

# The Strengthening of Faith Through the Understanding of Fitan Hadith: A Nominal Group Technique Approach

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## ABSTRACT

The Prophet PBUH's teachings regarding the events of the final days are referred to as fitan hadith. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to examine the understanding of the fitan hadith in the context of faith strengthening. In this study, the researchers chose the Nominal Group Technique approach as a method to obtain expert views. Based on the voting of five experts, the results obtained show that all of them agree that understanding the fitan hadith can enhance faith.

**Keywords:** Fitan hadith, faith strengthening, Nominal Group Technique.

## INTRODUCTION

Believing in Allah and His Apostle is a belief in the truth. The nature of faith according to Islam is constantly increasing and decreasing. The Quran makes it very evident that a person's faith can rise and fall. For example, Allah says, "And when His verses are recited to them, they [the verses] increase their faith" (Al-Anfal:2). In the course of that, the scholars have discussed some methods to enhance faith. One way to strengthen faith is to understand the evidence for religious practices, study about humanity and the universe, and carry out God's commands while avoiding His prohibitions (Mat Jalil, 2018). In other words, education in faith to enhance belief needs to emphasize the aspect of rational thinking that is reinforced by modern scientific knowledge (Ahmad Yunus Kasim & Abd Halim Tamuri, 2010).

In the context of today's society, the issue of increasing faith is of paramount importance. This is because faith is a strong fortress to face the challenges of the present. Similarly, efforts to promote rational faith are given particular attention to the younger generation. One of the methods that can attract people, especially young people, is the lecture of hadith about the events of the latter days. It can be seen by the number of spectators who follow the talk about the title on social media platforms like YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and so on. The science of hadith encompasses reports concerning the eschatological events of the end times, which are referred to as the fitan hadith. These include reports about the appearance of al-Mahdi, the Dajjal (the Antichrist), the descent of Prophet Isa, and the emergence of Gog and Magog (Waugh, 1985). Hence, this study focuses on evaluating the influence of fitan hadith lectures on the growth of faith in the community.

## THE IMPACT OF INADEQUATE UNDERSTANDING OF FITAN HADITH

Indeed, to ensure that fitan hadith can enhance faith, a sufficient understanding of hadith is crucial. This is because insufficient comprehension of fitan hadith can lead to incorrect interpretations. For instance, consider the hadith mentioning al-Mahdi, who will be born to lead the Muslims at the end of times. According to the hadith, the Prophet Muhammad PBUH stated, "The Day of Judgment will not occur until a man from my family leads the people, his name will be the same as mine and his father's name will be the same as my father's name, he will fill the world with justice" (Abu Dawud, 1994). However, due to inadequate understanding, there were claims around the 1970s in the 20th century that the Jordanian leader, al-Hasan bin Talal, was the awaited al-Mahdi. When it was said to him that in the hadith his name is mentioned as Muhammad, not Hasan, he asked back, "Does the name Muhammad mean something good (Hasan)?" Thus, there is no doubt that the meaning of that hadith is Hasan. Regarding the second name, which was his father's name of Abdullah, he clarified that it was actually his grandfather's name, and could be attributed to that rather

than his father's. This example clearly illustrates how incorrect interpretations and deviations in understanding the hadith of fitan can arise from insufficient comprehension using the proper methodological approach (Al-Qudah, 2009).

One way to address this issue is to employ hadith authentication and classification methods to ensure the validity and accuracy of hadith. This involves examining the chain of narration (isnad) and the text (matn) to determine the authenticity of the hadith. As emphasized by al-Bukhari, the renowned hadith scholar, the highest degree of authenticity after the Quran is the Sahih al-Bukhari (Binbeshr et al., 2021). Additionally, the consensus of scholars, known as the Ummah, has accepted this hadith collection as authentic. Careful examination of the narrators' reliability and the hadith's content can prevent the misuse of weak or fabricated hadith, ensuring that the understanding of fitan is grounded in authentic sources (Binbeshr et al., 2021; Najiyah et al., 2017).

Furthermore, misunderstandings about the fitan hadith can lead to misconceptions and create negative perceptions about the events preceding the Day of Judgment. For instance, there is a writer who has claimed that the Dajjal will appear before al-Mahdi and also mentioned the year 1420H, equivalent to 1999M, as the date of the Dajjal's appearance. Although this allegation has been proven false, it has caused concern among some community members who read the author's book published in Cairo (Al-Muqaddam, 2007). According to the observations of the fitan hadith, the correct chronology is that the appearance of al-Mahdi should precede the arrival of the Dajjal. This is because there is a hadith that mentions Prophet Isa will descend at a time when humanity will have their leader, namely al-Mahdi, and it is narrated that it will be Prophet Isa who will kill the Dajjal. Among the hadiths that mention this matter is what was narrated by Muslim from Jabir bin 'Abd Allah, who stated that the Messenger of Allah said, "There will always be a group from my ummah who will stand firm in defending the truth until the Day of Judgment." Then he continued, "Isa Ibn Maryam will descend, and their leader (the Muslims) will say, 'Come and lead us in prayer.'" Isa replied, "No, indeed, some of you are leaders over others, as a mark of honor from Allah" (Muslim, 1993). Scholars who explain the fitan hadith conclude that when the Dajjal appears, al-Mahdi will already have been leading the Muslims, but will not be able to defeat the Dajjal. Finally, Prophet Isa was sent down to defeat and kill the Dajjal (Al-Wabil, 2020; al-Qudah, 2009).

Additionally, there is an individual known for their theory regarding the end times, who asserts that Gog and Magog have already emerged in the present era and have launched missiles (Ikram Khalil & Faisal Ahmad Shah, 2022). This is another instance of a misunderstanding, as the chronology in the hadith about tribulations indicates that this group will only appear after the Dajjal is killed, which is subsequent to the reign of Prophet Isa when justice and peace prevail. abadiAbu Hurairah, one of the companions who narrated the most hadith, stated that the Messenger of Allah said, "By Allah in whose hand is my soul, the son of Mary (Prophet Isa) will descend as a just ruler. He will break the cross, kill the pig, abolish the jizyah tax, and peace will prevail such that young camels will be left unattended by many as if no one wants them. Greed, hatred, and envy will also disappear, and people will be invited to accept wealth, but no one will want to accept wealth (zakat, aid) from others" (Muslim, 1993).

According to a narration by Muslim, the duration of Prophet Isa's return is 7 years, whereas another narration by Ahmad and Abu Dawud mentions that he will live for 40 years, after which he will pass away and be prayed over by the believers. In the narration by Abu Dawud, the Messenger of Allah is reported to have said, "There is no prophet between me and him." (Prophet Isa). Indeed, he will descend, and when you see him, you will surely recognize him. A man with a modest physique, skin color between white and red, and hair that looks like it's dripping with water even though it's not wet. He will fight people to accept Islam, break the cross, kill pigs, abolish the jizyah tax, and Allah will abolish all religions (other teachings) besides Islam in his time. He will kill the Dajjal and then live for 40 years on this earth, after which he will be taken by Allah and prayed upon by Muslims" (Abu Dawud, 1994). During that time, Gog and Magog will emerge, and Prophet Isa will pray for Allah to destroy them (Al-Wabil, 2020). The claim that Gog and Magog have already appeared stems from a lack of understanding in the proper interpretation of the fitan hadith.

Hence, comprehending fitan hadith requires a thoughtful, well-informed approach. Authenticating and classifying hadith is essential to avoid misunderstandings and deviations from Islamic teachings. Gaining an

in-depth, accurate understanding of these hadith can strengthen our faith and prepare us for foretold events. Precisely grasping the hadith on tribulations is crucial in rectifying the ummah's mindset and inspiring them to confront the challenges of the end times.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

This study is based on several observations of previous writings. Some findings indicate that issues related to hadith fitan describing the signs of the Day of Resurrection have been discussed, but they do not specifically relate to its impact on the growth of faith. What is quite interesting is that there is writing stating that the purpose behind knowing the fitan hadith and the signs of the end times is to strengthen a person's will and faith so that they do not fall into temptation (Abdul Muhaimin Rapingi & Mohd Yusuf Ismail, 2022). This indicates that there is a connection between the understanding of hadith about trials and the increase in a Muslim's faith.

In addition, the implications of faith in the Hereafter within the context of education, which encompasses aspects of faith, morality, and truth, create a sense of fear of God that encourages individuals to maintain their relationship with God and with others (Shokibul Arifin, 2022). The truth is that a person who maintains their relationship with Allah and others is a testament to their faith, as described in the words of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, which means "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let them honor their guest, their neighbor, and speak only good things" (Muslim, 1993).

Some studies conducted show the relationship between beliefs based on the Quran and hadith and a person's actions in various fields such as goodness, morality, social aspects, civilization, personality, and jihad; and this includes the effects of understanding the fitan hadith (Ishak Khairon et al., 2024). What can be understood from this study is evidence that learning and understanding hadith, especially hadith about fitan, can enhance a person's faith. On the contrary, based on the scholars' observations of the hadith regarding fitan, the scholars believe that a correct understanding of the Day of Judgment will enhance faith.

Furthermore, the public's interest in lectures related to the events of the end times is increasingly growing. This can be witnessed through physical attendance at the lecture or by watching the lecture on social media. This situation is very good because the delivery of hadith about tribulations is done using a storytelling method that aligns with the chronology found in the events of the end times. The delivery of hadith through good storytelling will capture the listeners' attention and subsequently help them remember the facts and practice the noble values found in the story (Rabiatul Adawiah Ahmad Rashid & Ahmad Tarmizi Abu, 2017).

Next, the content found in the fitan hadith is suitable for awakening anyone who reads and studies it. Some hadith list a number of events that will occur in the future and remind us of the preparations needed to face them. (Muhammad Asyraf & Hamid Addin, 2021; Mek Wok Mahmud et al., 2021). Indeed, the influence of fitan hadith in enhancing a Muslim's faith lies in its content, which emphasizes good values that can awaken awareness, encourage good deeds, promote self-reflection, and remind one of life after death, among other things.

## Research Aims

This study aims to prove that an understanding of the fitan hadith can enhance the faith of a Muslim.

Specifically, this study has two main objectives:

- To examine the views and recommendations of experts in generating a solution based on expert consensus.
- To validate the item proposed solutions based on the consensus and opinion of experts.

## METHODOLOGY

The NGT is the primary research method used in this work. Five professionals with expertise in hadith research and instruction participated in the study. To make sure that everyone is aware of the facts, the researcher had a face-to-face meeting and questioning session. In order to gather ideas and solutions based on

expert opinion, experts were convened, and the NGT approach was used in a brainstorming session. Using the NGT approach, the researcher performed a specific computation at the end of the session to produce results that addressed the study's objectives.

**Sampling**

In this study, the researchers employed as many as five experts in the field of specialization hadith. This amount is sufficient to ensure that the sample used is expert and does not require large quantities. The Nominal Group Technique (NGT) can be executed either with a single cohort or a large group (Lomax & McLeman, 1984; Dobbie et al., 2004; Mustapha et al., 2022). However, it can also be divided into smaller groups to facilitate effective communication according to the specific needs of the study. For example, there is a study by Dobbie et al. (2004) on the evaluation of the curriculum of a medical course consisting only of four to eight members for each group formed. According to Van de Ven dan Delbecq (1971), the sample is between 5-9 people, while the opinion of Steward (2001) states that the number between 5-8 is sufficient to implement the NGT procedure.

**NGT Techniques Step**

NGT is a methodical process for figuring out what a group of individuals agree on when it comes to a particular topic. Delbecq, Van De Ven, and Gustafson (1975) initially conceived of it as a "participation technique for social planning circumstances," wherein "social planning circumstances" encompassed activities such as exploratory research, public engagement, multidisciplinary specialist usage, and proposal review. Since then, it has been applied to a wide range of group settings, including empirical social scientific research. A number of researchers have used it in education, including O'Neil and Jackson (1983), Lomax and McLeman (1984), and MacPhail (2001). However, it appears to be utilized more commonly in health research.

Four main phases make up the highly structured NGT process: (1) The autonomous creation of concepts in reaction to a prompt. (2) Round-robin sharing (and listing) of these concepts without discourse. (3) Providing clarification on each concept and organizing related concepts. (4) Ideas are ranked by individual voting. Voting must to be anonymous and adhere to the previously mentioned rules in order to promote truthful outcomes and participation. Last but not least, NGT creates a lasting record of the group's work and results by recording all recommendations and authorized modifications on flipchart pages. Putting these documents on display is a great way to let those who were unable to attend a meeting fully or in part know what was discussed at the previous meeting and to enable groups to continue where they left off (Fox, 1989 ; Mustapha et al., 2022)

The model's overall agreement and evaluation scores are displayed in the findings. This research shows that all model build concentrations are within the ideal range. It is now necessary for the proportion to exceed 70% in light of the results of these investigations. Every item above 70% expert consensus, according to the study of expert approval data. A few studies that back up this idea include Mustapha et al. (2022) and Deslandes, Mendes, Pires, and Campos (2010). This enables the researchers to draw the conclusion that the model's essential components are practical and well-liked by the intended audience. The lengthy rounds of expert judgement required by the Delphi method might be replaced with a faster alternative, the modified NGT methodology.

**FINDINGS**

Items / Elements	Voter 1	Voter 2	Voter 3	Voter 4	Voter 5	Total item score	Percentage	Rank Priority	Voter Consensus
To create awareness	3	3	3	3	3	15	100	1	Suitable
Motivation to do good	3	3	3	3	3	15	100	1	Suitable



Self-Reflection	3	3	3	3	3	15	100	1	Suitable
Understand things related to rewards in the afterlife	3	3	3	3	3	15	100	1	Suitable
Adding Religious Knowledge	3	3	3	3	3	15	100	1	Suitable

The survey findings obtained through the Nominal Group Technique indicate that all the expert participants unanimously agreed on the significance of the five trust indicators presented in the survey. They concurred that these elements serve as specific indicators for assessing an individual's level of trust. Based on these findings, it is evident that the fitan hadith encompass elements that cultivate awareness, motivation to act, self-reflection, understanding the purpose of life for the hereafter, and enhancement of authentic religious knowledge. All these elements play a crucial role in strengthening a Muslim's faith. Furthermore, the correct teaching and comprehension of the fitan hadith are indispensable in life, particularly in these end times. Consequently, the referenced experts unanimously concur that explaining the fitan hadith using the appropriate methodology can augment an individual's faith. Lastly, to implement the NGT method, the researchers opted to conduct face-to-face meetings.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the NGT questionnaire conducted, the researcher found that all the experts who were referred and had expertise in the field of hadith based on the elements listed as indicators of increased faith can be achieved through understanding the hadith of end-time events (fitan hadith). All the experts who were asked definitely answered that all the items marked as indications or signs of increasing faith can be established when a person understands the hadith well. As for the element of giving awareness, all fitan hadith experts can raise awareness in a person to face challenges in the end times with the preparation of faith and righteous deeds. They also agree with the motivating element of doing good deeds, that is, someone who listens and follows the last-time hadith reminder will try to improve his practice and avoid bad deeds. In addition, all scholars agree that remembering matters involving sins, rewards and rewards in the hereafter (also called *al-sam'iyat*) will occur when one is told about the preparations for the hereafter. Anyone who is Muslim will believe in the existence of reward for sin, heaven and hell. Therefore, when they study the final hadiths and understand them, then gradually and indirectly the feeling of fear of committing sins will arise. Next, the element of self-reflection is also important in increasing self-belief and it is achieved through in-depth knowledge of end-of-life hadith. The last sign of increasing faith in this survey is increasing religious knowledge. This can be proven that the tendency of young people to approach religion stems from the beginning because they are interested in the topic of doomsday.

Findings from the survey form through the NGT show that 100% of expert references agree that the five elements of faith indicators presented in the questionnaire session are important indicators. They also agree that these elements are specific indicators to measure a person's level of faith. To implement the NGT method, the researcher chose to meet face-to-face.

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