



Methods of Understanding the Quran and Hadith from Ancient Times to Modern Times

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Abstract: Along with the development of science and technology and rapid social change, the method of understanding the Qur'an and Hadith faces increasingly complex challenges. Traditional methods that have been used so far are beginning to be questioned in their ability to answer increasingly complex and global contemporary problems. The emergence of various new schools of thought, both liberal, contextual, and progressive, increasingly enrich and at the same time complicate efforts to understand the Qur'an. The purpose of this study is to discuss the Method of Understanding the Qur'an and Hadith from Ancient Times to Modern Times. The method used is the literature study method. In this method, data collection techniques are taken from reference sources in the form of books, journals, scriptures or other sources. The results of this study explain that The Quran and Hadith are the main sources of Islamic teachings that have encouraged scholars to develop various methods of interpretation. Although the methods of interpretation differ between the classical and modern eras, the main goal remains the same: to facilitate the understanding and application of Islamic teachings and to draw closer to Allah. The classical era emphasized fiqh, linguistic, and rational interpretation, while the modern era developed scientific, social, and feminist methods of interpretation. Differences in the context of time, tradition, and human conditions have encouraged Muslim scholars to continuously adapt their interpretive approaches to remain relevant and meaningful.

Keyword : Quran, Hadiths, Interpretation

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Introduction

The development of understanding and interpretation of the Qur'an and Hadith has experienced very complex dynamics throughout the history of Islamic civilization. Since the early days of the development of Islam, the method of interpretation has undergone significant transformation, starting from the textual approach of the companions to the more comprehensive contemporary hermeneutic method. The diversity of these approaches raises fundamental questions about how to understand the Qur'an in an authentic way but also relevant to the context of the ever-evolving era, considering the complexity of the social, cultural, and intellectual challenges faced by Muslims from generation to generation.

Along with the rapid development of science and social change, the method of understanding the Qur'an and Hadith faces increasingly complex challenges. The traditional methods that have been used so far are beginning to be questioned in their ability to answer increasingly complex and global contemporary problems. The emergence of various new schools of thought, both liberal, contextual, and progressive, has enriched and at the same time complicated efforts to interpret the Qur'an. This requires an in-depth study to understand the evolution of the method of interpretation, as well as its implications for religious understanding and Islamic practice in various parts of the world.

Several previous researchers have conducted research in this field such as that conducted by Muhibah et al., (2024) who conducted research on Comparative Analysis of Contemporary and Classical Tafsir Quran. then Amir et al., (2023) research also conducted research on Scientific Studies of the Qur'ān in the Contemporary Era: An Analysis of Concept, History, and Methodology. While Sardar (2017) conducted a similar research on Reading the Qur'an: The contemporary relevance of the sacred text of Islam.

However, from several previous researchers above, none have conducted research that discusses the Method of Understanding the Qur'an and Hadith from Ancient Times to Modern Times. so it is important to know the relevance of the Method of Understanding the Qur'an and Hadith from time to time.

The Holy Quran is the Book of Allah, whose verses are perfectly structured and then detailed by the Wise, All-Aware. It is the source of legislation in Islam and the clear light of Allah, which contains the guidance for all of humanity, leading them to the straight path until the Day of Judgment. Following the words of Allah, the sayings of His Messenger Muhammad (peace be upon him) come in matters of legislation; thus, understanding and interpreting the Quran and the prophetic traditions is essential (Abdal-Haqq, 2002 ; Thalib et al., 2020 ; Bakhashab, 1988)

Undoubtedly, the movement of interpretation that began since the early days of Islam and continues to this day has witnessed significant development in terms of interpretative trends and methodologies. The directions of Quranic interpretation have diversified according to the varying cultures of the interpreters, their diverse ideas, academic specializations, and their concerns with the issues of their times (Abd Rahman et al., 2017; Eweida, 2007). An interpreter must address people according to their understanding, as the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, and as Ali stated: "حَدِّثُوا النَّاسَ بِمَا يَعْرِفُونَ أَتُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يُكَذَّبَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ" (Mohammad Z. b. n. a, Hadith no: 128,) and Imam al-Shatibi added, "Thus, the imparting of knowledge is constrained; for there are issues that may be suitable for one group but not for another" (Abū Ubayda Mashūr b. vol. 5). This is the best statement regarding the need for a speaker to communicate according to the understanding and perception of the people.

This research is urgent to explore the genealogy of the method of understanding the Qur'an and Hadith comprehensively, starting from the approach of classical scholars to modern hermeneutic methods. The need for an integrative and contextual understanding is increasingly urgent, considering the complexity of the problems of the people that cannot be answered only with a textual approach. By tracing the development of interpretation methods from ancient times to modern times, this research is expected to provide a comprehensive intellectual map of how to

understand sacred texts that are dynamic, contextual, but still adhere to the fundamental principles of Islamic teachings. More than just a historical study, this research aims to produce a new methodological framework that can bridge the classical interpretation tradition with the demands of the current context.

Method

The study uses a literature study approach (library research) that integrates various library sources to review and analyze data comprehensively. This research method is carried out through library data collection by collecting information from various literatures, including books, scientific journals, academic articles, official documents, and other library sources relevant to the research topic.

Data collection techniques are carried out through systematic searches using library catalogs, electronic databases through Google Scholar and also the Harzing Publish or Perish application, taking into account the credibility and validity of the sources used.

The data analysis technique in this study uses the content analysis method and comparative analysis, which allows researchers to identify, categorize, and interpret data in depth. The analysis process begins with collecting various literatures which are then reviewed critically, followed by conducting an in-depth study of the main concepts, identifying patterns of thought, and comparing various perspectives from different sources.

Result and Discussion

1. Methods of Understanding the Quran and the Prophetic Traditions in the Classical Era

Allah, the Exalted, revealed the Holy Quran and commanded reflection upon it, contemplation of its meanings, and acting upon its commands. He said: (كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ), what helps a Muslim reflect on the Holy Quran is the knowledge of the meanings of its words and verses. Among the methods of understanding the Quran and the prophetic traditions in the classical era are:

a. Interpretation by Transmission

This refers to the interpretation of the Quran through the Quran itself, the Sunnah, and the sayings of the companions and the followers. Sheikh Muhammad ibn Abdul Azim al-Zarqani stated under the topic of "Interpretation by Transmission": "It is what has come in the Quran or the Sunnah or the words of the companions, clarifying Allah's intent in His Book." He then mentioned, "As for what is reported from the followers, there is a disagreement among scholars: some consider it part of the transmitted

interpretation because they mostly received it from the companions, while others say it is interpretation by opinion" (Manahil al-Irfan).

b. Fiqh

Fiqh is the knowledge that studies the practical rulings of Islamic law and their detailed evidence. It is the science of the practical subsidiary legal rulings derived from detailed proofs. It examines the rulings of the four categories of fiqh: acts of worship, transactions, family matters, and offenses. Each of these four categories has well-known details found in their respective sources, indicating their meanings. Al-Shafi'i defined fiqh with the well-known definition among scholars as: "The knowledge of the practical legal rulings acquired from their detailed evidence."

c. Linguistic Interpretation

The intended meaning of the Quran is broad, encompassing both linguistic and legal meanings, whether derived from established usage or aided by context, discourse, and circumstantial clues. Abdul Azim al-Zarqani defined it as "a science that investigates the Holy Quran in terms of its indication of Allah's intent, as far as human capacity allows." Maan al-Qattan defined it as "the clarification of the words of Allah revealed to Muhammad (peace be upon him)" (Musa'id bin Sulayman bin Nasser al-Tayyir).

d. Interpretation by Ijtihad

Interpretation by ijtiḥād refers to the effort exerted to understand the meaning of the Quranic text and uncover the implications of its words. It is a form of ijtiḥād within the realm of the text and within the limits of linguistic and legal principles. Thus, interpretation by ijtiḥād does not rely solely on narration; it also depends on reasoning and contemplation.

e. Rational Interpretation

Rational interpretation involves utilizing clear, definitive rational clues agreed upon by all reasonable individuals to interpret and understand the text. In this case, reason is used as a source to interpret the apparent meanings of the Quran in light of definitive rational evidence. Rational interpretation is essentially the same as ijtiḥād. In summary, it aims to clarify the meanings of Quranic verses and explain their implications through rational arguments and evidence. This applies to verses whose meanings are judged by independent theoretical or practical reasoning (Ali Akbar al-Mazandarani).

2. Methods of Understanding the Quran and Prophetic Traditions in the Modern Era

The Hungarian orientalist Ignaz Goldziher (died in 1921) is considered the first orientalist to document attempts at renewal in the interpretation of the Quran in the modern era in his book "Schools of Islamic Interpretation," published in 1913.

He was followed by many scholars in understanding the Quran and prophetic traditions, such as Muhammad Abduh, Sayyid Qutb, and Abul A'la Maududi; Among the methods used today are:

a. Scientific Interpretation

Scientific interpretation involves examining the comprehensive correspondence that researchers observe between Quranic terms, prophetic traditions, and the reality they refer to, which can only be understood through science. Science strives to uncover the secrets of existence to inform researchers about its truths, comparing its findings with what is mentioned in the Quran. Noticing the alignment between these truths and scientific results is what makes scientific interpretation a necessity rather than a baseless claim. What science has discovered through research and study has been revealed in the Quran through divine revelation (Hind Shalabi).

b. Social Interpretation

Social interpretation refers to utilizing the teachings of the Quran and prophetic traditions to address contemporary social issues. This approach is characterized by a focus on verses that convey social or educational content, striving to demonstrate harmony between religion, science, and modernity. It promotes rational ideas and combats ignorance and backwardness in society. Additionally, it aims to connect society with the Holy Book and its overarching goal of guidance, applying the meanings of the verses to modern realities and organizing people's lives according to the guidance of the Quran (Ali Daghim al-Tahir).

c. Feminist Interpretation

Feminist interpretation is the intersection of feminist research with religious studies, resulting in a new specialized field that examines religion from various aspects through the lens of women's positions and life experiences. It explores how religious concepts and their applications impact women's lives and their practice of faith, approaching religion with an awareness of the identity of diversity (Umayma Abu Bakr).

d. Intertextual Interpretation

Intertextual interpretation involves an objective approach to understanding Islamic texts by collecting all relevant verses and chapters from the Quran related to the studied topic. Among its guidelines is arranging the verses according to their chronological order of revelation to comprehend the context of time and place, understanding the nuances of expression, and

grasping the connotations of words (Aisha Abdul Rahman, known as Bint al-Shati).

e. Contemporary Interpretation

Contemporary interpretation refers to the direct interaction with the meanings and ideas found in the Quranic verses and prophetic traditions through the use of technology and various resources. This approach aims to keep pace with the modern era, enhancing deep understanding and expanding the scope of knowledge. It enables Muslims to strengthen their relationship with the Quran and apply its teachings in their daily lives. Among the most famous works in this field are the interpretations of Ibn Kathir and Al-Jalalayn.

f. Spiritual Interpretation

Spiritual interpretation focuses on understanding the deeper meanings that transcend the surface, emphasizing the spiritual and moral dimensions of Quranic texts through contemplation, reflection, seeking forgiveness, and prayer. Its goal is to guide the self toward spiritual objectives, enhance awareness, deepen the relationship with God, and foster personal development. This approach seeks to uncover profound meanings. Among its most notable works are "Al-Risala Al-Qushayriyya" and "Ihya Ulum al-Din" by Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali.

g. Comparative Jurisprudence

Comparative jurisprudence examines the differences among scholars regarding legal rulings by presenting the opinions of various scholars on a single issue and identifying the points of contention, known as "clarifying the place of dispute." It involves explaining the reasons for the disagreement, citing the evidence for each viewpoint, addressing any counterarguments, and determining the strongest opinion along with the rationale for that preference. The primary benefit of this discipline is the endeavor to reach God's judgment on matters where scholars have disagreed (Ibtisam Owaid Al-Mutrafi).

Conclusion

Muslims have exerted every effort and dedicated their lives to understanding the Holy Quran and the prophetic traditions, conveying their meanings to other nations and diverse tribes. They have not neglected this responsibility over the years, and this noble trait will continue, God willing, until the Day of Judgment. However, each era has its keys, terms, issues, and specific methods that must be taken into account. Therefore, Muslims in general should acquire the tools and methods of the modern age, and scholars, in particular, should utilize contemporary means and technologies in the interpretation of the Quran and religious discourse. Life changes day by day, and new issues and challenges arise with the passage of time, while methods of expression and research approaches evolve alongside the progress and growth we witness today. Thus, it is essential to engage in Islamic outreach using the keys of the

modern era and to express it in a way that strengthens guidance for people towards the pure religion.

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