materialism, while Muslim identity is progressively shaped by the logic of global consumerism. Ironically, despite the proliferation of Islamic scholarship and the widespread dissemination of religious sermons across digital platforms, consumerist behavior continues to intensify.³ This paradox highlights a significant disconnect between religious discourse and its practical implementation in everyday life.

Contemporary Muslim scholars have long identified the root of this problem as the weakening internalization of Qur'anic values in everyday life. In fact, the Qur'an offers a comprehensive ethical framework through the concept of *zuhud*, which advocates an inward disposition and a pattern of conduct that views worldly life in its proper perspective without elevating it as the ultimate purpose of human existence.⁴ However, this concept is often understood only partially, being perceived either as a doctrine detached from the realities of modern life or as an endorsement of poverty that is considered irrelevant to the needs of a developing society.

Such misconceptions have further widened the gap between the lived experience of the Qur'an and its practical manifestation in everyday life. Existing studies on *zuhud* within Indonesian Islamic scholarship continue to be dominated by normative exegetical approaches that remain largely confined to textual interpretation, with limited attention to how these Qur'anic values can be actualized

¹ Abdul Rachman, dkk., "Flexing and Its Implications for Religious and Social Life Among Indonesian Muslim Millennials", *Cakrawala: Jurnal Studi Islam* 19, no. 2 (2024): h. 63.

² Lihat, Digital 2026: Tren digital dan media sosial teratas di Indonesia <https://Wearesocial-Com.Translate.Google/Id/Blog/2025/11/Digital-2026-Top-Digital-and-Social-Media-Trends-in-Indonesia/>.

³ Muhamad Akda Fathul Barri, dkk., "Fenomena Konsumsi Konten Dakwah Digital pada Kalangan Mahasiswa: Systematic Literature Review", *Jurnal Da'wah: Risalah Merintis, Da'wah Melanjutkan* 8, no. 1 (2025): h. 130.

⁴ Raudhatul Jannah Ilyas dan Nurjannah, "Sikap Zuhud dalam Al-Qur'an Solusi Terhadap Fenomena Flexing di Media Sosial", *Fathir: Jurnal Studi Islam* 3, no. 2 (2026): h. 2.

within the contemporary social and cultural contexts of Indonesian society.⁵ Moreover, although living Qur'an studies have developed significantly in Indonesia, they continue to focus predominantly on the ritualistic and symbolic dimensions of the Qur'an. Consequently, ethical values embodied in the Qur'an, particularly zuhud, have received comparatively limited scholarly attention.⁶

To address these gaps, this study integrates a thematic (*maudū'ī*) interpretation of Qur'anic verses on zuhud with the living Qur'an framework to examine how the values of zuhud can be actualized as an ethical foundation for Indonesian Muslims in responding to contemporary moral crises. Specifically, the study investigates the Qur'anic foundations of zuhud, develops a living Qur'an based framework for its contemporary actualization, and analyzes the challenges and strategies for strengthening these values within the Indonesian context. By doing so, this study seeks to contribute to the advancement of living Qur'an scholarship by expanding its scope beyond ritual and symbolic practices to encompass Qur'anic ethical values. It also provides a practical conceptual framework for Islamic character education that is responsive to the moral challenges of contemporary society.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research design using a library research approach. Primary data were derived from the Qur'an and classical as well as contemporary works of Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsīr*), while secondary data were obtained from scholarly literature on the living Qur'an, zuhud, and contemporary Muslim social phenomena. The analysis of Qur'anic verses related to zuhud was conducted using the thematic (*maudū'ī*) method of Qur'anic interpretation. This method involves identifying verses that address a common theme, examining their contexts of revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*), analyzing their textual interrelationships, and synthesizing their ethical meanings into a coherent conceptual framework. The thematic approach was selected because it provides a comprehensive understanding of the Qur'an's perspective on a particular issue, rather than interpreting individual verses in isolation. The analysis of Qur'anic verses related to zuhud was conducted using the thematic (*maudū'ī*) method of Qur'anic interpretation. This method involves identifying verses that address a common theme, examining their contexts of revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*), analyzing their textual interrelationships, and synthesizing their ethical meanings into a coherent conceptual framework. The thematic approach was selected because it provides a comprehensive understanding of the Qur'an's perspective on a particular issue, rather than interpreting individual verses in isolation.

⁵ M. Quraish Shihab, *Membumikan Al-Qur'an: Fungsi dan Peran Wahyu dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat* (Bandung: Mizan, 2007), h. 40.

⁶ Sahiron Syamsuddin, *Metodologi Penelitian Living Qur'an dan Hadis* (Yogyakarta: TH-Press, 2007), h. 14.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Linguistic and Terminological Meaning of Zuhud

Etymologically, the term *zuhud* derives from the Arabic root *za-ha-dal*, which fundamentally denotes the idea of scarcity, insignificance, or the smallness of something. The noun *al-zahīd* refers to something of little value or quantity, whereas a *zāhid* is a person who turns away from worldly attachments, showing little interest in them and remaining content with only a modest share of worldly possessions.⁷ The term *zuhud* also carries the connotation reflected in the expressions *zahida fī al-syai'i* (to have no desire for or attachment to something) and *zahida 'an al-syai'i* (to turn away from or renounce something).⁸ Accordingly, from a linguistic perspective, *zuhud* may be understood as an attitude toward something perceived as possessing little value, such that it is not considered worthy of pursuit or attachment.

The Qur'anic usage of this root is illustrated in QS Yūsuf/12: 20, where the term *al-zāhidīn* is derived from the verb *zahada*, referring to an attitude of indifference toward something that is ordinarily regarded as desirable.⁹ From a terminological perspective, al-Gazālī (d. 505 H) defines *zuhud* as renouncing attachment to worldly life out of the recognition that it is inferior to the eternal excellence of the Hereafter. In his view, *zuhud* does not simply mean relinquishing wealth out of generosity, to gain public sympathy, or to seek praise. Although such motives reflect commendable moral qualities, they do not constitute genuine *zuhud*, since abandoning wealth for the sake of reputation, popularity, or merely to avoid the burden of possessing it remains a pursuit of worldly gratification. Indeed, these forms of gratification may at times be even more pleasurable than wealth itself. Therefore, they cannot be regarded as authentic *zuhud*.¹⁰

Similarly, Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) argues that the *zuhud* prescribed in Islam consists of abandoning desires for anything that offers no benefit in the Hereafter. This primarily includes excessive engagement in permissible (*mubāḥ*) matters that neither facilitate nor strengthen one's obedience to Allah swt. Conversely, whatever directly benefits one's spiritual well being or serves as a means of attaining benefit in the Hereafter should not be renounced, as abandoning such things does not constitute *zuhud* in the Islamic sense.¹¹ These definitions indicate that *zuhud* in Islam is governed by a clear normative principle maintaining a proper balance in which worldly life serves as a means, while the Hereafter remains the ultimate end, with both outward conduct and inner spiritual orientation harmoniously aligned.

⁷ Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusain ibn Muḥammad al-Ma'rūf bi al-Rāgib al-Aṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt fī Garīb al-Qur'ān* (Damaskus: Dār al-Qalam, 1991), h. 384.

⁸ Muḥammad ibn Mukrim ibn 'Alī Abū al-Faḍl Jamal al-Dīn ibn Manẓūr al-Anṣārī al-Ifriqī, *Lisān al-'Arāb*, Juz 3 (Beirūt: Dār Ṣadr, 1993), h. 197.

⁹ M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsīr Al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan, dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an*, Jil. 6 (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002), h. 416.

¹⁰ Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Gazālī, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, Juz 4 (Beirūt: Dār al-Ma'rifah, t.th.), h. 219.

¹¹ Aḥmad ibn Taimiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatawā*, Juz 10 (Madīnah: Majma' al-Malik Fahd Liṭabā'ah, 1995), h. 21.

Contemporary Muslim scholars have offered a renewed understanding of zuhud in response to the challenges of modernity. Rather than interpreting zuhud as withdrawal from worldly affairs or the rejection of material progress, they conceptualize it as an ethical and spiritual disposition that liberates the individual from enslavement to wealth, power, and all forms of worldly attachment.¹² Taken together, these definitions suggest that zuhud in the Islamic intellectual tradition encompasses two interrelated dimensions an inward dimension, reflected in one's attitude toward worldly life, and an outward dimension, manifested through ethical conduct and behavior.

Qur'anic Perspectives on Zuhud

1. QS al-Ḥadīd/57: 20

إِغْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهُمْ زِينَةٌ وَتَفَاخُرٌ بَيْنَكُمْ وَتَكَاثُرٌ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ كَمَثَلِ غَيْثٍ أَعْجَبَ الْكُفَّارَ نَبَاتُهُ ثُمَّ يَهِيجُ فَتَرَاهُ مُصْفَرًّا ثُمَّ يَكُونُ حُطَامًا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٌ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ.

The meaning:

*Know that the life of this world is nothing but play, amusement, glitter, mutual boasting among yourselves, and rivalry in wealth and children. It is like rain whose vegetation delights the farmers, but later it withers, and you see it turn yellow; then it becomes dry and broken. In the Hereafter there is severe punishment, as well as forgiveness from Allah and His good pleasure. The life of this world is nothing but the enjoyment of delusion.*¹³

Al-Ṭabarī (d. 310 H) interprets this verse as a divine admonition warning believers not to be deceived by the transient nature of worldly life. According to him, the pleasures of this temporal world are merely forms of play and amusement that distract people from preparing for the Hereafter. Likewise, worldly adornments are understood as external embellishments through which individuals seek to display their prestige and superiority before others.¹⁴ Al-Nasafī (d. 710 H) interprets this verse as portraying the successive stages of worldly life through familiar human experiences. In his explanation, play (*la'ib*) characterizes the activities of children, amusement (*lahw*) reflects the diversions of youth, adornment (*zīnah*) symbolizes the pursuit of external beauty and appearance, mutual boasting (*tafākhur*) refers to people's tendency to compete in pride and social prestige, while rivalry in wealth and children (*takāṣur*) denotes the pursuit of superiority through

¹² Haidar Bagir, *Mengenal Tasawuf: Spiritualisme dalam Islam* (Jakarta Selatan: Noura Books, 2019), h. 84.

¹³ <https://Quran.Kemenag.Go.Id/Quran/per-Ayat/Surah/57?From=20&to=20>.

¹⁴ Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl āi al-Qur'ān*, Juz 23 (Makkah: Dār al-Tarbiyyah wa al-Turās), h. 193.

material possessions and offspring. Collectively, these stages illustrate the human inclination to seek distinction by possessing and displaying more than others.¹⁵

This verse provides one of the Qur'an's most comprehensive and compelling descriptions of the true nature of worldly life. While it does not discourage human beings from enjoying the blessings of this world, it reminds them that worldly life should never become an ultimate end in itself or distract them from preparing for the Hereafter.

2. QS al-Qaṣaṣ/28: 77

وَابْتَغِ فِيمَا آتَاكَ اللَّهُ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ وَلَا تَنْسَ نَصِيبَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَأَحْسِنَ كَمَا أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ وَلَا تَبْغِ الْفُسَادَ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ.

The meaning:

Seek, by means of what Allah has granted you, the abode of the Hereafter, but do not neglect your share of this world. Do good as Allah has been good to you, and do not seek to spread corruption in the land. Indeed, Allah does not love those who spread corruption."¹⁶

The expression *wa lā tansa naṣībaka min al-dunyā* (do not neglect your share of this world) signifies the lawful provisions (*ḥalāl*) that Allah swt. has made permissible, such as food, drink, clothing, housing, and marriage. However, the verse does not endorse unrestricted enjoyment of worldly life. Rather, it emphasizes that worldly blessings should be exercised within the ethical framework of rights and obligations Allah has rights over His servants, individuals owe duties to themselves, families possess legitimate claims, and others including guests are likewise entitled to their respective rights. Therefore, each right-holder should be accorded what is rightfully due.¹⁷

The term *naṣīb* is derived from the Arabic root *naṣaba*, which originally conveys the meaning of establishing or assigning something in a firm and manifest manner. Accordingly, the *naṣīb* referred to in this verse signifies a rightful share or allotted portion that legitimately belongs to an individual and therefore should neither be neglected nor denied. This lexical meaning suggests that every person has a divinely ordained share of worldly life that may be enjoyed within the limits prescribed by Allah.¹⁸ This implies that what is prohibited is not engagement with worldly life itself, but rather complete neglect of worldly responsibilities to the extent that one's basic needs, moral obligations, and social responsibilities are disregarded.

The foregoing analysis of these Qur'anic verses reveals that *zuhud* encompasses complementary dimensions that together constitute a coherent ethical

¹⁵ Abdullah ibn Aḥmad ibn Maḥmūd al-Nasafī, *Tafsīr al-Nasafī (Madārik al-Tanzīl wa Ḥaqāiq al-Ta'wīl)*, Juz 3 (Beirut: Dār al-Kalām al-Ṭayyib, 1998), h. 439.

¹⁶ <https://Quran.Kemenag.Go.Id/Quran/per-Ayat/Surah/28?From=77&to=77>.

¹⁷ Abū al-Fidā'i Ismā'il ibn 'Umar ibn Kaṣīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, Juz 6 (Riyāḍ: Dār Ṭayyibah li al-Nasy wa al-Tauzī', 1999), h. 253.

¹⁸ M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan, dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an*, Jil. 10, h. 406.

framework for life. At its core lies an inward dimension, namely a state of the heart that is free from emotional and psychological attachment to worldly life. This inner disposition serves as the foundation for all other manifestations of zuhud, for a person who has attained inward zuhud remains steadfast in the face of material loss, does not become arrogant when blessed with wealth, and does not seek human praise as the ultimate motive for one's actions.¹⁹ The outward dimension of zuhud, in turn, represents the practical manifestation of this inward disposition in everyday life. It is reflected in a simple and proportionate pattern of consumption, modest personal appearance, and a lifestyle that remains free from domination by consumerist trends.²⁰ This does not imply imposed poverty, rather, it represents a deliberate simplicity that arises from spiritual consciousness.

A further dimension is the social dimension of zuhud, which is oriented toward compassion, generosity, and meaningful contribution to others as the natural outcome of both inward and outward zuhud. A person who is not attached to wealth is more inclined to share it generously for the benefit of others, recognizing material possessions as a trust rather than an end in themselves,²¹ it is this social dimension of zuhud that transforms it from a form of personal spirituality into a transformative social ethic.

Living Qur'an as a Framework for the Actualization

1. The Genealogy and Concept of the Living Qur'an in Indonesia

The study of the living Qur'an in Indonesia began to receive serious scholarly attention in the early 2000's, a significant milestone was the publication of *Living Qur'an dalam Lintasan Sejarah Studi Al-Qur'an* by Mohammad Mansur and his research team, which became one of the earliest methodological references to systematically map the field of living Qur'an studies within the Indonesian academic context.²²

Conceptually, the living Qur'an refers to the social reality that the Qur'an exists not merely as a text to be recited and interpreted, but also as a living entity embodied in the social practices of Muslim communities.²³ The Qur'an is recited, memorized, chanted, used as an amulet, placed in particular locations, and its values are internalized and expressed in everyday life. These diverse manifestations constitute the primary objects of inquiry in living Qur'an studies.

Sahiron Syamsuddin further expanded this perspective through the *ma'na cum maghza* approach, which seeks to understand the historical meaning of a Qur'anic

¹⁹ Abd al-Karīm ibn Hawāzin al-Qusyairī, *Laṭā'if Al-Isyārāt-Tafsīr Al-Qusyairī*, Juz 3 (Mesir: al-Hai'ah al-Miṣriyyah al-'Āmah li al-Kitāb), h. 544.

²⁰ Ilham Defriono, dkk., "Zuhd and Minimalism in a Consumerist Society", *Peradaban Journal of Religion and Society* 2, no. 2 (2023): h. 152.

²¹ Roma Wijaya, "Rekonstruksi Ajaran Sufistik Era Medsos (Kajian Konsep Zuhud)", *al-Dzikra: Jurnal Studi Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan al-Hadits* 17, no. 1 (2023): h. 24.

²² Mohammad Mansur, *Living Qur'an dalam Lintasan Sejarah Studi Al-Qur'an: dalam Metodologi Penelitian Living Qur'an dan Hadis* (Yogyakarta: Teras, 2007), h. 5.

²³ Tiara Ningsih, dkk., "Living Qur'an: Sebuah Pendekatan Kontekstual dalam Memahami Al-Qur'an", *Journal Hub for Humanities and Social Science* 2, no. 1 (2025): h. 118.

verse while simultaneously uncovering its significance for contemporary contexts. This approach is highly relevant to Living Qur'an studies, as it emphasizes that the actualization of Qur'anic values is not merely a mechanical application of an ancient text, but rather a dynamic process of interpretation that remains responsive to changing social contexts.²⁴

2. Shifting the Focus from Ritual Practices to Moral Values

Most existing studies on the living Qur'an continue to focus primarily on ritualistic and symbolic practices, such as the recitation of the Qur'an during funeral ceremonies, the use of Qur'anic verses in traditional healing practices, *khataman* (Qur'an completion) ceremonies, Qur'an memorization as a tradition in Islamic boarding schools, and similar religious practices.²⁵ These studies have made valuable contributions to the field however, they have not adequately addressed the moral dimension of the living Qur'an, particularly how Qur'anic ethical values such as *zuhd*, *tawāḍu'* (humility), *amānah* (trustworthiness), and justice genuinely shape individuals' life orientations and social behavior.

This shift in focus is essential, as the challenges facing Muslim communities today are rooted more in a crisis of morality and value orientation than in a crisis of ritual practice.²⁶ Muslims may continue to recite the Qur'an diligently, yet its values are not necessarily internalized in their social interactions and digital conduct. It is precisely at this point that living Qur'an studies, with their emphasis on moral values, demonstrate their particular relevance and urgency.

3. The Actualization of the Value of Zuhd in Response to the Contemporary Moral Crisis

a. Inner Zuhd as a Response to Flexing Culture

In Qur'an al-Ḥadīd/57: 20, Allah warns against mutual boasting as one of the deceptive attractions of worldly life. This warning has become particularly relevant in today's digital environment, especially on platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, where an individual's worth is often measured by displays of wealth and material success. Flexing culture represents a widespread form of digital boasting, and the Qur'an identifies such behavior as one of the principal mechanisms through which worldly life deceives human beings.²⁷

The actualization of inner zuhd does not require abandoning social media or withdrawing from the digital world. Rather, it entails transforming one's inner orientation in engaging with digital platforms. Individuals who have internalized the value of zuhd will use digital media as a means of disseminating knowledge and promoting the common good, rather than as a stage for displaying social status

²⁴ Sahiron Syamsuddin, *Hermeneutika dan Pengembangan Ulumul Qur'an* (Yogyakarta: Pesantren Nawesea Press, 2017), h. 140.

²⁵ Tiara Ningsih, "Living Qur'an: Sebuah Pendekatan Kontekstual dalam Memahami Al-Qur'an", h. 119.

²⁶ Sry Nurlila Yusuf, "Relevansi Pendidikan Agama Islam dalam Menghadapi Krisis Moral Generasi Milenial", *JIS: Journal Islamic Studies* 3, no. 3 (2025): h. 287.

²⁷ Layyinat Sifa, dkk., "Flexing Culture from The Qur'anic Perspective: Between Lifestyle and the Principle of Tauhid", *Tajdid* 22, no. 2 (2023): h. 568.

or seeking recognition.²⁸ Such individuals will not feel left behind when confronted with others' displays of luxury, because their worldview does not regard material wealth and extravagance as the measure of success.

In the Qur'anic Sufi tradition, this inner state is referred to as *qalb al-salīm* (a sound heart). A sound heart is one that is neither consumed by envy at the sight of others' wealth nor overcome by arrogance because of its own advantages. In the digital age, *qalb al-salīm* represents one of the strongest forms of psychological resilience against *Fear of Missing Out* (FOMO) and toxic social comparison, both of which have become among the most prevalent psychological challenges associated with social media.²⁹

The practical actualization of inner zuhd in the digital age includes the awareness to refrain from posting content intended to display one's social status, the ability to browse social media without developing feelings of inferiority, the confidence to present oneself authentically without projecting an image of luxury, and the habit of measuring success by seeking the pleasure of Allah rather than by the number of likes and followers.³⁰ This is not merely a moral exhortation rather, it represents a direct actualization of the living Qur'an through the values of zuhd embodied in the Qur'anic verses.

b. Outward Zuhd in the Age of Consumerism

The consumerist crisis affecting Indonesian society requires a response at the level of concrete behavioral practice,³¹ It is at this point that zuhd assumes a direct and practical role. The statement in QS al-Kahfi/18: 46, which describes wealth as *zīnah al-ḥayāh al-dunyā* (the adornment of worldly life rather than its ultimate purpose), provides a strong foundation for a balanced and proportionate approach to consumption.

In the context of consumerism, outward zuhd should not be understood as synonymous with poverty or the rejection of worldly comfort. The Qur'an does not prohibit the enjoyment of worldly blessings rather, it condemns *isrāf* (excessiveness) and *tabzīr* (wasteful extravagance).³² Outward zuhd may be understood as intentional simplicity a form of simplicity consciously embraced on the basis of spiritual awareness, rather than one imposed by economic constraints.

The distinction between the two is crucial, as a person who lives simply because of a lack of alternatives cannot necessarily be regarded as practicing zuhd. By contrast, an individual who possesses sufficient wealth yet deliberately chooses

²⁸ Ilyas dan Nurjannah, "Sikap Zuhud dalam Al-Qur'an Solusi terhadap Fenomena Flexing di Media Sosial", h. 4.

²⁹ Syifa Nur Afiyah, dkk., "Fenomena *Fear of Missing Out* dan Dampaknya terhadap Kesehatan Mental Remaja dalam Perspektif Islam", *Khazanah: Jurnal Mahasiswa* 17, no. 2 (2025): h. 60.

³⁰ Agusman Damanik, dkk., "Konsep Zuhud dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an sebagai Jalan Menuju Kesempurnaan", *PESHUM: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sosial, dan Humaniora* 4, no. 5 (2025): h. 7424.

³¹ Asep Rifqi Abdul Aziz, "Perilaku Konsumtif Masyarakat Indonesia dalam Perspektif Herbert Marcuse", *Sophia Dharma: Jurnal Filsafat, Agama Hindu, dan Masyarakat* 5, no. 2 (2022): h. 3.

³² Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *Zuhud di Era Modern*, Terj. Kathur Suhardi (Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Kautsar, 2001), h. 16.

a simple lifestyle out of Qur'anic consciousness exemplifies the true meaning of zuhd. As explained by al-Gazālī, zuhd is not the absence of what one needs, but the willingness to renounce what is unnecessary.³³

The manifestation of outward zuhd in the daily lives of contemporary Indonesian Muslims can be observed in various forms of behavior, such as making consumption choices based on necessity rather than social prestige, selecting functional vehicles or housing instead of status symbols, and having the confidence to live simply within a consumerist environment. This form of social courage is described in Islamic moral thought as *syajā'ah ijtīmā'iyah* (social courage), representing the tangible expression of a mature inner zuhd.

c. Social Zuhd as an Active Expression

The most socially transformative dimension of zuhd, yet one that is often overlooked, is social zuhd. The QS al-Qaṣaṣ/28: 77, which calls upon believers not to neglect their share of this world while doing good to others as Allah has done good to them, conveys a powerful message that authentic zuhd must ultimately produce tangible benefits for others.

In the context of economic inequality in Indonesia, where the wealthiest 1% of the population controls more than half of the national wealth, the relevance of social zuhd becomes increasingly apparent.³⁴ Social zuhd should emerge as a relevant and urgent ethical framework. The one who embodies zuhd does not accumulate wealth for hoarding, but rather circulates it within society. Surplus wealth is not perceived as a source of personal accomplishment to be displayed, but as a form of trust (*amānah*) that must be responsibly distributed.³⁵

Within the framework of the living Qur'an, social zuhd is manifested in Muslim communities that cultivate a culture of sharing, including food distribution initiatives, charity movements, digital *waqf*, and business communities that prioritize blessings over maximum profit. These practices are not merely acts of philanthropy rather, they represent social expressions of Qur'anic zuhd that are actively lived and embodied.

Within the realm of Islamic preaching (*da'wah*), the narrative of zuhd needs to be rearticulated in ways that are relevant and engaging for contemporary Muslim audiences. Effective preaching on zuhd is not one that induces guilt over possessing wealth, but rather one that inspires individuals to place wealth in its proper ethical position. Creative forms of digital *da'wah*, testimonies from successful figures who embody zuhd, and Muslim communities that authentically actualize these values serve as a bridge between Qur'anic values and the lived realities of young Indonesian Muslims.

³³ Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Gazālī, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, Juz 4 (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, t.th.), h. 216.

³⁴ Lihat, <https://money.kompas.com/read/2025/11/20/130900426/menko-pm-cak-imin--1-persen-orang-terkaya-kuasai-hampir-50-persen-kekayaan>.

³⁵ Ilyas dan Nurjannah, "Sikap Zuhud dalam Al-Qur'an Solusi terhadap Fenomena Flexing di Media Sosial", h. 8.

This is how character development ought to be strengthened, in which zuhd gives rise to an ethical and moral framework that promotes social harmony, comfort, and peace.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the value of zuhd in the Qur'an, as elaborated in QS al-Ḥadīd/57: 20 and QS al-Qaṣaṣ/28: 77, holds strong and specific relevance to the contemporary crises faced by Indonesian Muslims. Employing a living Qur'an approach, this article argues that zuhd is not an outdated concept confined to classical Sufism, but rather a dynamic, applicable, and transformative Qur'anic ethic of life. Three dimensions of zuhd are formulated, namely inner zuhd, outward zuhd, and social zuhd, each responding to a distinct dimension of contemporary crisis. These three are not standalone solutions, but rather a unified ethical framework that reinforces one another within a model of actualization consisting of the textual, internalization, and practical realization stages.

The contribution of this article is primarily academic, as it expands the scope of living Qur'an and Qur'anic exegesis studies by incorporating the dimension of moral values, which has received limited attention in previous scholarship, while also proposing a conceptual model that may guide future research. Practically, it offers an operational framework for the development of character education that responds to the challenges of contemporary Indonesian Muslim society. Future research should focus on empirical validation of the proposed actualization through field studies that observe how selected muslim communities embody Qur'anic zuhd in everyday life. Thus, the study of zuhd within the living Qur'an paradigm is not only normatively robust but also firmly grounded in the lived realities of Indonesian muslims.

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