

# Hoax News and Technology Literacy from the Qur'anic Perspective

Muhammad Yusuf<sup>1</sup>  
muhammadyusuf@uin-alauddin.ac.id

**Abstract:** The development of media technology and freedom of releasing news led to fake news or hoaxes spread to form a public opinion in order to get particular interests which are used to attack each other, accuse, slander, and generate stereotypes, even to claim that a specific group or religion is superior to others. This study takes under scrutiny the Qur'anic perspective about hoaxes and technology literacy to help provide context for an effort to combat fake news. Using a thematic and an anthropological approach to the Qur'an, this study has found that the Qur'an narrates that hoaxes have existed since the first humans, Adam and Eve, to test the true faith as well as pretense. The Qur'an gives a sign that the eternal enemy of honesty is a hoax. *Tabayyun* is a crucial concept for fighting hoaxes, and *qalam* is the medium.

**Keywords:** Hoax, technology, Qur'anic guidance, *tabayyun*, *qalam*.

**Abstrak:** Perkembangan teknologi media dan kebebasan dalam memproduksi berita mendorong maraknya hoaks (berita palsu), yang biasa digunakan untuk menyerang, memfitnah, dan menciptakan stereotip, bahkan membangun *truth-claim* kelompok atau agama tertentu, sehingga mampu mengkonstruksi opini publik untuk memperoleh kepentingan tertentu. Studi ini mengkaji perspektif Al-Qur'an tentang hoaks dan literasi teknologi untuk membantu memberikan konteks dalam upaya memerangi berita palsu. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan tematik dan antropologis terhadap al-Qur'an, penelitian ini menyatakan bahwa al-Qur'an menarasikan hoaks sebagai fenomena yang telah ada sejak masa Adam dan Hawa untuk menguji keimanan. Al-Qur'an memberikan tanda bahwa musuh abadi kejujuran adalah hoaks. Selain itu, *tabayyun* adalah konsep penting untuk memerangi hoaks, adapun *qalam* adalah medianya.

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<sup>1</sup> UIN Alauddin Makassar, Indonesia

## Introduction

As a holy book, the Qur'an comes with guidance for humans by declaring the truth and correcting hoaxes. Hoax is the devil's fundamental mission and his followers to lead people astray from the way of truth. Since the devil exists, since then also the spread of hoaxes has occurred. Thus, the hoaxes become faithful and pious people (Qs. Al-Ahzab/33: 70). To deal with the case of hoaxes, the Qur'an provides guidance for believers to form or choose an environment together with an honest community of people (Qs. Al-Taubah/9: 119-122). Hoax always changes shape with its fixed mission, which plunges humanity from the straight path (Qs. Al-A'raf/7: 16).

For this reason, the Qur'an repeatedly states and positions the devil as a real enemy to humans, and humans are prohibited from following the steps of the devil (Qs. Al-Baqarah/2: 208). In his various types, the devil always moves with his eternal mission to derail man from the path of truth with multiple deceptions. Some people are trapped and manipulated to carry out the mission, so they share with the devil to smooth out the deception (Qs. Al-Nisa/4: 76), distort the facts with various strategies. The devil and his army will continue to follow human civilization development and progress until the Day of Judgment (Qs. Al-A'raf/7: 16). The more sophisticated the development of technology, the more sophisticated the devil prepares ammunition and launches attacks through the production and distribution of hoaxes packaged as if they resemble a systematic truth.

Along with the progress of human civilization on the earth, at the same time, the rapid advances of technology and communication and globalisation have an impact on freedom of information on online social media (Koloay, 2016, p. 20). This freedom is often used to produce and spread slander for personal or group interests. Hoax instead becomes a strategic or 'projected' move towards achieving specific goals. Not a few tricks are used to form public opinion that leads to an uproar, unclear information, and fear (Budiman, 2017, p. 17). The hoax then spread through newspapers, radio, television, and the internet. The spread of hoaxes was carried out with various motives and goals, such as humor, marketing, art, entertainment, activism, and

education (Kasperek & Bethany Messersmith, 2015, p. 55). In other words, a hoax is an admittedly wrong step, but often results are justified or legitimised as 'lawful crime' for a particular purpose-driven by lust.

According to a survey conducted on February 7, 2017, the spread of hoaxes (fake news) on internet sites is about 34.9 percent, television 8.7 percent, print media 5 percent, email 3.1 percent, and radio 1.2 percent (Librayanti, 2017). It shows that Indonesia is classified as one of the countries experiencing serious problems in the spread of hoaxes. The 2017 Mastel's survey has revealed that people receive hoaxes more than once a day. The most broadly used channel in hoax distribution is social media (Juditha, 2018, p. 31-44). The trend is always increasing every year, along with the increasing number of social media users. In 2018-2019, data from the Ministry of Communication and Information, states that about 800,000 sites in Indonesia have been indicated spreading fake news.

Fake news (hoax) spreads very quickly, especially in people whose literacy levels are still deficient. Usually, they are easy to accept information just 'like' that without checking. They even spread it without considering the accuracy and feasibility of the information received. The community finally fell into the confusion of news, provocation, mutual suspicion, slander, hostility, and bloodshed (Qs. Al-Baqarah/2: 30). Many victims felt due to hoaxes and slanders, which were systematically packaged. Therefore, the Qur'an is a holy book carrying a sacred mission to guide people to truth, goodness, and honesty. It againsts all forms of falsehood. It is crucial to explore the Qur'anic guidance to the phenomenon of production and the spread of hoaxes that is increasingly massive and systematic (Rasmussen, 2010, p. 74). To uncover the Qur'anic instructions and guidance, Muslims need the relevant methods and approaches and analytical techniques.

The scholars need to allude to explore the Qur'anic guidance in dealing with and responding to false news. The Qur'an expresses itself as a guide for humans and a guide for those who fear Allah. For example, it is seen in research conducted by Ishmael D. Norman,

Moses Aikins, Fred Binka (2012, p. 52) Christopher Chang & M. Eric Gershwin (2005, p. 151), B. Jongman & J. Van Der Dennen (2005), Sheila Kasparek & Bethany Messersmith (n.d.). Peter Suwarno (2013, p. 1), Ratna Istriyani and Yuliatun (2016, p.201-207), Ricky Firmansyah (n.d.), Ratna Istriyani dan Nur Huda Widiani (2016, p.201-207). This fact also opens up space to study the guidance of the Qur'an about how attitudes in dealing with hoaxes are increasingly massive and systematic. The people in the era of disruption experience blurring and even fall victim to hoaxes deliberately designed by people seeking profit with hoaxes. The Qur'an uses various terms related to hoaxes, but the fundamental concept to fight and prevent hoaxes is *tabayyun* and *Al-qalam*.

This study uses a thematic exegesis method (Yusuf, 1990, p.42-43), namely by using various terms of the Qur'an that point to the meaning of "hoaxes" (fake news) and understanding the guidelines for using information communication technology. The thematic method focuses on the Qur'anic guidance related to fake news and guidance on how to respond to it. Two events take this method. First, determine the topic explicitly, based on the terms *atqana*, *Al-kizb*, *Al-ifku*, *Al-fitnah*, *Al-zhonn*, *Al-'ushbah*, *naba'*, *fasiq*, *munafiq*, *nurjifun*, *tabayyun* and terms that have the same meanings, as well as the antonyms of these words. Second, understanding the meaning of the texts implicitly, namely the concept of 'the ethics of reporting and the use of media education and information' in the Qur'an. It necessitates the Qur'anic semiotic analysis approach. This approach also requires the interpreter to understand reality and problems (Yusuf, 2017, p.100; Al-Farmawi, 1977). Search for verses using *Mu'jam* (Al-Baqiy, 2012) by always paying attention to the contents of the relevant verses. Furthermore, this study is enriched with an anthropological approach as the guidance pearls from the story-based Al-Quran (Yusuf, 2016, p.6). In this context, the story is positioned not merely as a historical fragment of society in the apostles' era—however, living and relevant guidance for various reality (Djuned, 2011, p.1).

From a historical perspective, hoaxes have existed since human existence. Even the victims of hoaxes were the first humans (Adam a.s.

and Sitti Hawa). The devil delivered the hoax (fake news) to them. The Qur'an has shown it in various terms. This article analyses how the Qur'an explains the important of technology literacy to fight hoaxes or fake news. This study uses a thematic approach to answer this question.

### Understanding the Hoax

The word 'hoax' originally comes from 'hocus pocus,' which comes from 'hoc est corpus', which is Latin, which means 'this is the body'. This word is used by magicians to claim the truth, even though they are lying. In the *Oxford Dictionary* (Oxford Univ., 2001, p. 211), the hoax is interpreted as a trick played on somebody for a joke: v deceives somebody with a hoax; tricks played on someone as a joke. Likewise, in the Cambridge Dictionary (2017), the meaning of hoax is more or less the same; that is a hoax or a joke. In history, the term hoax was used in the 7th century in the tradition of "Satir Art Hoax" (SAH), which means satire is criticism, art means art, and hoax is interpreted as a hoax/ manipulation/outsmart /lie. The hoax's definition is not as narrow as the meaning of 'fake news' because if traced to history, the hoax was originally a Satir Art Hoax, then changed to Satir Hoax, became Satire and or Hoax. The term 'hoax' became popular after the American drama film, starring Richard Gere, "The Hoax". The film was released in 2006, directed by Lasse Hallstrom, with screenwriter William Wheeler, based on a novel of the same name by Clifford Irving (2017). Since then, the film "The Hoax" is considered a film containing many lies.

### Literature Review

### Hoaxes on Social Media: Factors and Spread

It was once opening social media, simultaneously, we are confronted with true and hoaxes. The problem is that not all social media users can be wise and able to distinguish the two. It is not only due to character problems but also

because of the inability to track sources and valid news content. It is necessary to trace the true meaning to interpret the meaning correctly. A hoax is "deceive somebody with a hoax" (Oxford University, 2011, p. 211). That is also interpreted as "to deceive someone by making them believe something which has been maliciously or mischievously fabricated". Whereas noun form, a hoax is defined as "trick played on somebody for a joke" or "anything deliberately intended to deceive or trick" (Deceive, 2017). In the Indonesian context, the hoax is an absorption word that is the same as "fake news."

The increasingly widespread hoax is inseparable from the development of media technology that has changed communication tools to form a global village more quickly (Rivers & Theodore, 2008, p. 346). Global Village means that through the mediation of modern communication media, millions of people worldwide feel the closeness between one another in a circle (John, 1996, p. 324). The effectiveness and speed of communication tools influence the growth of social media. It has substantially changed the way of communication between people. Communication and information can spread quickly, even without a certain limit, so that all people are free to issue opinions. Everything becomes easier to receive, share, and comment via social media like *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *WhatsApp*, *Instagram*, and *Line*. The information then overlaps, implosives, and exploits because it is reproduced through the 'share' and 'copy' options in the social media system (Istriyani & Nur Huda, 2016, p. 296).

Freedom of releasing news led to fake news and hoaxes spread to form a public opinion (Holmes, 2012, p. 103), especially in political years. For the sake of particular interests, hoax news is often used to attack each other, accuse, slander, create conflict, stereotypes, even to claim that a specific group or religion is superior to others (Simangunsong, 2016, p. 65). The media is present to convey information directly related to various social, economic, and political interests. In the end, the press becomes a biased container of interests from various parties (Haryanto, 2015, p. 48). On the one hand, the media has become a commodity of information to meet the community's needs and curiosity. The media also tends to discredit

other parties for certain benefits without regard to social impacts that may occur (Istriyani, 2016, p. 203). As users, humans determine the positive and negative information and communication technology, 'the man behind the gun.'

The perpetrators of hoax news dissemination related to several factors (Allcott & Matthew, 2017, p. 217). *First*, exciting news articles become viral on social media to attract advertisements and news providers to earn revenue through the site of origin. It seems to have been the main factor for most providers to profit from deliberately created hoax news (Subramanian, 2017). *Second*, some hoax news providers are trying to support the ideology that it advocates by attacking opposition groups that are rivals (Dewey, 2016). For example, right-wing news providers identify themselves as left-wing and want to embarrass people on the right-wing by spreading hoax news (Sydell, 2017). *Third*, the decline in revenue in the media industry is caused by the ease of making websites and land for advertising platform content. Fourth, there is a sense of worry about the decline in the reputation of the mass media. To enhance that reputation, a piece of hoax news will emerge to improve reputation. *Fifth*, the rise of social media is not only a tool for modern communication but also a means of making money. By bringing up horrendous news, the selling power of social media will generate more profits. *Sixth*, the decline in "trust" from the media industry, so that it raises hoax news as an alternative to get a stronger appeal. *Seventh*, the emergence of political factors as a venue to reduce other groups (Fiorina & Samuel J. Abrams, 2008, p. 563–588). These factors encourage news providers and disseminators to cheat on the news.

In addition, the emergence of social media platforms such as *Facebook*, *WhatsApp*, *Instagram*, *Line*, and *Twitter* has also become a means for the public to receive and disseminate news and information, whether in the form of images or videos (Tempo, 2016). In seconds, hoax news can spread across all levels of world society. The ease with which news spread is also the most significant supporter of spreading hoaxes, primarily through unlimited social media and without giving an identity. That way, users can express what they want freely. It is the

reason why when there are issues that are not necessarily true, social media users then spread it just like that. Community trends tend to be happy to share information through social media such as WhatsApp, Blackberry, Messenger, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram (Tasandra, 2017), and so on without searching for the right news contents and sources.

## Findings and Discussion

### A Qur'anic Perspective on Technology and Hoax

#### *Terms 'Technology' in the Qur'an*

Technology means the whole means and provides goods needed for the survival and comfort of human life (Nn, 2001, p. 1158). Technology is meant to develop and apply tools, machines, materials, and processes that help humans solve their problems. The word 'technology' is essential to describe inventions and devices that use newly discovered science principles and processes. Technology comes from the word "*atqana*" that is found in Qs Al-Naml/27:88) From this word also found the noun مُتْقِنٌ or مُتَّقِنٌ, which means perfect, superior, excellent, excellent. The term 'technology' comes from the verb يُتْقِنُ - أُتْقِنَ which means to master, to know well, to be proficient, to be skilled, to go beyond in. The word then forms the concept in the form of masdar اِتْقَانٌ, which means mastery, order, skill, skill, perfection. From this root word, the word تَقْنِي is formed, which means a technical, technological, technical expert and تَقْنِيَّةٌ word, which implies technique, technical reasons. It also forms the term اِتَّقَى - يَتَّقِي, which means to be alert, cautious, avoiding, preventing. The word يُقَنَّ - قَنَّ, which means to make modifications to the law.

Allah guides by giving examples of what can be observed and the purpose the observations are created. Humans always observe to find the light of what Allah Swt., has described. The universe and the processes that occur in it are stated as "verses



of Allah" (Baiquni, 1996, p. 6)—examining the cosmos or the universe interpreted as "reading the verse." Allah has described technology in the Qur'an. The Word of God relating to technology is quiet in Surah Al-Anbiya: 80-81.

*"And we have taught David armor for you, to protect you in battle, are you not grateful? And for Sulaiman, the strong wind blows that blow into the land that we have blessed, and we know everything."*

This lesson that God delivered to the Prophet David can we see the development of making armor specifically designed for the soldiers in the war they face. Likewise, the Prophet Sulaiman a.s; Allah had subdued the wind for him to visit the surrounding country (Mutia, 2007, p. 72-73).

In the past century, Muslims could only touch and guess the answer from technology. In contrast, in this century, we have seen with our own eyes how rocket technology and sophisticated electronic control have successfully catapulted humans to the surface of the moon and return it to earth and send spacecraft, each of which has a specific mission. The Qur'an also tells about the most sophisticated means of transportation. In Surah Yasin: 41-42, Allah says: "And a sign for them is that We raise up their descendants in an ark full of content and We create for them whom they will drive like the ark." The verse describes Allah's power that reminds people of their ancestors who were saved in Noah's boat. In verse 41, Allah explains Noah's ark, which also gave him knowledge about making the boat. In verse 42, God also explains information about various transformation tools that humans can use. All of God's information can be seen and felt (Shihab, 2002: 544).

#### *Terms 'Hoax' in the Qur'an*

The term hoax in the Qur'an can be identified from the understanding of the word **الْإِفْك** (Al-*ifk*), which means reversal (like an earthquake that reverses a country), but what is meant here is a big lie, because a lie is a distortion of facts. In this case, the Qur'an termed it *'usbah* (**عصبة**). The word *'usbah* is derived from the word *'ashaba*

(عصب) which originally meant 'firmly bound'. From the origin of this word was born the word *muta'ashshib* (متعصب) which is fanatical. That is why people who are fanatical excessively towards someone or something tend to lie to defend. This word is understood in the sense of a group that is strongly intertwined with one idea, in this case spreading negative issues, to defame (Shihab, 2002, p. 296). The hoaxes themselves are usually already designed for a specific purpose. In this case, the Qur'an calls it *iktasabal* اکتسب. *Iktasaba* shows that the spread of the issue was carried out in earnest. It is not only understood from the word *kasaba* which means business, but also from the addition of the letter ta' (ت) in the word (Shihab, 2002, p. 297). The word کبره (*kibrah*) is taken from the word کبر (*kibr*) or *kubr*, which is used in the broadest and most widespread sense. What is meant here is the most widely spread hoaxes or fake news.

The phenomenon of the spread of hoax news itself has been explained in the Qur'an, as in the QS. Al-Nur:11. According to history, the revelation of the QS. Al-Nur:11 is nothing but because of allegations of adultery directed at Aisha when she was returning to Medina with Muslim troops. Then on a trip, Aisha felt lost her necklace. When Aisha searched for the missing necklace, the Muslim army left her and thought that Aisha was with them. That is when Aisha felt left behind. He was then confused. He fell asleep due to drowsiness. After a while, a friend named Shafwan bin Al-Mu'aththal Al-Sulami Al-Dhakwani saw her.

Shafwan recited '*innalillahi*' and then delivered Aisha to the Muslim group. However, after this incident, some Muslim community people even busy talking and spreading false news about Aisha. Until for a month, Aisha felt something different from the Prophet in reacting to it. They also wanted to discuss to divorce Aisha from this news. Aisha continued to complain and complain to Allah about what had happened until it was revealed QS. Al-Nur/24: 11 to answer his anxiety (Ibnu Kathir, 1994, p. 276-277), who brings lies in your group. Do not consider him bad for you, even he is right (good) for you, each one of them gets what he does from that sin, and who takes

the most significant part of them, the big portion of doom" (QS. Al-Nur/24: 11). This verse is condemnation for those who accuse the Prophet's wife, Aisha, without evidence. Then Allah said, "Indeed, those who carry and disseminate false news intentionally, the hoax is related to the honor of the family of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), it is a group from the community you live among believers). Do not consider it good or bad, because by doing so you can distinguish who is hypocritical and who is strong in faith (will get an appropriate reply)" (Shihab, 2002, p. 294).

Based on that verse, the hoax source can be from an internal community that was intentionally designed. The hoax case isn't new. Long time, the Prophet Muhammad, even at the time of the Prophet Adam, had circulated like hoax news. Even this phenomenon occurred in the family of the Prophet Muhammad himself, and the victim was his wife, Aisha RA. In response, Allah answered Muslims not to spread hoaxes in the next verse. When you hear it, believers (men and women) do not think well of themselves and say: "this is one of the real lies" (Qs. Al-Nur/24: 12). This verse explains that when the news of the hoaxes spread, there were among Muslims who fell silent, neither confirmed nor denied. Some people talk about it and ask questions. Besides, some do not believe it and express beliefs about Aisha's sanctity so that the verse was revealed to give a warning of condemnation of people who are silent as if justifying, especially those who talk while asking questions about the truth of the issue.

The verse encourages them to take positive steps, why when you hear the hoax, you as believers and believers are not prejudiced towards their brothers who are defamed, even though what is defamed is a part of themselves, even concerning the Prophet and his family (Shihab, 2002, p. 299). Furthermore, the Qur'an also criticized those who took part in spreading hoax news even though he did not know the truth. Allah leaked, "And if it were not for God's grace and His mercy upon you in this world and the hereafter, surely you would have been overwritten with a significant punishment because of your talk about (hoax). Remember when you receive it (hoax) from mouth to mouth, and you say from your mouth what you don't know at all, and you

take it lightly, even though in God's eyes, it is a big case. (Qs. Al-Nur/24: 14-15).

Based on this verse, it is clear that God's threat is addressed to those involved in delivering hoax news, both those who already know the hoaxes story or do not know it. Compared to today, this term means those who take a part share or forward breaking news that is not necessarily true, even know validity or not, and someone takes part in delivering the hoax news. He also deserves the threat of Allah's punishment because even though the case looks trivial, God considers the case exceptional. After all, it is closely related to destroying harmony among fellow Muslims. Hoax providers get sins with a "*sayy'iah jariyah*" (sustainable sin). The impact of an evil hoax that spread through the media is broader than manual dissemination.

### **The Solution and Guidance of the Qur'an in Dealing with Hoaxes**

Islamic history records that the hoaxes' phenomenon has also often been detrimental to Muslims, even trying to find weaknesses in the holy text of the Qur'an, but failed because God always guarantees the authenticity of the Qur'an. However, lies have infiltrated the explanation of the Qur'an. The deviation of the Qur'an meaning has been done for the sake of pseudo personal interests or groups (Al-Shafi'i, n.d. , p. 208). Islamic history records that hoaxes' phenomenon has also often been detrimental to Muslims, even trying to find weaknesses in the holy text of the Qur'an, but failed because God always guarantees the authenticity of the Qur'an. However, lies have infiltrated the explanation of the Qur'an. The deviation of the Qur'an meaning has been done for the sake of pseudo personal interests or groups

The story of the Qur'an is news about the context of the prophets' lives and previous people and events related to them that contain inspiration for the next human race (Ma'rifa, 2009, p. 418-419). The story in the Qur'an is typologically different from the story in the context of literature (Sayyid Qutb, 2004, p.143). The stories of the Qur'an are generally incomplete, not coherent, and beheaded scattered on the sidelines of the verse (Yusuf, 2016, p.69). The

circumstances thus make the message of the story unique and in-depth. Some fragments of the story are mentioned repeatedly, while the elements of time and place are often not mentioned, and the physical characteristics of the characters are not a concern. The Qur'an focuses more on its personality, motivations, and behavior (Naqrah, 1974, p.360). The stories in the Qur'an consist of three main constituent elements, namely figures, events, and dialogues (Naqrah, 1974, p.348). This method often ends with mere exposure to the story without close relationships and relevance to the socio-anthropological reality in various contexts. Practically, by applying this method, the data, in this case, the relevant verses of the Qur'an are categorized as exposure to ethnographic data (Endraswara, 2013, p.60). Although not all verses are displayed, the moral message is understood. In uncovering the messages' noble ideal, an analysis is carried out by applying the content analysis (Yusuf, 2010). An anthropological approach is also applied to try the Qur'anic texts about the story by treating it as a reality of living history and staying empowered to guide humans as inspiration in all space, time, and conditions.

### *The Qur'anic Suggestion to always Tell the Truth*

Teaching honesty, truth, and commitment based on faith in Allah and the hereafter is the most crucial way before generation master technological literacy. Technology is like a gun that humans will control, so good or bad technology will depend on the user. The Qur'an has explained to humankind always to say the truth, especially in delivering news, because providing a piece of accurate information will maintain the purity of Islamic teachings and give birth to harmony in social interaction. As explained in the Qur'an about the necessity to convey the truth as Al-Ahzab/33: 70-71.

*"O you who believe! Fear Allah and (always) say a word directed to the right. God may make your conduct whole and sound and forgive you your sins: he that obeys God and His Messenger has already attained the highest achievement".*

Furthermore, this verse is also an appeal to Muslims to say in righteous words. It means that in delivering a piece of news, a believer must provide straight and not distorted news, so that these words do not cause sleaze. There is a relationship between faith in God and the hereafter with spread useful information or no spread hoax. From Abu Hurairah that the Prophet PBH said, *مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ* "Whoever believes in Allah and the Hereafter, let him say well or let him be quiet" Ibn Hajar (773 H/1372 M – 852 H/1449) (Muslim n.d.; Bukhari, 1339 H/1979 M). Ibn Hajar (773 H/1372 M – 852 H/1449 M) (Bukhari, 2005) has explained this hadith, "This is a short phrase that containing deep meaning; all words can be useful, harmful, or one of the two. This phrase is called *jawami' al-kalim*. It is also one of the characteristics of the prophetic word.

In this context, as if the Prophet said there are only two believers, say the excellent true or keep quiet. Humans will be held accountable for every sense of organ used in producing, spreading, or receiving information and news. As Allah says, *"Behold hearing, vision, and heart, they will be held accountable"* (Qs. Al-Isra/17: 36) and *"There is no a word (a sentence) said but there is a guardian angel nearby who always is present"* (Qs. Qaf/50: 18). Namely, angels are always watching him and witnessing its history, as stated in His Word, *"But truly, for you there are (angels) who oversee (your work), who are glorious (in the sight of Allah), and who take note of (your work is). They know what you are doing"* (Qs. Al-Infithar/82: 10-12). *"Whoever knows that and believes it with true faith, he is fearing Allah regarding his word, so that he does not speak except goodness or silence"*. Related to this, believers have only two choices, saying that it is good again, excellent or silent (As-Sa, 1992). That is, if the conversation contains both truth and goodness, speaking is better than silence. However, if silence brings goodness and benefit, then an attitude of silence is better than talking, let alone spreading hoaxes. Islam stands on the principle of "preventing danger more priority than taking benefit".

Likewise, in several hadiths, including when the Prophet said, "Nothing slouches humans' necks in hell but their verbal results." It

was judged as authentic hadith by Al-Albani (1914 M/ 1333 H – 1999 M/1420 H) in *Jami' al-Sahih*, number 5136 (Al-Asqalani, 1378 H/1959 M). Providers and disseminators of hoaxes, even more incitement and slander or public lies and incitement, are those who lose Allah's sight. "From Abu Hurairah; that the Prophet. asked, "Do you know who is the someone who loses?" The friends also replied, "People who are losers are people who do not have dirham money or property." He said, "Verily, the one who loses among my people is the one who comes on the Day of Judgment come with the reward of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. However, he also came with many sins in reproach, accusation, eating property (from other people's rights), spilling blood, and beating others. Later his goodness will be given to the wrongdoers (victims). If his good deeds have been given and his revenge has not yet been completed, the wrongdoer's sin will be taken. Then given to him. The next, he was thrown into hell." (HR. Muslim in his *Shahih*, number. 2581).

By telling the truth, God will lead the truth to a clear path (Al-Thabari, 2007, p. 274-275). People who believe in Allah will not lie, because Islam teaches to convey the truth, both from individuals or groups or organizations (Abu Zahrah, n.d. , p.33-34), so that it can deliver news containing the truth because Islam invites and encourages Muslim communities to convey the truth (Mahfuz, 1958, p. 69-70) as Islam aspires (Ibrahim, 1982, p. 49). Islam teaches that delivering a piece of news should be provided following instructions and the right path (Al-Razi, 1994, p. 647). The base of goodness is truth and honesty, so anyone who wants goodness should be honest. Especially in terms of providing information, the Qur'an has referred to it as *qawlan shadidan*, telling the truth or communicating well in social interaction (Dahlan, 2014, p. 115–23). Muslims must achieve a degree of truth of factuality by making checks and rechecks, confirmations, and accuracy (McQuail, 1992). This is to avoid the occurrence of defamation, both in the form of libel (sedition) and slander (slander) (Potter, 2006, p. 60). Telling the truth is the key to achieving happiness and avoiding anything that is not peaceful (Subhi, 2001, p. 129). Delivering trustworthy news means telling the truth honestly, in other terms,

namely providing the information honestly (Kovach & Tom Rosenstiel, 2006, p. 38).

For recipients, a piece of information is recommended to clarify (Noor, 2018, p. 34). Clarifying any news received is a demand of Muslims. The Qur'an requires Muslims to practice *tabayyun*.

*"O you who believe, if there is an ungodly person who comes to you with the news, then carefully check (fa tabayyanu), so that you do not inflict a disaster upon a people without knowing (conditions that) cause you to regret that action" (Qs. Al-Hujurat/49: 6).*

Al-Tabari stated that the verse was revealed regarding Al-Walid bin Uqbah bin Abu Mu'it when he was delegated by the Prophet to take alms of the people Bani Mustaliq people (Al-Tabari, 2001, p. 349). Al-Tibrizi mentioned that the verse came down about Al-Walid bin Uqbah when the Prophet (PBUH) delegated to take the Bani Mustaliq (Al-Thibrizi, 2008, p. 178). Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal narrated that one day the Bani Mustaliq people wanted to pay (hand over) zakat following the provisions agreed with the Prophet. Until the time of payment arrived, his envoy did not come. Finally, the people of Bani Mustaliq decided to go to the Prophet (Al-Suyuthi, 2008, p. 524-525). Simultaneously, the Prophet sent Al-Walid bin Uqbah to take alms from the Bani Mustaliq people. However, for some reason, Al-Walid bin Uqbah returned to the Prophet and said that Al-Haris - one of the Bani Mustaliq - did not want to give alms and wanted to kill him. In the end, Al-Haris arrived at the Prophet and told him the real situation that he had never met Al-Walid bin Uqbah, especially to kill him (Al-Suyuthi, 2008, p. 524-525). When Al-Haris met the Prophet, he said, *"Do you really refuse to give up your zakat and also want to kill my delegation?"* Al-Haris answered, *"For the sake of the One who sent you with the truth, I never did it."* Then, the Qs. Al-Hujurat verses 6-8 revealed (Al-Suyuti, 2002, p. 420).

The wicked are suspected as a source of lies and doubts because they tarnish the Muslims' information. The defamation will distort the data and not be completely objective (Wirdiyana, 2019, p. 150). Then, the Muslims should not be in a hurry to act based on the wicked



information, or they can act wrongfully so sorry (Sayyid Qutb, 2004, p. 143). This verse suggests people who believe, be careful and selective in receiving and spreading the news that comes from the wicked (Al-Qarni, 2008, p. 153). Muslims are required to always be attentive, both in delivering information and in living their daily lives. Islam provides guidance and guidance on the right path (Al-Zarqani, 1972, p. 124). The principle of *tabayyun* is a guide of the Qur'an for each recipient and disseminator of the news. *Tabayyun* is the key and must for those who believe, namely, to verify the truth and benefit of a message. In other words, faith and the principle of caution receiving and spreading information have a relationship. It also shows that Allah protects believers from the dangers of hoaxes. Muslims have to correct news from people. This principle is an effort to anticipate the spread of hoax news, which causes discord, hatred, and regret (Al-Qarni, 1972, p. 153), war, and bloodshed. It shows that the Qur'an emphasizes the fundamental values of faith and loyalty to God, which must be translated into human values to respond to all news that arises by checking and reviewing carefully.

#### *Increasing the roles and responsibilities of scientists*

God provides guidelines for the public to be careful in receiving news, especially hoaxes sourced from these false news-carrying agencies. Clarification efforts are needed from religious leaders, journalists, news station owners, scientists, and the government. Fighting the spread of hoaxes is expected to be a filter in combating the phenomenon of the spread of hoaxes today. Religious leaders are also expected to make an in-depth study, check and recheck, confirm, verify, and validate information (Eriyanto, 2002). So that news messages that spread can be received and utilized by the public to learn the reality surrounding certain situations (Eriyanto, 2002). When news comes from anywhere, religious leaders and religious preachers are not trapped in misleading euphoria or even agents to reinforce hoax news. The Prophet's exemplary character, such as *shiddiq*, *amanah*, *tabligh*, and *fathanah*, must be applied and exemplified in daily life in responding to spreading news. They are also expected to convey Islamic teachings

extracted from authoritative sources and be careful about quoting from Google.

In the context of science, *tabayyun* can be interpreted as scientific research. Scientists have the obligation of scientific responsibility to research to obtain the spread of accurate and useful knowledge. It includes data sources, data collection techniques, data analysis techniques, presentation, and analysis, and inference approaches. *Tabayyun* technically can be realized in the form of triangulation. In the context of scientific development, *tabbayyun* is a necessity. The role of scientists in fighting hoaxes can be applied through strengthening and developing research methodologies and data literacy. It also necessitates the mastery of information and communication technology for believers—the triangulation technique as a data validity test technique in qualitative research. One of the essential things that are part of the research process, both qualitative and quantitative is the validity or validity of the data (Kasyian, 2015, p. 1-13). Thus, valid data do not differ between the data reported by the researcher and data that happened to the research object. According to Moleong (2005, p. 330-331), the triangulation technique with sources means comparing and cross-checking the degree of trustworthiness of the information obtained through time and various tools. Such is what the Prophet (PBUH) did. When he received information about the attitude of Banu Mustaliq, so he did not immediately believe it. He even sent someone else to ensure the accuracy of the information.

The Qur'an guides to search for knowledge and information to experts. *"And We did not send before you, except men whom We gave revelations to them; then ask those who know if you don't know"* (Qs. Al-Nahl/16: 43; Qs. Al-'Anbya/[21: 7). These verses provide instructions for selecting a data source who knows a problem or the required area. This also suggests that the accuracy in selecting informants or respondents must be considered to obtain the right information. It is imperative because someone can be an expert in specific fields, but he is a cloud in other fields. This verse implies the necessity to pay attention to and selectively select scientific sites and links via the internet in today's context.

### *Prioritising Mastery and Use of Information and Communication Technology*

The digital era requires mastery and the use of information and communication technology and data literacy. The tendency of change and innovation in education will continue to occur in entering the 21st century today. These changes include more accessible to find learning resources, more options to use, and utilizing information and communication technology (ICT), the increasing role of media and multimedia in learning activities (Budiman, 2017, p. 76), and various other purposes. Since the COVID 19 pandemic from the end of 2019 to the present (August 2020), virtual interaction cannot be avoided. It has even become a solution in many ways, including learning activities at all levels of education. Likewise, in preaching activities, it changes from the form of meeting face to face with the audience to lecturing via virtual.

In Islam, an instrument or media requirement for the implementation of an obligation is obligatory. It is relevant to the rule of "an intermediary who delivers a definite goal. Agreed, the law of intermediary is the same as the law of destination. For this aspect, the scholars expressed it with a simile, *مَا لَا يَتِمُّ الْوَاجِبُ إِلَّا بِهِ فَهُوَ وَاجِبٌ*. Something that is obligatory which is imperfect except with it, the existence of an intermediary becomes obligatory. "In the view of Islam, learning and teaching activities is mandatory for every Muslim. Likewise, in preaching activities, it is required. The media is needed. Thus, the procurement and use of instructional media and proselytizing of the law are mandatory. Mastering and using information and communication technology is necessary to realize the obligations of teaching, learning, and preaching. In the era of the industrial revolution, including during the COVID 19 pandemic, internet media in learning activities and legal preaching is mandatory. It is based on the consideration that the obligations of learning, teaching, and preaching can run using virtual media.

In a pragmatic concept with the possibility to apply academically, it can say that science (body of knowledge) and technology as state of the art contain the meaning related to the production process;

concerning how various sources, land, capital, labor, and skills are combined to realize production goals. Conventionally includes the control of the physical and biological worlds, but also broadly includes social technology, especially social development technology, so that technology is a systematic method to achieve every individual goal (Dwiningrum, 2012, p. 153; Ngafifi, 2014, p. 36). Only with the right empowerment efforts are expected, the community can be fortified from the various possibilities that could be emerged as an impact of the digital age (Suri, 2019, p. 178). Therefore, the more advanced the technology is, the more it needs awareness and strong character building. This statement reinforces the belief that the Prophet's noble morals are a fundamental need for humanity.

### *The Qur'an Condemns the Hoax Spreader*

The Qur'an strongly condemns those who take part in spreading lies, either consciously or unconsciously. It is confirmed in Qs. Al-Nur/24: 14-15. "And if it were not because of God's grace and His mercy on you in this world and hereafter, surely you would have been hit with a great punishment, because of your talk about (false news). Remember when you receive (false news) from mouth to mouth (verbally) and you say from your mouth what you do not know in the slightest, and you take it lightly, even though in God's eyes it is a big thing" (Qs. Al-Nur/24: 14 -15). This verse says, "from mouth to mouth" because when the revelation of this verse, hoaxes spread did not use information and communication technology, so it was done verbally. The point of the verse's instructions is not the medium, but the hoaxes spread and its harmful effects. It shows that the spread of hoaxes with any media and any method is not permitted. Therefore, the prohibition of its spread is permanent and eternal. The verse explains that God will not give gifts and mercy to those who spread false news, including hoaxes in the current context. If they do not repent immediately and admit their mistakes, Allah will inflict great punishment on them. God confirms, do you take lightly the deeds that you do by spreading the false news? If you consider it a light matter, God considers it an exceptional case, because its spread can be

detrimental to various parties. The adverse effects are huge and massive. Meanwhile, Islam prioritizes the prevention of adverse effects rather than the benefits.

Based on this verse, Allah strongly condemns those who produce or take part in spreading lies. Muslims must be more careful and careful in receiving and spreading the news. Islam requires its people to convey the truth, both personally and collectively (Abu Zahrah, n.d. , p. 33-34). Muslims expect to get the information correctly and adequately, as a form of faith and observance in religion, as Islam aspires (Mahna, n.d. , p. 49). Thus, Islam teaches that delivering a piece of news should be adjusted to the instructions and the right path in Islam (Al-Razi, 1994, p. 647). The progress of ICT is not the root of the problem, but the problem is humans' unpreparedness to use it appropriately. The phrase "The man behind the gun" is an expression that shows that the main challenge facing humanity is the problem of humanity. The mastery of technology in the era of disruption is essential, but affirming its users' character and mentality is more important. Moral and responsibilities are the keys to facing the spread of hoax.

#### *Tabayyun and Al-Qalam: Key Concept and Media*

The Qur'an uses many terms to denote the meaning of hoax, but among these terms, *tabayyun* is positioned as the central concept in fighting hoaxes (Syarifudin, 2019, p. 32-39). Instruction of *tabayyun*, which is enshrined in the text of the Qur'an, indicates that the hoax problem is also an eternal thing as long as the history of humanity. Hoaxes have been the enemy of believers throughout history. Hoaxes will still exist alongside Satan because it is the devil's primary and eternal mission to make humans hate each other and become hostile until bloodshed. The families of the prophets and messengers of Allah became victims of hoaxes starting from Prophet Adam and Eve until Prophet Muhammad and his family (Aisha RA.) became victims. The command to perform *tabayyun* indirectly implies that there must be adequate communication knowledge to deal with it not to become a victim. It is not only to avoid the dangers of hoaxes but also to become

a signal for believers to master the technology to produce and spread the news that is true and contains benefits for the people. The verse about *tabayyun* makes it imperative for the faithful to prepare themselves and the generation to become believers, master science and technology, communication science, and journalism (Al Walidah, 2017, p. 317- 344). They must be kind and honest human beings. Still, they own and control the media to spread goodness and honesty and are responsible for protecting society from the dangers of spreading hoaxes.

This view refers to the obligation to do good and prevent evil, the commitment to tell the truth. To make this happen, it requires mastery of the media and the basic communication sciences. Following the rule, *ما لا يتم الواجب الا به فهو واجب* "What is not perfect the duty without it, to present it is an obligation". Today, many perpetrators of crime or crime victims are not because of their desire, but because of other people's sins. Many good people are deceived and even participate in spreading hoaxes because they do not master valid and accurate news sources. They helped spread hoaxes, which had a broad and massive impact on society. As a result, they become sorry (victims). The command of *tabayyun* contains an in-depth-meaning. One of the meanings is to strengthen technological literacy and sciences. Communication, information, research methodology, and strong character are imperative for believers.

In an academic context, schools and colleges must pay serious attention to this direction. The concept of *Al-qalam* was the first verse to be revealed. Al-Qalam is mentioned in the Qur'an, Al-'Alaq/96: 4; Al-Qalam/68: 1 (Kasman, 2017, p. 52) with the oath (*qasam*). In Surah Al-Qalam verse 1, *ن وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ* "Nun, for the sake of *Al-qalam* and what they write". The pronunciation (formulation) of the oath shows very urgent information. *Al-Qalam* has developed a meaning that refers to "all writing media of writing, " which can produce and disseminate information and knowledge. The diction '*Al-qalam*' has an unlimited range of meanings. It implies the necessity of writing and mastering the media. In surah Al-'Alaq:4 *الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ*

“Who teaches (humans) through the *qalam*”. The term *Al-qalam*, which refers to writing media, is a concept of the Qur’an that reaches all conditions and developments in information and information technology. Monumental works and thoughts can be passed down from generation to generation by applying the concept of *al-qalam*.

## Conclusion

Hoax is the eternal enemy of honesty, while honesty is a fundamental and universal teaching of religion. Hoax and reliability are eternal. The fundamental value that must be developed is the character of truthfulness. Technological progress must be accompanied by two things, namely technological mastery and responsibility, so that users are not manipulated by technology, or they make technology a tool of crime. In the Qur’an, the prohibition of spreading hoaxes on one side and instructions to be selective in receiving and spreading the news, on the other hand, are the methods of the Qur’an in protecting humans from the dangers of hoaxes. The guideline to be careful in receiving and disseminating information is a scientific signal that scientists should develop research methods to present methodologically measured information. Tabayyun terminology is the scientific concept of the Qur’an, which is the concept of validation, verification, triangulation, and synthesis, to ward off various hoax information. Therefore, scientists are expected to take the role and responsibility of developing scientific methods and applications in facing the era of globalization. The Qur’an informs us that evil figures or groups of the elite (*al-mala'*) need to be on the alert because they have the power to produce and spread hoaxes massively to realize their goals. To minimize the production and spread of hoaxes, religious-based character, faith, and moral character development are necessary to early anticipation of the harmful effects of information and communication technology. Developing and strengthening research abilities packed with mastery of information and communication technology carried out by scientists implements the tabayyun effort. While *al-qalam* shows all writing media of information.

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