

Salam as Qur'anic Social Ethics: Ahmad Hassan's *Tafsir al-Furqan* and the Construction of Muslim Public Morality

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Abstract

Studies on ethical principles in contemporary Qur'anic exegesis hold significant potential for advancing contextual and socially relevant interpretations of the Qur'an. This research provides an in-depth analysis of Ahmad Hassan's *Tafsir Al-Furqan*, focusing on the construction of the concept of *salam* (greeting of peace) and its implications for social ethics in contemporary Muslim communities. The primary aim of this study is to explore how *salam* is articulated not merely as a ritualized greeting but as an ethical principle emphasizing peace, moderation, and social responsibility. The study employs a qualitative-descriptive approach with thematic-conceptual analysis, examining Qur'anic verses related to *salam*, documenting Ahmad Hassan's exegetical interpretations, and situating them within modern socio-religious contexts. Primary data were derived from *Tafsir Al-Furqan*, supported by secondary sources from global Qur'anic studies, Islamic ethics literature, and social research. Findings indicate that *salam* in *Tafsir Al-Furqan* functions as a moral instrument that fosters trust, social solidarity, and harmonious interactions, effectively linking Qur'anic principles with contemporary social practices. The main contribution of this study lies in presenting an exegetical framework that integrates Qur'anic moral guidance with modern social realities, thereby extending the horizon of Qur'anic interpretation toward a more interdisciplinary, dialogical, and socially transformative discourse.

Keywords: Islamic Social Ethics, *Tafsir Al-Furqan*, Ahmad Hassan, Qur'anic Hermeneutics, Plural Societies.

Abstrak

Kajian terhadap konsep *salam* dalam tradisi tafsir Al-Qur'an kontemporer menyimpan potensi kontribusi signifikan bagi pengembangan paradigma tafsir yang kontekstual dan etis. Penelitian ini mengkaji secara mendalam *Tafsir Al-Furqan* karya Ahmad Hassan, dengan fokus pada konstruksi makna *salam* dan implikasinya terhadap etika sosial umat Muslim kontemporer. Tujuan utama penelitian ini adalah mengungkap bagaimana *salam* diposisikan tidak sekadar sebagai ungkapan ritual, melainkan sebagai prinsip etika yang menekankan perdamaian,

moderasi, dan tanggung jawab sosial. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif-deskriptif dengan metode analisis tematik-konseptual, menelaah ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an terkait *salam*, mendokumentasikan penafsiran Ahmad Hassan, serta menempatkannya dalam konteks sosial-keagamaan modern. Data primer diperoleh dari *Tafsir Al-Furqan*, ditunjang dengan sumber sekunder dari literatur tafsir global, kajian etika Islam, dan studi sosial-keagamaan. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa *salam* dalam *Tafsir Al-Furqan* berfungsi sebagai instrumen etika sosial yang membangun kepercayaan, solidaritas, dan interaksi harmonis, sekaligus menghubungkan prinsip Qur'ani dengan praktik sosial kontemporer. Kontribusi utama studi ini terletak pada penyajian kerangka tafsir yang mengintegrasikan prinsip moral Al-Qur'an dengan konteks sosial modern, memperluas horizon kajian tafsir Al-Qur'an ke arah yang lebih interdisipliner, dialogis, dan relevan secara sosial.

Kata Kunci: Etika Sosial Islam, Tafsir Al-Furqan, Ahmad Hassan, Hermeneutika Qur'ani, Masyarakat Plural

Introduction

In the Qur'an, *salam* (greeting of peace) is not merely a conventional salutation; it embodies a theological and ethical principle that signifies safety, harmony, and social well-being. Ironically, in contemporary practice, *salam* increasingly functions as a marker of rigid religious boundaries, often generating social tensions and fragmentation within pluralistic communities. Recent observations in Indonesia, for example, reveal that interreligious greetings remain contested, highlighting the growing divergence between Qur'anic ideals and evolving socio-religious realities (Ridwan & Kasman, 2025; Nasution et al., 2025). These developments underscore a critical social concern: the practice of *salam*, when stripped of its ethical and spiritual depth, risks undermining the very social cohesion it is meant to promote.

From a Qur'anic perspective, *salam* encompasses both theological and normative dimensions. Theologically, it represents an ideal state of peace and harmony, as articulated in the concept of *dār al-salām*, reflecting God's promise of a tranquil and just existence for humanity (Lubis et al., 2020). Normatively, *salam* functions as a foundational component of Islamic social ethics: it signals recognition, conveys trust, and fosters social solidarity (Cetin, 2022; Taştekin, 2021; Al-Aghbari, 2024). In this sense, *salam* transcends a simple verbal expression, operating as a moral instrument that embodies moderation, gentleness, and justice in interpersonal interactions.

In practice, however, the ethical and spiritual essence of *salam* is often reduced to formality. Religious rulings and fatwas, particularly those emphasizing doctrinal purity, may inadvertently generate social tension and community fragmentation (Rahman et al., 2025). These observations suggest that contemporary challenges in the practice of *salam* stem not from the Qur'anic text itself, but from its interpretation and construction within specific socio-

religious contexts. Consequently, Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsir*) emerges as a critical framework for understanding *salam*, mediating between revealed texts and lived social realities (Kulinich, 2022; Muhammad & Rahman, 2022; Haleem, 2018).

Global scholarship demonstrates that *salam* and Islamic social ethics are deeply intertwined. Peace in the Qur'an is conceptualized across multiple dimensions—external, internal, and meta—which collectively underpin social stability. Islamic social ethics, derived from Sharia, is adaptable and dynamic, promoting well-being and justice in pluralistic societies (Afsaruddin, 2025; Elmahjub, 2019; Karama & Khater, 2020). While fatwas provide practical guidance, their social impact requires a contextual and dialogical approach (Rahman et al., 2025). Contextual and ethical approaches to *tafsir*, as developed by scholars such as Abdullah Saeed and Farid Esack, ensure that Qur'anic interpretation remains relevant to contemporary issues, while vernacular and local exegeses, including those in Indonesia, contribute to a global understanding of the Qur'an (Mirza, 2023; Mujahidin et al., 2024).

Despite this growing body of work, few studies have examined *salam* specifically as an ethical principle within a defined exegetical framework. This gap limits understanding of how *salam* is conceptualized in particular *tafsir* works and how such constructions shape contemporary Muslim social ethics. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates how *salam* is constructed in Ahmad Hassan's *Tafsir Al-Furqan*, hypothesizing that it functions not merely as a ritualized greeting but as an ethical principle emphasizing peace, moderation, and social responsibility. By foregrounding interpretive frameworks, this study highlights that challenges in contemporary *salam* practice are largely a matter of exegetical construction rather than Qur'anic text per se, underscoring the need for renewed engagement with *tafsir* as a conceptual solution to the crisis of meaning surrounding *salam* in modern socio-religious contexts.

Methodology

This study focuses on the concept of *salam* (greeting of peace) as articulated in Ahmad Hassan's *Tafsir Al-Furqan*. The unit of analysis is the construction of *salam*'s meaning from both ethical and theological perspectives within the exegetical text, as well as its implications for contemporary Muslim social ethics, particularly in pluralistic Indonesian society.

To address the research objectives, a qualitative-descriptive approach was employed. This approach was chosen because the study aims to explore the depth, structure, and social context of *salam*, which cannot be adequately captured through quantitative methods. The

qualitative approach enables a holistic interpretation of the text while situating the findings within relevant socio-religious contexts.

Primary data were drawn from Ahmad Hassan's *Tafsir Al-Furqan*, while secondary data were obtained from global Qur'anic studies, literature on Islamic ethics, and social-religious research related to the concept of *salam*. This combination of primary and secondary sources allows the study to analyze the text in depth while assessing its social relevance comprehensively.

Data were collected through intensive library research, including the identification of Qur'anic verses related to *salam*, analysis of Ahmad Hassan's interpretations of these verses, and examination of secondary literature to enrich the contextual understanding. This systematic approach ensures that the data collection is focused, comprehensive, and relevant to the research objectives.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic-conceptual methods, beginning with the development of thematic categories based on the ethical, theological, and social dimensions of *salam*. Text coding was then performed to identify patterns and relationships among concepts. The final stage involved interpretation and synthesis of primary and secondary data to produce a holistic understanding of *salam* as an ethical principle within the exegetical framework. This method was selected to ensure that the analysis moves beyond mere description, providing deep insights into the ethical, social, and theological meanings embedded in the text, thereby contributing significantly to the study of Qur'anic exegesis and Islamic social ethics.

Results and Discussion

A. Ahmad Hassan and the Ethical Construction of Salam in *Tafsir Al-Furqan*

Ahmad Hassan, known as Hasan Bandung, was a prominent Qur'anic exegete in the Malay Archipelago, born in Singapore in 1887 and later based in Bandung (Zainal & Thoriq, 2023). Despite limited formal education, he pursued Islamic studies through self-learning and tutelage under prominent scholars, mastering diverse branches of Islamic sciences including *fiqh al-'ibadat* and theology (Faizul Akhyar et al., 2021). Hassan actively engaged in socio-religious debates between modernist and traditionalist groups, connecting with figures such as Faqih Hasim and H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto, which influenced his rational and contextual approach in exegesis (Siti Fatimah, 2017).

Tafsir Al-Furqan was initiated in 1928 and completed over twelve years, covering all 30 *juz* of the Qur'an (Abdul Rohman et al., 2021; Anggun et al., 2023). The tafsir integrates

literal (*harfiyyah*) and semantic/substantive (*maknawiyyah*) translation methods, presented in clear, concise language with footnotes and a thematic index, following the *adabi ijtimā'i* interpretive style that emphasizes socio-cultural relevance (Hafid Nur Muhammad & Dewi Purwaningrum, 2020).

Ahmad Hassan interprets the term *salam*—derived from *salima*—*yaslamu*—*salāman*—*salāmatan*—as encompassing safety from harm, spiritual integrity, and social respect (Adib Bisri & Munawwir A. Fattah, 1999; Ibn Manzūr, n.d.). In QS. An-Nisa: 86, *tahiyah* is a greeting that requires a reciprocated response:

“When you are greeted with a greeting, respond with one that is better than it, or return it in a like manner. Indeed, Allah is ever mindful of all things.” (QS. 4:86)

Hassan emphasizes that *salam* functions as both a moral-prayer act and a literal greeting, integrating ethical obligations with social etiquette (Ahmad Hassan, 1986).

The tafsir distinguishes two interpretive layers:

Dimension	Description	Example
Literal (<i>Harfiyyah</i>)	Emphasizes the literal greeting and obligation to respond appropriately	<i>Assalāmu 'alaikum</i> → <i>Wa 'alaikumus-salām wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh</i>
Deeper (<i>Maknawiyyah</i>)	Salam as ethical-prayer act, invoking safety, mercy, and blessings	Greeting expresses sincere prayer for the other's well-being; response should be better or equivalent

Table 1. Literal and Deeper (*Maknawiyyah*) Interpretation of Salam in Ahmad Hassan's Tafsir Al-Furqan

These layers show that *salam* operates simultaneously as a social salutation and an ethical-spiritual act.

Hassan explains that initiating *salam* is recommended (*sunnah*), while responding is obligatory (*fāḍilah*), reflecting both individual and collective ethical responsibility (Al-Baghawī, 2002; al-Baīḍāwī, 2000).

Historically, pre-Islamic greetings varied in intent; some were expressions of goodwill, others of resentment. Hassan compares these forms with Qur'anic guidance and Prophetic practice, highlighting Islam's ethical refinement of greetings (Buya Hamka, n.d.; Nawawi Al-Bantani, 1997). Unlike pre-Islamic forms, *salam* encompasses prayer, social etiquette, and

moral consciousness. Compared to classical tafsirs (e.g., Al-Baghawī, al-Baidāwī), Hassan's interpretation emphasizes social ethics and modern contextual relevance, bridging textual meaning with contemporary practice.

Hassan extends the practice of *salam* to both known and unknown recipients, emphasizing sincerity and ethical intention. Responding appropriately fosters trust, social solidarity, and harmonious interaction, demonstrating that *salam* is a practical ethical tool that operationalizes Qur'anic principles in daily life.

Two patterns are evident:

1. *Salam* as a literal greeting with specific linguistic and ritual obligations.
2. *Salam* as a moral-prayer act, embedding ethical values and social responsibility.

These patterns reveal that *salam* functions multidimensionally, integrating textual, ethical, and social layers.

In conclusion, Ahmad Hassan's *Tafsir Al-Furqan* presents *salam* as a multilayered ethical principle: literal greeting, moral supplication, and social instrument. Contemporary challenges in *salam* practice often arise from interpretive gaps rather than the Qur'anic text itself. Hassan's tafsir bridges this gap by linking textual exegesis with ethical application, providing a model for embedding Qur'anic values into social interactions.

B. Emerging Patterns in the Interpretation and Practice of *Salam*

The findings of this study indicate that *salam* in Ahmad Hassan's *Tafsir Al-Furqan* is constructed through two interrelated dimensions: the literal (*harfiyyah*) and the ethical-spiritual (*maknawiyyah*) aspects. At the literal level, *salam* is understood as a normative greeting with clearly defined obligations, as articulated in Q. an-Nisā' [4]:86. Ahmad Hassan emphasizes that the utterance *Assalāmu 'alaikum* must be reciprocated with an equal or superior response, ideally *Wa 'alaikumus-salām wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh* (Ahmad Hassan, 1986). This pattern aligns with Prophetic tradition, which regards initiating *salam* as a strongly recommended practice (*sunnah mu'akkadah*) and responding as a collective obligation (*fard kifāyah*) (Nawawi, n.d.). Accordingly, *salam* is not merely an optional social courtesy but an integral component of the normative structure of Islamic social relations.

Beyond its literal dimension, a *maknawiyyah* pattern emerges, in which *salam* is conceptualized as both a supplication and an ethical act. *Salam* conveys not only a salutation but also prayers for safety, mercy, and blessings, carrying moral and spiritual significance. This pattern is reinforced by a Prophetic hadith emphasizing the virtue of spreading *salam* to both acquaintances and strangers. In *Riyād al-Ṣāliḥīn*, Imam al-Nawawi records the Prophet's

statement: “*The best expression of Islam is to feed others and to spread greetings of peace to those you know and those you do not know*” (Nawawi, n.d., p. 214). This hadith underscores *salam* as a mechanism for fostering social solidarity and ethical interpersonal bonds rather than as a mere linguistic formality.

The study also identifies patterns of variation in the social practice of *salam*, influenced by cultural and situational contexts. *Salam* is used across multiple interactional spaces, including household visits, formal forums, written communications, and social media platforms. The full expression (*Assalāmu 'alaikum wa rāḥmatullāhi wa barakātuh*) is typically employed in formal contexts, while abbreviated forms are more common in everyday interactions (Riswandi, 2019, p. 67). This contextual adaptability extends to interreligious contexts, as illustrated by Muslims offering *salam* to Hindu communities in Bali through the *menyama braya* tradition, highlighting social brotherhood beyond religious boundaries (Moch. Khafidz et al., 2023, p. 2237289). These findings suggest that *salam* functions not as an exclusive religious marker but as a flexible ethical practice that promotes social harmony.

Furthermore, a new pattern is emerging with the shift of *salam* practices into digital spaces. In online communication, *salam* serves as an ethical marker, framing interaction with values of justice, kindness, and civility (Saputra & Asbi, 2025; Warisno et al., 2025). Contemporary literature proposes the concept of *digital fiqh governance*, integrating classical Islamic ethical principles with the moral logic of digital life, positioning *salam* as part of a normative guide for responsible online conduct (Siregar et al., 2025). Nevertheless, the data indicate significant challenges, particularly the tendency to reduce *salam* to a performative or formalistic symbol amid increasing performative religiosity and instantaneous digital communication. This pattern highlights the tension between the ethical meaning of *salam* as taught in tafsir and hadith, and its practical expression in contemporary society.

Overall, the identified patterns suggest that *salam* operates across a broad spectrum: from Qur'anic textual norms, ethical social praxis, cross-cultural adaptation, to the negotiation of meaning in digital spaces. These findings affirm that contemporary challenges surrounding *salam* do not stem from the Qur'anic text itself but from interpretive frameworks and modes of actualization in evolving social contexts, laying the groundwork for critical reflection in the subsequent *Interpretation* subsection.

C. Connecting *Salam* to Qur'anic Ethics and Hermeneutics

In Ahmad Hassan's *Tafsir Al-Furqan*, *salam* is not merely a formal greeting but a moral practice that underscores ethical responsibility and social solidarity. It serves as a bridge between Qur'anic teachings and everyday interactions, fostering *ukhuwah Islamiyyah*, empathy, and benevolence among individuals. Practicing *salam* sincerely reflects adherence to Qur'anic norms while cultivating social ethics. Ahmad Hassan emphasizes that responses to *salam* should be offered in a superior form (*wa 'alaikumus-salām wa rāḥmatullāhi wa barakātuh*), reflecting the Prophet's Sunnah and Qur'anic principles (Ahmad Hassan, 1986). This interpretation is further reinforced by the Hadith in *Riyād al-Ṣāliḥīn*, which highlights the merit of extending *salam* to both acquaintances and strangers (An-Nawawi, n.d.). Accordingly, *salam* functions as a moral instrument that integrates the Qur'anic text, Sunnah, and lived social practice.

Historically, *salam* has undergone a significant transformation, evolving from pre-Islamic greetings that occasionally conveyed hostility to Qur'anic salutations imbued with prayer, blessing, and ethical intent. This historical perspective is crucial for understanding how *salam* operates as a symbol of ethical conduct and spiritual mindfulness in social interaction, rather than a mere linguistic ritual. For instance, the story of Prophet Abraham receiving angelic guests illustrates how greetings convey peace and divine protection (Q. Adh-Dzariyat:25), while Surah Al-Mujadilah:8 warns against greetings that deviate from God's prescribed formula. These examples demonstrate that *salam* encompasses ritual, ethical, and spiritual dimensions that reinforce one another, highlighting its role as both a linguistic and moral-spiritual instrument.

Ahmad Hassan's hermeneutical approach emphasizes the social and ethical context of *salam*. Contextual and ethical exegesis stresses that Qur'anic values must be applied in everyday life, guiding interpersonal behavior and fostering community cohesion. He practices contextual interpretation by highlighting social ethics, including interfaith interactions and digital communication (Esack, 2002; Saeed, 2005). Contemporary applications of *salam* in digital spaces and cross-cultural contexts reveal the adaptability of these ethical principles while maintaining their Qur'anic foundation (Moch. Khafidz et al., 2023; Saputra & Asbi, 2025). Through this approach, Ahmad Hassan bridges the textual prescriptions of the Qur'an with social realities, strengthening moral conduct and social harmony in modern society.

Finally, *salam* manifests Qur'anic social ethics in pluralistic and contemporary settings. In practice, it builds solidarity, reinforces integrity, and cultivates empathy, while teaching social responsibility. Contemporary social-ethical interpretations emphasize good

conduct, respect for others, and ethical communication, reflected in practices of *salam* at home, in formal gatherings, on social media, and in interfaith exchanges (Belhaj, 2024; Ritonga et al., 2023). As such, *salam* in Ahmad Hassan's tafsir is not merely a verbal formula but a moral and social practice that promotes harmony, *ukhuwah*, and ethical engagement across society.

D. Social Implications of Salam in Contemporary Muslim Communities

Patterns and interpretations of *salam* carry significant social implications in contemporary Muslim societies. In everyday practice, *salam* is often reduced to a mere linguistic formality, stripped of its ethical and spiritual depth. Classical Qur'anic exegetes such as al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Kathīr emphasize that *as-salām* in the Qur'an functions as a supplication for safety, tranquility, and divine blessing, rather than a simple greeting (Al-Dimasyq, 2002; Al-Thabari, 2001). The erosion of this meaning signals an urgent need to revitalize *salam* as a social ethic that reinforces both spiritual consciousness and humane interaction. Cultivating the sincere and complete practice of *salam* from an early age plays a crucial role in instilling empathy, respect, and moral responsibility within society (Riswandi, 2019).

From a thematic exegetical perspective, al-Qurtubī interprets the command to respond to greetings (Qur'an 4:86) as an expression of social justice and recognition of human dignity, even amid difference (Al-Qurtubī, 1964). However, in contemporary contexts, certain rigid religious interpretations—particularly within some expressions of Salafism—have posed challenges to fostering inclusive and peaceful social relations. Nevertheless, internal doctrinal transformations within Salafism, especially in regions such as Saudi Arabia, indicate a shift toward more moderate and dialogical orientations. Within this evolving landscape, *salam* can be reclaimed as a practical symbol of peace, mutual recognition, and social cohesion within Muslim communities (Sinani, 2022; Tais, 2024).

In migrant Muslim communities, *salam* assumes an even more tangible social function. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī interprets *salam* as a mechanism for generating *amān* (a sense of security) in social relations, particularly in contexts marked by uncertainty and vulnerability (Al-Razi, 1981). This interpretation resonates with the lived experiences of Muslim migrant communities, such as those in the Salam Complex, who confront challenges including stigmatization, structural marginalization, and property disputes. In such settings, the consistent practice of *salam* operates as a cultural and ethical tool that strengthens internal

solidarity and nurtures trust across ethnic boundaries through adaptive and balanced models of communal leadership (Regadio, 2018).

Moreover, Sufi exegetes such as al-Qushayrī understand *salam* as a manifestation of *rahmah* (compassion) that must be translated into concrete social action (al-Qusyairi, 2007). This perspective aligns closely with the Islamic concept of *takaful al-ijtima'i*, which underscores collective responsibility and mutual support, particularly during times of crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Islamic social security systems grounded in zakat and charitable giving aim not merely at material redistribution, but at preserving human dignity through empathetic, relational, and morally grounded social engagement (Shuaib, 2023).

At the interfaith level, exegetes like al-Marāghī stress the universal dimension of *salam* as a Qur'anic expression of Islam's vision of peace and coexistence (Maraghi, 2001). This universal ethic is reflected in the social practices of Muslims in plural settings such as Salatiga, where values embedded in *salam*—including unity, honesty, and mutual respect—serve as social capital for harmonious interaction with non-Muslim communities. In this sense, *salam* transcends its role as an internal Islamic greeting and emerges as a practical instrument for social dialogue, intercommunal trust, and peaceful coexistence in multicultural societies (Kuswaya & Ali, 2021).

E. Lessons for Contemporary Exegesis and Ethical Practice

These findings offer important insights for the development of Qur'anic exegesis and ethical practice in a global context. The integration of exegetical texts with lived social realities demonstrates that the Qur'an cannot be approached as an ahistorical text detached from human experience. Hermeneutical approaches that are attentive to ethical and social dimensions significantly enhance the Qur'an's relevance in addressing contemporary challenges. In this regard, Abdullah Saeed advocates a dynamic and context-sensitive methodology that prioritizes the overarching ethical objectives of the Qur'an—such as justice, compassion, and public good—over rigid textualism (Rois et al., 2025).

Within this framework, the practice of *salam* may serve as a concrete model for the internalization of Qur'anic values in everyday life. Rather than functioning merely as a normative concept, *salam* operates as an ethical practice capable of fostering solidarity, social trust, and civility within plural societies. This illustrates that exegesis should not end with the production of theoretical meaning but should extend to shaping social ethos and moral conduct. A living *tafsīr*, therefore, is one that successfully bridges scriptural interpretation, ethical values, and daily practice across diverse social contexts.

Furthermore, the development of contemporary Islamic ethics can benefit from engagement with modern philosophical discourse. Dialogues between Muslim thinkers such as Taha Abdurrahman and modern philosophers like Hans Jonas, particularly on the notion of responsibility ethics, open new avenues for articulating Islamic moral thought in response to global ethical concerns. Such engagement does not undermine the authority of revelation; rather, it enriches the expression of Qur'anic values through moral frameworks that resonate across cultures and historical moments (Topkara, 2025).

At the same time, the pursuit of contextualized exegesis requires vigilance against misinterpretation and misuse of the Qur'an. Experiences in countries such as Malaysia reveal serious challenges, including the politicization of Qur'anic interpretation and the adoption of rationalist approaches that deviate from sound exegetical principles. Consequently, identifying and correcting erroneous interpretations becomes an essential academic and moral responsibility of contemporary exegetes, ensuring that the Qur'an is not instrumentalized for narrow ideological or political agendas (Abdullah et al., 2025).

In the digital age, the challenges of Qur'anic interpretation are further complicated by the rise of artificial intelligence (AI). While AI can assist in textual analysis and data processing, it must remain a secondary tool rather than an autonomous interpreter. Ethical and epistemological concerns arise when interpretive authority is delegated to machines, potentially distorting religious understanding and weakening traditional scholarly practices. In this context, the revitalization of meaningful ethical practices such as *salam* underscores that the formation of a harmonious social civilization depends less on advanced technology than on moral consistency, ethical awareness, and a sustained commitment to the Qur'anic principle of *rahmatan li al-ālamīn* (Azhar et al., 2025; Sachedina, 2022).

Conclusion

This article demonstrates that *salam* is not merely a verbal expression but a practice imbued with profound theological, ethical, and social dimensions in contemporary Muslim life. The main finding highlights that the reduction of *salam* to a formal or ritualized gesture—often shaped by normative debates and rigid interpretations—has contributed to the erosion of compassion, solidarity, and social cohesion within Muslim societies. Conversely, when *salam* is understood and practiced holistically, as emphasized in the Qur'an, classical exegesis, and contemporary ethical thought, it functions as a moral medium that internalizes values of peace, respect for human dignity, and relational ethics across individuals and communities. In

this sense, *salam* embodies a form of Islamic moral wisdom that is simple in practice yet far-reaching in its civilizational impact.

From a scholarly perspective, this study contributes to contemporary Qur'anic exegesis by underscoring the necessity of integrating textual interpretation with lived social realities. It extends the scope of *tafsir* from a predominantly normative and doctrinal enterprise toward an ethical and contextual approach that is socially transformative. By engaging classical *mufassirs*, modern Islamic ethical thinkers, and contemporary social contexts—including pluralism, interfaith interaction, and digital challenges—this article affirms that Qur'anic interpretation remains relevant and intellectually productive when oriented toward universal moral objectives such as justice, compassion, and peace. Within this framework, *salam* is positioned as a practical Qur'anic model that bridges revelation, ethics, and global social life.

Nevertheless, this study has certain limitations. The analysis is primarily conceptual and literature-based, and therefore does not fully capture the diversity of *salam* practices across different cultural, legal, and social settings. Future research may benefit from empirical and comparative studies across regions and Islamic traditions to examine how *salam* is negotiated, contested, and embodied in everyday Muslim life. Further investigation is also needed into the implications of digital technologies and artificial intelligence for Qur'anic ethics, in order to ensure that the development of contemporary exegesis remains grounded in scholarly authority while remaining responsive to the ethical challenges of an evolving global society.

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