A Parameter Based Framework for Addressing the Misinterpretation of Hadith Al-Fitan in Contemporary Discourse

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ABSTRACT:

This study examines the issue of the misinterpretation of Hadith al-Fitan in contemporary discourse, particularly when hadith texts are interpreted without adherence to established scholarly methodologies. Such tendencies have contributed to interpretive distortions, highlighting the need for a more systematic and authoritative framework for understanding these narrations. Accordingly, the study aims to develop a parameter-based framework to address the misinterpretation of Hadith al-Fitan in contemporary discourse. A qualitative approach was employed through document analysis, involving the examination of authoritative classical sources and relevant contemporary academic literature. The collected data were analysed using thematic content analysis. The findings reveal that a sound understanding of Hadith al-Fitan requires the holistic integration of relevant narrations, a disciplined literal approach to hadith texts, adherence to authoritative scholarly understanding and careful consideration of the correspondence between contemporary events and the indications of hadith texts. Collectively, these parameters form an integrated analytical framework for evaluating and regulating interpretive tendencies related to Hadith al-Fitan. This study contributes to the field of hadith studies by proposing a systematic, contextual, and authoritative framework that may assist scholars and researchers in addressing contemporary challenges associated with the interpretation of Hadith al-Fitan.

Keywords: Hadith al-Fitan; Misinterpretation, Framework, Interpretation, Contemporary Discourse

1. Introduction

Hadith constitutes the second primary source of Islamic law after the Qur'an. Beyond serving as a historical record, Hadith functions as a fundamental reference in the formulation of legal rulings, creed and ethics, while simultaneously providing guidance for human life. Understanding Hadith within an appropriate framework through a sound scholarly discipline is therefore essential to safeguarding the integrity of Islamic teachings from all forms of distortion and deviation ('Ajjaj al-Khatib, 1966; Brown, 2009). In this regard, methodologies developed by Muslim scholars, particularly the discipline of Usul al-Hadith, provide a systematic and comprehensive framework for accurately understanding the meanings of hadith texts, extending beyond the mere assessment of the authenticity of transmission ('Ajjaj al-Khatib, 1966).

Within contemporary discourse, the phenomenon of misinterpreting hadith texts has become increasingly alarming. This situation arises either through movements that reject the authority of Hadith altogether or through groups that adopt a purely literal approach to hadith interpretation without adhering to a systematic methodology (Musa, 2008; Brown, 2009; al-Qaradawi, 2000). Such distortions reflect a broader crisis of understanding among Muslims, as certain individuals fail to grasp the essence and proper methodology of hadith interpretation (al-Qaradawi, 2000). Musa (2008) and Brown (2009) argue that the inability to distinguish between textual meaning and contextual application renders hadith vulnerable to manipulation in support of particular agendas or, conversely, to rejection on the grounds of perceived irrationality. Al-Qaradawi (d. 1444 AH) (2000) further explains that such distortions are often driven by ignorant individuals who deliberately manipulate the meanings of authentic hadiths to advance personal interests, ideological affiliations, or their own desires.

These challenges become even more critical when dealing with Hadith al-Fitan. According to al-Qaradawi (2000), hadiths within this category are frequently misunderstood in ways that foster passivity and despair, leading some individuals to neglect religious obligations or abandon their responsibilities under the pretext of awaiting future predestined events. Furthermore, Zaimuddin (2023) observes that Hadith al-Fitan is often exploited for political purposes. At the same time, hadith texts concerning al-Mahdi, the caliphal system, and political leadership are frequently manipulated to legitimise the agendas of particular groups or factions (Zaimuddin, 2023). Accordingly, this article aims to develop a parameter-based framework for addressing the misinterpretation of Hadith al-Fitan in a more systematic and authoritative manner.

2. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative approach grounded in conceptual analysis to develop a parameter-based framework for addressing the problem of misinterpreting Hadith al-Fitan in contemporary discourse. In terms of research design, the study employs a document analysis method involving a critical examination of both classical and contemporary sources. Authoritative classical sources serve as the epistemological foundation for understanding Hadith al-Fitan, while contemporary sources comprise journal articles and scholarly works that discuss the phenomenon of misinterpretation within present-day contexts. The integration of these two categories of sources is essential for identifying the gap between traditional interpretive approaches and contemporary interpretive tendencies.

Data collection is divided into primary and secondary sources. Primary data consist of classical texts that provide authoritative perspectives on the understanding of Hadith al-Fitan, whereas secondary data encompass scholarly discussions on hadith interpretation methodologies as well as analyses of interpretive deviations in contemporary discourse. Data were analysed using thematic content analysis, enabling the identification, categorisation and synthesis of key themes relevant to the development of the proposed framework.

3. Results

The Concept of Hadith al-Fitan

The term al-fitan is derived from the Arabic language and is the plural form of fitnah. According to Ibn Faris (d. 390 AH) (1982) and Salih and Muhammad (1998), the word fitnah denotes trial, testing and purification. Ibn Manzur (d. 711 AH) further explains that the term refers to trials, tribulations and the process of distinguishing and refining. Consistent with this explanation, Muhammad al-Amin (2009) states that the original meaning of al-fitan refers to the process of placing gold into fire in order to separate what is valuable from what is worthless.

From a terminological perspective, Muslim scholars define fitnah as any form of trial, calamity or event that tests the faith of individuals or communities. According to al-Qastalani (d. 923 AH) (1996), fitnah encompasses trials, punishment, hardship, and all forms of undesirable circumstances that may lead to harmful consequences such as disbelief, sin, disgrace, immorality, calamities and similar afflictions. Likewise, al-Tuwayjiri (2006) explains that the essence of fitnah lies in testing and trial. He further asserts that fitnah serves to reveal the true nature of a person, whether virtuous or otherwise. Hadith al-Fitan refers to a body of hadiths that discuss future events involving trials, hardships, and catastrophic occurrences intended as warnings for believers (Jalil & Noor, 2024). Similarly, al-'Ujayri (2011) defines Hadith al-Fitan as a collection of hadiths describing future trials and challenges that serve to expose the true condition of individuals, whether righteous or otherwise.

The Tradition of Writing on Hadith al-Fitan

Within the tradition of hadith scholarship, one of the earliest works devoted specifically to collecting narrations on this subject is al-Fitan by Nu'aym ibn Hammad al-Khuza'i (d. 228 AH) (al-Khuza'i, 1991; Nawal, 2013; al-Marwazi, n.d.). Other notable works include al-Fitan by Hanbal ibn Ishaq ibn Hanbal al-Shaybani (d. 273 AH) (al-Shaybani, 1998) and al-Sunan al-Waridah fi al-Fitan by 'Uthman al-Dani (d. 444 AH) (al-Dani, n.d.). Furthermore, discussions on Hadith al-Fitan also receive considerable attention in major hadith compilations such as Sahih al-Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, Sunan Abi Dawud, and Jami' al-Tirmidhi.

An examination of the treatment of this subject in the major hadith collections reveals several terminologies employed by scholars. The most prominent is al-fitan itself, referring to various forms of trials, turmoil, and divisions that befall the Muslim community, particularly during the end times. In addition, some scholars combine the term al-fitan with Ashrat al-Sa'ah (Signs of the Hour). For example, al-Nawawi (d. 676 AH) entitled the relevant section of Sahih Muslim as Kitab al-Fitan wa Ashrat al-Sa'ah (Muslim, 1955). Such terminology appears intended to broaden the scope of the discussion, as not all end-time events constitute fitnah; some represent major and minor signs indicating the approach of the Day of Judgment.

Moreover, the term al-Malahim is also closely associated with this field of discussion. Al-Malahim refers to major wars or epic battles that will occur during the end times. In his al-Sunan, Abu Dawud (d. 275 AH) designated this section as Kitab al-Fitan wa al-Malahim (Abu Dawud, 1976). This designation indicates that, in addition to trials and tribulations, the hadith corpus also contains narrations concerning major battles between Muslims and their enemies preceding the Day of Judgment. Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 AH) (2004) distinguishes between al-Malahim and al-Fitan. According to him, al-Malahim refers to wars fought between Muslims and non-Muslims, whereas fitnah denotes conflicts occurring among Muslims themselves (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2004). This distinction is based on prophetic traditions in which the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) referred to himself as Nabi al-Malhamah. Ibn al-Qayyim (d. 751 AH) (2019) explains that al-Malhamah signifies a Prophet commissioned to strive against the enemies of Allah.

Misinterpretation of Hadith al-Fitan in Contemporary Discourse

The misinterpretation of hadith arises when the rigorous methodological principles established

within the Islamic scholarly tradition are neglected, resulting in interpretive distortions that undermine the integrity of hadith texts (al-Deek, 2025). This problem becomes more critical when weak or unauthentic hadiths are employed in theological debates and when the contextual circumstances surrounding the narration of a hadith are disregarded (Aziz & Qasim, 2025). Without a comprehensive understanding of both the text and its context, modern audiences risk reading hadith through the lens of contemporary ideological commitments or purely anachronistic assumptions (Aziz & Qasim, 2025; al-Deek, 2025).

Contextual understanding constitutes one of the fundamental requirements for accurate hadith interpretation. Failure to apply this principle often produces fragmented, ideologically driven, and methodologically unsound interpretations (al-Deek, 2025). For instance, some individuals selectively focus on particular texts based on emotional inclinations or personal preferences. Such an approach disrupts the balance of textual understanding and contributes to the growth of ideological extremism (al-Deek, 2025).

In the context of Hadith al-Fitan, the challenges of interpretation are considerably greater because many of these narrations concern future events (ghaybiyyat). Such hadiths are often regarded as difficult to interpret due to the challenge of determining whether they should be understood literally, metaphorically, or analogically (Azmi, 2020). Indeed, one of the principal causes of misinterpretation in contemporary discourse is the tendency either to impose an excessively literal reading upon texts that should be understood symbolically or, conversely, to symbolise texts that were intended to be understood literally (Azmi, 2020; al-Deek, 2025).

Another common form of misinterpretation is the forced correlation of hadith texts with contemporary events (al-'Ujayri, 2011). Many individuals hastily claim that particular events or public figures correspond to descriptions found in Hadith al-Fitan without sufficient evidence (al-'Ujayri, 2011).

For example, within contemporary discourse, some interpret al-Dajjal not as a human individual but as a symbol of advanced technology, global economic systems, or media propaganda. Although technological advancement characterises the modern age, hadith texts consistently describe al-Dajjal as a specific individual possessing identifiable physical characteristics (Aziz & Qasim, 2025; Azmi, 2020). Interpreting al-Dajjal as a technological system or abstract structure without substantial textual evidence may distort the Prophet's original warning regarding the trials associated with al-Dajjal (Azmi, 2020; Dars et al., 2025).

Furthermore, narratives derived from Hadith al-Fitan have frequently been manipulated by extremist organisations such as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) as instruments of political and military propaganda (Musselwhite, 2016). These groups construct end-time war narratives to attract followers, selectively and literally citing Hadith al-Fitan to legitimise their ideological struggle, particularly through references to Dabiq, apocalyptic warfare, and the Black Banners (Musselwhite, 2016; Haroro, 2016). They utilise relevant hadiths to portray the conflict in Syria as al-Malhamah al-Kubra and to present their movement as the prophesied army of the end times (Haroro, 2016). Moreover, their use of hadith to incite hostility among Muslims and encourage indiscriminate opposition to political leaders departs significantly from the original objectives of Hadith al-Fitan, which emphasise wisdom, patience, and communal unity (Dars et al., 2025).

Similarly, with regard to hadiths concerning al-Mahdi, various contemporary groups have claimed that their leaders are the awaited al-Mahdi (Sidek & Majid, 2022). In some cases, leaders have even proclaimed themselves to be al-Mahdi, as exemplified by the claims of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani (Badshah et al., 2024). Such assertions frequently disregard the characteristics explicitly outlined in the hadith texts (Badshah et al., 2024). Furthermore, the exploitation of Mahdist traditions for partisan agendas not only misguides followers but also undermines the sanctity of the prophetic

message, which is fundamentally intended to establish justice and mercy (Sidek & Majid, 2022).

4. Discussion

Parameter One: Integrating All Relevant Narrations and Adopting a Contextual and Holistic Approach

Scholars have consistently emphasised the necessity of compiling all authentic narrations related to Hadith al-Fitan and examining them collectively to prevent misconceptions and misinterpretations of their intended meanings. According to Nawal (2013), classical scholars stressed the importance of gathering narrations pertaining to al-Fitan, analysing them, and understanding their meanings through a holistic approach. To facilitate this objective, they dedicated specific chapters and sections within their scholarly works to this subject matter (Nawal, 2013). In a similar vein, Salman (2004) argues that understanding this field requires the systematic collection of narrations and the evaluation of their authenticity. Likewise, al-Muqaddam (2008) maintains that one of the essential methods for understanding Hadith al-Fitan is to integrate all available chains and textual variants of narration, compile the authentic reports, and subsequently interpret them collectively and comprehensively.

In general, a comprehensive understanding of any issue can only be achieved through an examination of all relevant hadiths within a particular thematic category (Md Ariffin et al., 2023). Classical scholars strongly advocated this methodological principle. Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 241 AH) stated: "A hadith cannot be properly understood unless its various chains of transmission are collected, for hadiths explain one another" (al-Baghdadi, n.d.). Similarly, al-Athram (d. 261 AH) remarked that hadiths clarify and corroborate one another (Jarrad, 2018). Ibn Hazm (d. 456 AH) (1988) likewise asserted: "Recording the hadiths of the Messenger of Allah, compiling them, and bringing them together is an obligation."

In the context of Hadith al-Fitan, neglecting this parameter constitutes one of the primary causes of misunderstanding the intended meanings of the texts. For example, some contemporary interpretations claim that Gog and Magog (Ya'juj and Ma'juj) symbolise global systems and technological structures that dominate the modern world (Hosein, 2009; Supomo & Hidayat, 2021). Likewise, the hadith describing Gog and Magog shooting arrows into the sky, as narrated by Muslim (1955), has been interpreted by some as referring to advanced military technologies, including ballistic missiles and military satellites. Such interpretations further suggest the occurrence of a future "Star Wars"-type conflict between two major geopolitical blocs, namely the Anglo-American-Israeli alliance (Gog) and Russia (Magog) (Hosein, 2009).

These interpretations, however, contradict the views advanced by authoritative hadith scholars. When the relevant religious texts are examined collectively, Gog and Magog are not portrayed as symbols of global powers or technological systems. Rather, they are described as a group of human beings who spread corruption on earth, prompting Dhul-Qarnayn to construct a barrier to prevent their destruction and mischief (Qur'an, al-Kahf 18:94). Near the end of time, they will eventually break through this barrier (Qur'an, al-Anbiya' 21:96–97) and proceed towards Bayt al-Maqdis (Jerusalem). During their journey, they will stop at Lake Tiberias and drink from it until its water is depleted (Muslim, 1955).

This understanding is further supported by the hadith of al-Nawwas ibn Sam'an, in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated:

"Then Gog and Magog will proceed until they reach Mount Khamr, which is the mountain of Bayt al-Maqdis. They will say: 'We have killed those who were on the earth; now let us kill those who are in the heavens.' Then they will shoot their arrows towards the sky, and Allah will return their arrows stained with blood" (Muslim, 1955).

Interpreting these arrows as symbols of missiles, advanced military technology, or military satellites represents an interpretation that has not been advanced by recognised authoritative scholars of Islam. Rather, scholars maintain that the arrows mentioned in the hadith should be understood according to their apparent and

original meaning. This interpretation is reinforced by another prophetic narration in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

"Indeed, I know their names, the names of their fathers, and the colours of their horses. They will be among the finest cavalry on the face of the earth at that time" (Muslim, 1955).

Another narration states:

"The Muslims will use the bows, arrows, and shields left behind by Gog and Magog as fuel for seven years after their destruction" (Ibn Majah, 2000).

Accordingly, a number of scholars have argued that during the end times humanity will revert to the use of traditional weapons and military equipment, such as bows, shields, swords, and horses (al-Ashqar, 1991; al-Muqaddam, 2008). Therefore, a holistic examination of all relevant narrations is indispensable in preventing speculative interpretations that detach hadith texts from their broader textual and contextual framework.

Parameter Two: A Disciplined Literal Approach to Hadith Texts

Hadith texts describing events of fitnah should be understood through a disciplined adherence to their literal meanings. In this context, a literal approach refers to deriving meaning directly from the apparent wording of the hadith without resorting to figurative interpretation (ta'wil), unless there is clear and authoritative evidence necessitating such an interpretation. At the same time, the text should not be understood in an excessive manner by introducing additional meanings, associating it with specific contemporary events, or constructing speculative assumptions that lack support from the religious sources.

Based on the present study's review of the literature, this approach represents one of the fundamental principles established by Muslim scholars for understanding religious texts in general, including Hadith al-Fitan. Al-Shafi'i (d. 204 AH) (1938) articulated this principle by stating:

"Every statement in the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) that is general and clear should be understood according to its apparent meaning and general applicability until an authentic hadith from the Messenger of Allah indicates that the intended meaning of that general expression is in fact specific or restricted."

This methodological principle is also supported by numerous other scholars. Among them is al-Tabari (n.d.), who stated:

"It is not permissible to abandon the literal meaning understood from a statement in favour of a hidden interpretation for which there exists no evidence establishing its validity."

Drawing upon a wide range of scholarly discussions, al-Harbi (2008) concludes that there is scholarly consensus among Muslims regarding the obligation to adhere to the apparent meaning of scriptural texts so long as no other Shar'i evidence exists to redirect that meaning.

In the context of Hadith al-Fitan, certain interpretations not only depart from the literal understanding of the texts but also involve excessive figurative readings unsupported by credible evidence. For example, some have argued that al-Dajjal merely symbolises superstition, deception, and evil (Muhammad Rashid, 1990). Others have interpreted al-Dajjal as representing a false form of Christianity (Shadi, 2010). Furthermore, a variety of perspectives emerging from different ideological and religious traditions have associated al-Dajjal with contemporary realities. For instance, al-Dajjal has been portrayed as a symbol of advanced technological systems and global economic powers that exercise control over humanity (Sahib, 1999). Within certain Christian interpretations, the Antichrist is likewise understood not as a single individual but as a movement or spirit opposing the truth that already exists within society (Maryam, 2014).

Such interpretations clearly diverge from the descriptions found in the hadith literature, which portray al-Dajjal as a real individual possessing distinct physical characteristics. This is evident in

the statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him):

"Indeed, Allah is not hidden from you. Indeed, Allah is not one-eyed." Then he pointed with his hand towards his eye and said: "Indeed, al-Masih al-Dajjal is blind in his right eye, and his eye appears like a protruding grape" (al-Bukhari, 1994)

In another narration, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

"Allah has not sent any Prophet except that he warned his people about the one-eyed liar (al-Dajjal). Indeed, he is one-eyed, whereas your Lord is not one-eyed. Between his eyes is written the word 'Kafir'" (al-Bukhari, 1994).

Similarly, the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated:

"Indeed, I have informed you so much about al-Dajjal that I fear you may not fully comprehend him. Indeed, al-Masih al-Dajjal is a short man, with curly hair and one defective eye. His eye is neither completely blind nor sunken. If you remain uncertain regarding al-Dajjal or his characteristics, then know that your Lord is not one-eyed" (Abu Dawud, 1976).

These narrations clearly indicate that al-Dajjal is an actual individual possessing specific and identifiable characteristics. Accordingly, Ibn 'Uthaymin (d. 1421 AH) (2017) explains that al-Dajjal is a man descended from Adam, whom Allah, in His wisdom, will bring forth as a means of testing humanity through one of the greatest trials in human history.

Parameter Three: Adhering to Authoritative Scholarly Understanding in the Interpretation of Hadith al-Fitan

In interpreting Hadith al-Fitan, prioritising authoritative scholarly understanding is of paramount importance. In this context, the views of scholars from the earliest generations of Islam are regarded as authoritative, as they belonged to the generations closest to the era of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), possessed the deepest mastery of the Arabic language, and demonstrated the most accurate understanding of revelation in light of its historical context and contemporary realities. By referring to their understanding, the interpretation of Hadith al-Fitan can be guided in a manner that remains faithful to its intended meaning, thereby preventing excessive interpretation, unfounded speculation, and deviations from sound understanding.

These authoritative generations comprise the early Companions (Sahabah) and those who faithfully followed their path among the early Muslim generations (Sa'd, 2014). They are recognised as the three most virtuous generations referred to by the Prophet (peace be upon him), who said:

"The best of people are my generation, then those who come after them, then those who come after them" (al-Bukhari, 1994).

As a general principle, understanding religious texts—including Hadith al-Fitan—requires adherence to the understanding of the early Muslim generations, as they were the closest to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Consequently, they possessed a superior understanding of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, having lived during the period of revelation, comprehended both the textual and contextual dimensions of the religious texts, and possessed an unparalleled command of the Arabic language. For this reason, numerous scholars have emphasised the importance of following their understanding. Among them was al-Awza'i (d. 157 AH), who stated:

"Adhere firmly to the legacy of the early generations, even if people reject you. Beware of the opinions of later people, even if they adorn them with eloquent words" (al-Ris, 2015).

These generations engaged with revelation without resorting to unwarranted reinterpretation or distortion, nor did they oppose the revealed texts through purely rational speculation. Al-Ghufayli (1998) explains that none among them spoke about religious matters except on the basis of revealed guidance. Consistent with this perspective, al-Harbi (2008) formulated a specific methodological principle, namely that the interpretations of the Salaf and their understanding of the revealed texts constitute

authoritative evidence for subsequent generations. Likewise, Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 AH) (2004) emphasised the necessity of understanding what Allah and His Messenger intended through the texts of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. According to him, the Prophet personally taught the Companions the meanings of these texts, making their knowledge of the intended meanings of revelation even more complete than their memorisation of the texts themselves (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2004). This knowledge was subsequently transmitted to the generations that followed them (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2004).

An illustrative example can be found in the hadith concerning the emergence of al-Mahdi. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated:

"Indeed, the earth will be filled with oppression and tyranny. Then a man from my family will emerge and fill it with justice and equity just as it had previously been filled with oppression and tyranny" (Ibn Hibban, 2012; al-Hakim, 2018).

Various interpretations have been advanced regarding the emergence of al-Mahdi. Some contemporary approaches tend towards metaphorical readings, portraying al-Mahdi as a symbol of reformers, justice, and moral goodness rather than a specific individual (Muhammad Yusoff & Ismail, 2023). Similarly, deviant religious movements, particularly those that have emerged in Malaysia, have identified certain individuals as al-Mahdi, despite such claims contradicting authoritative scholarly understanding (Fadzil, 2011).

In contrast, early Muslim authorities such as Ibn Sirin (d. 110 AH) explicitly stated that al-Mahdi would be a member of this Muslim community and would serve as the imam of Prophet 'Isa (Jesus) upon his descent to earth (Ibn Abi Shaybah, 1989). Furthermore, al-Safarini al-Hanbali (d. 1188 AH) affirmed that the narrations concerning the emergence of al-Mahdi have been transmitted through numerous chains from a considerable number of Companions and subsequently narrated by the Successors (Tabi'un), reaching the level of mutawatir ma'nawi (mass-transmitted in meaning), thereby producing certain and definitive knowledge (al-Kattani, n.d.).

Al-Safarini further maintained that belief in the emergence of al-Mahdi constitutes an obligatory element of faith, as affirmed by Muslim scholars and documented in the creedal works of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah (al-Kattani, n.d.). Accordingly, adherence to the authoritative understanding of the early generations serves as an essential safeguard against speculative interpretations and ideological appropriations of Hadith al-Fitan in contemporary discourse.

Parameter Four: The Correspondence of Events With The Indications of Hadith Texts

Hadith al-Fitan is closely associated with events or realities that are expected to occur in human history. In order to arrive at an accurate interpretation, particularly when attempting to relate a hadith to a specific event, the event in question must first be carefully examined to determine whether it genuinely corresponds to the textual indications of the hadith.

This parameter emphasises that the evaluation of an event should not be conducted hastily based solely on a single external characteristic that appears superficially similar to the content of a hadith. Rather, the entirety of the prophetic description must be examined comprehensively, including the event itself, the accompanying signs and circumstances, as well as the implications explicitly mentioned by the Prophet (peace be upon him). In this regard, scholars have cautioned against directly associating hadiths concerning tribulations with contemporary realities without sufficient evidence (Salman, 2004). According to them, the true correspondence between a hadith and a particular event often becomes apparent only after the event has actually occurred or has fully unfolded (Salman, 2004).

The methodological principle outlined above extends beyond the interpretation of Hadith al-Fitan and applies across various Islamic disciplines. Within the framework of Islamic jurisprudence, for example, the Qur'an and the Sunnah establish legal rulings in a general manner. Consequently, determining whether a

specific event or circumstance falls under a particular legal ruling requires careful understanding and sound judgement (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1991). Ibn al-Qayyim (d. 751 AH) (2019) explains that a mufti cannot issue an accurate legal verdict without first understanding the reality of the situation (fiqh al-waqiʿ) and then understanding Allah's ruling concerning that reality (fiqh al-wajib fi al-waqiʿ).

In the context of Hadith al-Fitan, this parameter is particularly significant because it enables individuals to assess contemporary events through the guidance of the Qur'an and the Sunnah while ensuring that such assessments remain consistent with established scholarly principles and methodological discipline. The Prophet (peace be upon him) himself demonstrated caution when evaluating incidents of fitnah that occurred during his lifetime.

One notable example is his approach towards Ibn Sayyad, concerning whom rumours had circulated among the people that he might be al-Dajjal. Consequently, the Prophet (peace be upon him), together with ʿUmar ibn al-Khattab and several Companions, went to observe and investigate his condition in order to determine whether he was indeed al-Dajjal (al-Bukhari, 1994; Muslim, 1955). This incident illustrates the importance of verification and careful examination before attributing a prophetic description to a specific individual.

Another example concerns the demolition of the Kaʿbah during the time of ʿAbd Allah ibn al-Zubayr (d. 73 AH). Several hadiths indicate that the destruction of the Kaʿbah will occur near the end of time and will constitute one of the signs of the Hour. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

"The Kaʿbah will be destroyed by a man from Abyssinia who has thin legs" (al-Bukhari, 1994; Muslim, 1955).

In a narration from Ibn ʿAbbas, an additional description is mentioned:

"It is as though I can see him: a black man with widely spaced legs, removing its stones one by one" (al-Bukhari, 1994).

Likewise, a narration from ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿAmr states:

"The Kaʿbah will be demolished by a man from Abyssinia who has thin legs. He will strip it of its ornaments and remove its covering (kiswah). It is as though I can see him: a man with a small head (or a bald head) and bent legs, striking the Kaʿbah with his spade and axe" (Ahmad, 1995).

According to al-Qastalani (d. 923 AH) (1996), the destruction of the Kaʿbah described in these narrations will occur shortly before the Day of Judgment, at a time when no one on earth remains who invokes the name of Allah. Similarly, al-Shayiʿ (2007) explains that the destruction of the Kaʿbah is a future event that will undoubtedly occur and remains among the signs of the Hour that have yet to be fulfilled.

However, the demolition of the Kaʿbah during the era of Ibn al-Zubayr bears no connection to the event described in these prophetic narrations. In fact, Mujahid (d. 104 AH) stated:

"When Ibn al-Zubayr demolished the Kaʿbah, I went to observe whether I could find the characteristics described by ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿAmr. However, I found none of them" (al-Azraqi, 2016).

The attitude demonstrated by Mujahid reflects the methodological caution exercised by the early Muslim scholars before attributing any historical event to the fulfilment of a prophetic narration. It illustrates the importance of ensuring complete correspondence between an event and the textual indicators contained in the hadith before making definitive claims regarding its fulfilment. Such a disciplined approach serves as an important safeguard against speculative interpretations and premature attempts to associate contemporary events with Hadith al-Fitan.

5. Conclusion

This study has developed a parameter-based framework for addressing the issue of misinterpreting Hadith al-Fitan in contemporary discourse. Based on the analysis undertaken, the findings indicate that the interpretation of Hadith al-Fitan requires a more structured methodological approach that incorporates four

principal parameters: the holistic integration of narrations, a balanced literal approach to textual interpretation, adherence to authoritative scholarly understanding, and the correspondence between hadith texts and contemporary realities.

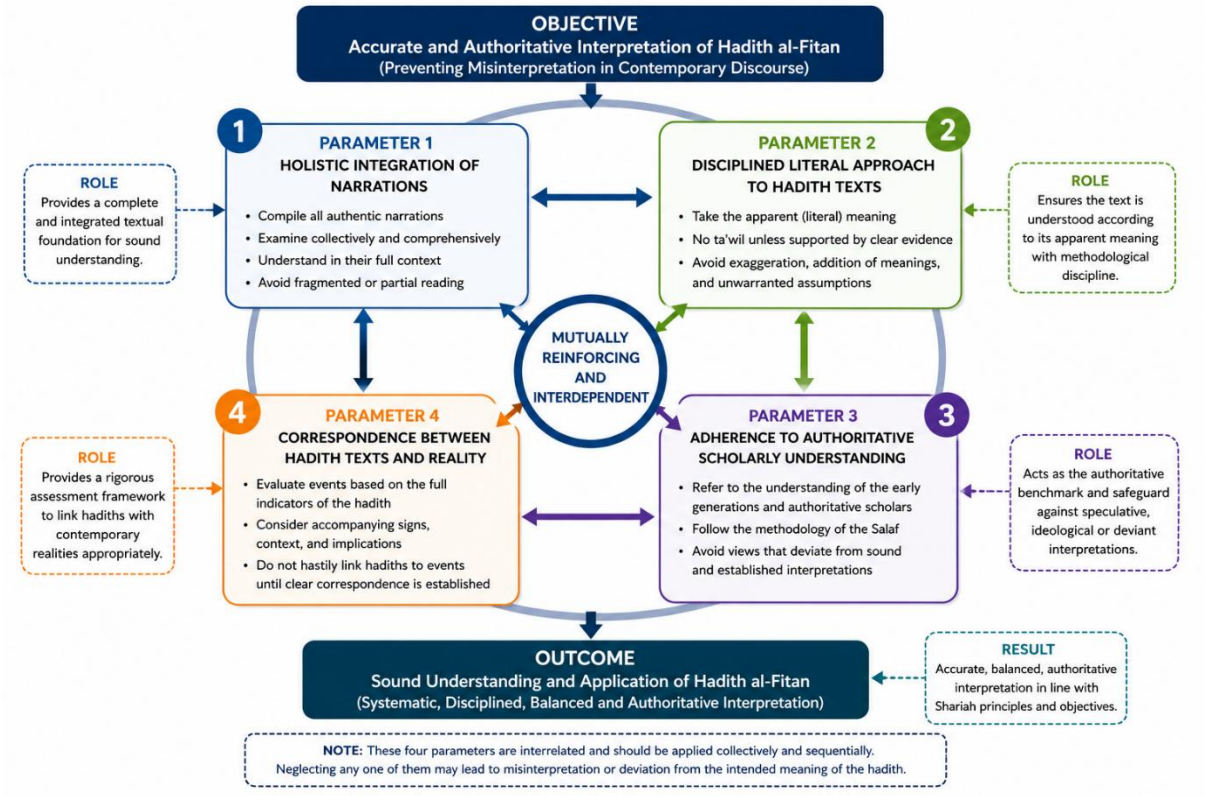

Figure 1. Parameters for Understanding Hadith al-Fitan

These four parameters serve as a guiding framework for producing accurate interpretations and mitigating tendencies towards interpretive distortion. In this regard, each parameter functions as a foundational evaluative criterion to ensure that the process of understanding Hadith al-Fitan is conducted in a systematic, disciplined, and authoritative manner. Furthermore, the proposed parameters are mutually reinforcing and should not be treated as independent or isolated components. Rather, they operate collectively as an integrated framework that facilitates a balanced and methodologically sound interpretation of Hadith al-Fitan within contemporary discourse.

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8. Author Declaration

The authors confirm that this manuscript is an original work and declare that there are no conflicts of interest related to this research.