



From Jidāl to Digital Literacy: The Musa–Khidir Dialogue in QS. Al-Kahfi [18]: 60–82 as a Model for Addressing Misinformation and Hoaxes

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Abstract: This study examines the jidāl method in the dialogue between Prophet Musa and Prophet Khidir in QS. Al-Kahfi [18]: 60–82 and its relevance to contemporary digital literacy challenges. Employing a qualitative library research approach, this study analyzes Qur’anic verses, classical and contemporary tafsir literature, as well as scholarly works on digital literacy, misinformation, and information ethics. The findings reveal that the jidāl method in the Musa–Khidir narrative is not merely a form of dialogue but an epistemological process that cultivates intellectual humility, contextual understanding, critical inquiry, and epistemic patience. The narrative demonstrates that premature judgments often arise from limited information and inadequate contextualization, conditions that closely resemble the mechanisms through which misinformation and hoaxes spread in digital environments. Through a Maqashid Syariah perspective, particularly the principle of ḥifẓ al-‘aql, the study argues that the narrative contributes to the preservation and development of human intellect by encouraging verification, reflective thinking, and wisdom-oriented judgment. Based on these findings, the study formulates a Qur’anic Digital Literacy Model consisting of three interconnected stages: verification (tabayyun and tatsabbut), clarification through constructive dialogue (jidāl ḥakīm), and transformation toward wisdom (ḥikmah). The study contributes theoretically to the intersection of Qur’anic studies, Maqashid Syariah, and digital literacy scholarship while providing practical insights for developing ethical and responsible information behavior in the digital age.

Keywords: Jidāl; Digital Literacy; QS Al-Kahfi; Maqashid Syariah; Misinformation; Information Ethics.

Abstract: Penelitian ini mengkaji metode jidāl dalam dialog Nabi Musa dan Nabi Khidir pada QS. Al-Kahfi [18]: 60–82 serta relevansinya terhadap tantangan literasi digital kontemporer. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian kepustakaan melalui analisis ayat Al-Qur’an, literatur tafsir klasik dan kontemporer, serta berbagai kajian tentang literasi digital, misinformasi, dan etika informasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa metode jidāl dalam kisah Musa–Khidir bukan sekadar bentuk dialog, melainkan proses epistemologis yang membentuk kerendahan hati intelektual, pemahaman kontekstual, sikap kritis, dan kesabaran epistemik. Narasi tersebut memperlihatkan bahwa kesalahan penilaian sering muncul akibat keterbatasan informasi dan kurangnya pemahaman konteks, suatu kondisi yang serupa dengan mekanisme penyebaran hoaks dan misinformasi di media digital. Melalui perspektif Maqashid Syariah, khususnya prinsip ḥifẓ al-‘aql, kisah ini berkontribusi dalam menjaga dan

mengembangkan akal manusia melalui verifikasi, refleksi kritis, dan pengambilan keputusan yang berorientasi pada hikmah. Berdasarkan temuan tersebut, penelitian ini merumuskan Model Literasi Digital Qur'ani yang terdiri atas tiga tahapan, yaitu verifikasi (tabayyun dan tatsabbut), klarifikasi melalui dialog konstruktif (jidāl ḥakīm), dan transformasi menuju hikmah (ḥikmah). Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi teoretis pada kajian tafsir, Maqashid Syariah, dan literasi digital, sekaligus menawarkan kerangka praktis bagi penguatan perilaku bermedia yang kritis, etis, dan bertanggung jawab.

Kata Kunci: Jidāl; Literasi Digital; QS Al-Kahfi; Maqashid Syariah; Misinformasi; Etika Informasi.

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Introduction

The rapid expansion of digital technology has fundamentally transformed the way information is produced, distributed, and consumed in contemporary society (Hilbert, 2020; Martin, 2017). Social media platforms have become primary sources of information for millions of users, enabling the rapid dissemination of news across geographical and cultural boundaries (Alejandro, 2010; Fazil et al., 2024). However, this digital transformation has also generated new challenges, particularly the widespread circulation of misinformation and hoaxes (Aïmeur et al., 2023). The increasing speed of information exchange often exceeds the public's capacity to verify content critically, creating what scholars describe as an era of information disorder and post-truth communication (Waston, 2025). In Indonesia, where social media penetration is among the highest in the world, the spread of misinformation has become a serious social concern affecting public trust, social cohesion, and decision-making processes (Lee, 2020). The high volume of digital interaction encourages users to respond quickly to information without adequate verification, thereby increasing vulnerability to misleading narratives and false claims (Priyowidodo, 2025).

The challenge of misinformation is closely related to the emergence of the attention economy, a digital environment in which information competes for visibility through speed, novelty, and emotional appeal rather than accuracy (Serrano-Puche, 2021). Research has shown that false information often spreads faster than verified information because it tends to be perceived as more surprising and emotionally engaging. This phenomenon is further strengthened by confirmation bias, where individuals are more likely to accept and share information that aligns with their preexisting beliefs without conducting critical evaluation. Consequently, technical digital literacy alone is insufficient to address contemporary information problems. Users require not only the ability to access information but also ethical and epistemological competencies that enable them to evaluate, interpret, and verify information responsibly. In this context, the development of

value-based digital literacy frameworks becomes increasingly important for creating healthier information ecosystems.

Recent studies on misinformation and digital literacy have proposed various approaches to strengthening critical information behavior (Diaz Ruiz, 2025). (Karina & Rifa'i, 2026) developed the concept of information disorder to explain the complexity of misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation in digital environments. Funk et al., (2019) emphasized the importance of critical media literacy that enables users to evaluate representation, production, and audience dimensions of media content. Within Islamic studies, several scholars have explored Qur'anic approaches to information ethics, verification, and communication (Gantira, 2025; Habib et al., 2025; Ulya et al., 2025). However, most existing studies focus on concepts such as tabayyun, media ethics, or historical cases of false information in Islamic tradition. Research specifically examining the dialogical and epistemological dimensions of Qur'anic narratives as models for digital literacy remains relatively limited.

One Qur'anic narrative that offers significant potential for developing a critical digital literacy framework is the story of Prophet Musa and Prophet Khidir in QS. Al-Kahfi [18]: 60–82. The interaction between the two figures presents a unique model of learning characterized by questioning, critical reflection, patience, and the suspension of premature judgment. Throughout the narrative, Prophet Musa repeatedly responds to events based on immediate perceptions, while Prophet Khidir demonstrates the importance of deeper contextual understanding before reaching conclusions. Classical commentators such as Al-Qurtubi and Fakhr al-Din al-Razi interpret this narrative as an educational process that cultivates humility, intellectual openness, and ethical inquiry. These values are highly relevant to contemporary digital environments, where individuals frequently encounter fragmented information and are encouraged to make rapid judgments without sufficient contextual understanding.

Despite the growing literature on digital literacy and Qur'anic communication ethics, limited attention has been given to the method of *jidāl* embodied in the interaction between Prophet Musa and Prophet Khidir as a framework for addressing misinformation in social media environments. Existing studies generally discuss *jidāl* within theological debates, educational interactions, or conflict resolution contexts, while its relevance to digital information behavior remains underexplored. Therefore, this study seeks to analyze the *jidāl* method in QS. Al-Kahfi [18]: 60–82, examine its relevance to the challenges of misinformation and hoaxes in contemporary social media, and formulate a Qur'anic digital literacy model grounded in the principles of critical dialogue, epistemic humility, verification, and wisdom. This study contributes to the development of

interdisciplinary scholarship by integrating Qur'anic studies, digital literacy, and information ethics to address contemporary communication challenges.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative approach using library research as the primary research design (Danandjaja, 2014). A qualitative approach was selected because the study aimed to explore, interpret, and contextualize the concept of *jidāl* in the narrative of Prophet Musa and Prophet Khidir in QS. Al-Kahfi [18]: 60–82 and examine its relevance to contemporary digital literacy challenges, particularly the spread of misinformation and hoaxes in social media environments. According to (Creswell & Poth, 2016), qualitative research is appropriate for investigating meanings, values, interpretations, and social phenomena that require in-depth understanding rather than statistical measurement. In this study, the Qur'anic narrative was treated as a textual and educational source containing epistemological principles relevant to contemporary information practices.

The primary data source consisted of QS. Al-Kahfi [18]: 60–82, which narrates the interaction between Prophet Musa and Prophet Khidir. To obtain a comprehensive understanding of the text, the study utilized several classical and contemporary tafsir references, including Tafsir Al-Qurṭubi, Mafāṭiḥ al-Ghayb by Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, Tafsir Ibn Kathir, and Tafsir Al-Misbah by Quraish Shihab. Secondary sources included books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and scholarly publications discussing *jidāl*, Qur'anic communication, media literacy, information ethics, digital literacy, misinformation, and social media communication. These sources were selected purposively based on their relevance to the research objectives and their contribution to understanding the relationship between Qur'anic epistemology and contemporary digital communication challenges.

Data collection was conducted through documentation techniques by identifying, selecting, and reviewing relevant textual materials from both primary and secondary sources. The process involved several stages: collecting Qur'anic verses and tafsir interpretations related to the story of Prophet Musa and Prophet Khidir, reviewing literature on *jidāl* and Islamic communication ethics, and examining contemporary studies on misinformation, hoaxes, and digital literacy. The collected data were then systematically organized according to thematic categories, including critical inquiry, verification, patience in acquiring knowledge, epistemic humility, and dialogical learning. These categories emerged inductively from the textual analysis while also reflecting contemporary concerns regarding information verification and digital communication practices.

The study employed thematic content analysis as the primary analytical technique. Following the framework proposed by Zed, (2008), the analysis involved familiarization with the data, coding significant textual units, identifying recurring themes, reviewing thematic patterns, and constructing interpretive explanations.

The analysis focused on identifying dialogical interactions and educational values embedded in the narrative, particularly those related to questioning, verification, critical reflection, and knowledge acquisition. Furthermore, the identified themes were interpreted using contemporary digital literacy perspectives to examine their relevance to misinformation prevention and responsible information behavior in social media environments.

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, source triangulation was applied by comparing interpretations from multiple classical and contemporary tafsir works, as well as integrating perspectives from Qur’anic studies, communication studies, and digital literacy scholarship. The analytical process also involved theoretical triangulation by combining insights from information literacy theory, media literacy studies, and Islamic communication ethics. Through this interdisciplinary approach, the study sought to produce a comprehensive understanding of how the *jidāl* method in QS. Al-Kahfi [18]: 60–82 can contribute to the development of a Qur’an-based digital literacy framework capable of addressing contemporary challenges related to misinformation, hoaxes, and information disorder in social media environments (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017).

Results And Discussion

The Jidāl Method as a Transformation from Epistemic Certainty to Epistemic Humility

The analysis of QS. Al-Kahfi [18]: 60–82 reveals that the dialogue between Prophet Musa and Prophet Khidir represents more than a narrative of knowledge transmission; it constitutes a profound epistemological journey designed to transform human attitudes toward knowledge itself. Classical Muslim exegetes consistently interpret the story as a lesson concerning the limitations of human understanding when confronted with realities that transcend immediate perception. Al-Razi (1999) explains that Musa’s objections were not expressions of ignorance but manifestations of a rational commitment to justice based upon available evidence. However, the narrative demonstrates that observable evidence alone is often insufficient for reaching accurate conclusions. Similarly, Al-Qurtubi (2006) argues that the story illustrates the distinction between *‘ilm al-zāhir* (apparent knowledge) and *‘ilm al-bāṭin* (deeper wisdom), emphasizing that truth frequently contains dimensions inaccessible to immediate observation.

This finding suggests that the primary objective of *jidāl* in the Musa–Khidir narrative is not argumentative victory but epistemological transformation. Throughout the journey, Musa repeatedly encounters situations that challenge his cognitive assumptions and force him to reconsider the relationship between perception and reality. The educational process culminates not in the acquisition of additional factual information but in the development of intellectual humility. In

this regard, the narrative promotes what may be termed *tawāḍuʿ* epistemic (epistemic humility), namely the awareness that human knowledge is inherently limited and therefore requires continual verification and openness to correction.

The relevance of this principle becomes increasingly significant within contemporary digital environments. Social media platforms encourage users to consume and respond to information rapidly, often without sufficient reflection. Algorithmic systems privilege immediacy and engagement rather than accuracy, creating conditions in which individuals frequently mistake exposure to information for genuine understanding. Consequently, users develop what might be described as an illusion of knowledge. The Musa–Khidir narrative directly challenges this tendency by demonstrating that certainty based solely on partial information may produce inaccurate judgments. Therefore, epistemic humility emerges as a foundational ethical principle for navigating contemporary information ecosystems.

From the perspective of Maqashid Syariah, this finding contributes directly to the objective of *ḥifẓ al-ʿaql* (the preservation of intellect). Jasser Auda (2021) emphasizes that protecting human intellect requires not only safeguarding cognitive capacity but also preventing intellectual distortions that undermine sound reasoning. In the contemporary context, misinformation, hoaxes, and manipulated narratives represent significant threats to intellectual integrity. Thus, the educational model embedded within the Musa–Khidir dialogue functions as a Qurʾanic mechanism for protecting human cognition against premature judgments and epistemological arrogance.

The Musa–Khidir Narrative and the Dynamics of Information Disorder

A second major finding concerns the striking correspondence between the perceptual failures experienced by Prophet Musa and the mechanisms through which misinformation operates in contemporary digital environments. The narrative presents three controversial events – the scuttling of the boat, the killing of the young boy, and the reconstruction of the wall – which initially appear irrational and morally problematic. However, each event later reveals hidden dimensions that fundamentally alter its interpretation.

The first event, involving the scuttling of the boat, illustrates the dangers of context-deficient information. Musa evaluates the action based upon observable evidence and concludes that it constitutes an unjust act. However, Khidir subsequently reveals that the action was intended to protect the boat from confiscation by a tyrannical ruler. Ibn Kathir (2003) notes that Musa’s interpretation was understandable because he lacked access to the broader contextual framework within which the event occurred.

This finding bears remarkable similarity to contemporary misinformation practices. Wardle and Derakhshan (2017) argue that a significant proportion of misinformation does not arise from entirely fabricated content but from information

that has been removed from its original context. Photographs, quotations, videos, and news reports may be technically authentic while simultaneously producing misleading interpretations when detached from relevant contextual information. Therefore, the Musa–Khidir narrative suggests that contextual deficiency constitutes one of the most fundamental mechanisms through which misinformation operates.

The second event, namely the killing of the young boy, highlights the role of emotional manipulation in shaping public perception. Musa’s reaction is immediate and emotionally charged because the act appears morally indefensible. Yet the later explanation demonstrates that initial emotional responses did not capture the full complexity of the situation. This pattern closely resembles contemporary social media dynamics, where emotionally provocative content often spreads more rapidly than factual information.

Vosoughi et al. (2018) found that emotionally engaging misinformation circulates significantly faster than verified information because it triggers psychological reactions that encourage sharing behavior. Fear, anger, outrage, and sympathy frequently override rational evaluation processes. The Musa–Khidir narrative therefore offers a timeless lesson regarding the necessity of regulating emotional responses through critical reflection and contextual inquiry.

The third event, concerning the reconstruction of the wall, demonstrates the risks associated with incomplete interpretation. Musa interprets the action as irrational because it appears to benefit an ungrateful community. However, Khidir later reveals a hidden objective connected to the protection of vulnerable individuals. This event parallels contemporary conspiracy theories and clickbait narratives that encourage audiences to construct explanations based upon insufficient evidence. Lewandowsky et al. (2017) observe that conspiracy thinking often emerges when individuals attempt to impose simplistic explanations upon complex realities. The narrative consequently warns against explanatory reductionism and encourages deeper investigation before reaching conclusions.

Collectively, these three episodes reveal that misinformation is fundamentally an epistemological problem rather than merely a technological one. The central issue is not the availability of information but the quality of human judgment. Consequently, the Musa–Khidir narrative provides a sophisticated framework for understanding the cognitive vulnerabilities that facilitate the spread of misinformation in contemporary digital environments.

Epistemic Šabr and the Ethics of Delayed Judgment

One of the most significant findings of this study concerns the concept of šabr epistemic (epistemic patience). Throughout the narrative, Khidir repeatedly reminds Musa that understanding requires patience. Importantly, patience here should not be interpreted merely as emotional endurance. Rather, it functions as an intellectual discipline regulating the process of judgment formation.

Quraish Shihab (2002) argues that patience in this narrative reflects the ability to postpone conclusions until adequate understanding becomes available. This interpretation is particularly relevant within contemporary social media culture, which encourages instantaneous reactions and rapid information sharing. The attention economy rewards speed, visibility, and engagement, often at the expense of accuracy and reflection.

Buckingham (2019) emphasizes that critical media literacy requires reflective thinking and resistance to impulsive responses. The Musa–Khidir narrative provides a Qur’anic foundation for precisely this form of intellectual discipline. Before reacting, individuals must first investigate, verify, and contextualize information. Thus, *ṣabr* epistemic functions as a mechanism for interrupting impulsive information behavior.

From a Maqashid perspective, epistemic patience contributes not only to the preservation of intellect (*ḥifẓ al-‘aql*) but also to the preservation of social harmony (*ḥifẓ al-mujtama’*). Misinformation frequently generates polarization, conflict, and distrust within society. By encouraging delayed judgment and reflective inquiry, epistemic patience reduces the likelihood of harmful information dissemination and contributes to healthier public discourse.

Formulating a Qur’anic Digital Literacy Model

The most important contribution of this study is the formulation of a Qur’anic Digital Literacy Model derived from the epistemological principles embedded within the Musa–Khidir dialogue. The model consists of three interconnected stages: Verification, Clarification, and Transformation.

The first stage, Verification, is grounded in the Qur’anic principles of *tabayyun* and *tatsabbut*. At this stage, individuals suspend immediate reactions and verify information before accepting or disseminating it. Verification functions as a cognitive filter designed to prevent impulsive engagement with potentially misleading content.

The second stage, Clarification, is based upon *jidāl ḥakīm* (constructive dialogue). Information should not merely be consumed but discussed critically and respectfully. Through dialogue, alternative interpretations can be explored and misunderstandings corrected. This stage transforms information verification into collective meaning-making.

The third stage, Transformation, culminates in *ḥikmah* (wisdom). Wisdom represents the integration of knowledge, ethics, context, and responsibility. The ultimate objective of digital literacy is therefore not simply accurate information consumption but the cultivation of wise and ethically responsible digital citizens.

The model may be illustrated as follows:

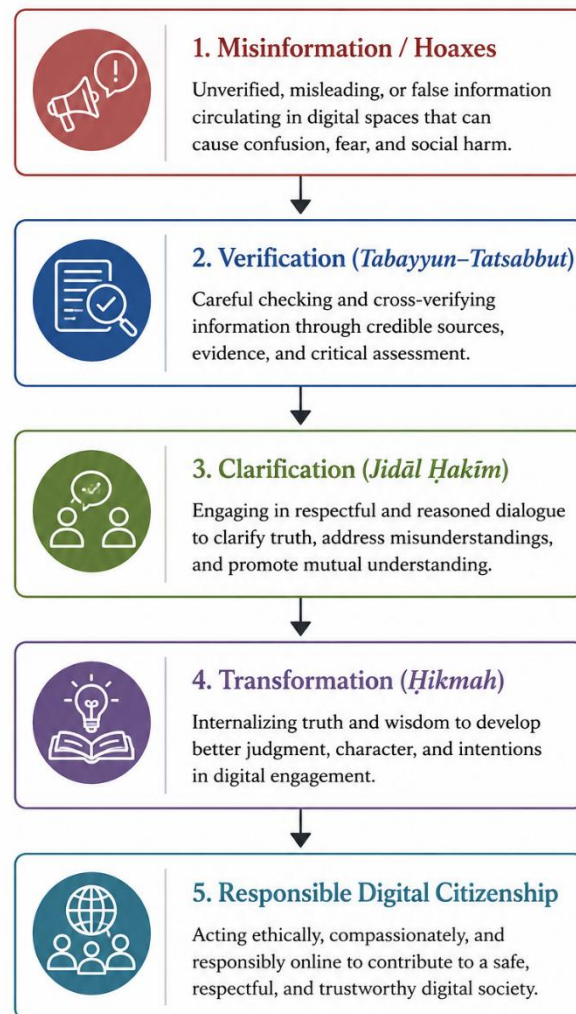


Figure 1. The *Tabayyun–Jidāl Ḥakīm* Model for Promoting Responsible Digital Citizenship

This model extends contemporary digital literacy frameworks by incorporating ethical, spiritual, and epistemological dimensions rooted in Qur’anic teachings. Unlike conventional literacy models that emphasize technical competencies, the Qur’anic model integrates intellectual humility, epistemic patience, and wisdom-oriented judgment. Consequently, it offers a comprehensive framework for addressing misinformation and information disorder in the digital era while simultaneously advancing the maqashid objective of preserving and cultivating human intellect.

Conclusion

The analysis of the dialogue between Prophet Musa and Prophet Khidir in QS. Al-Kahfi [18]: 60–82 demonstrates that the *jidāl* method represents a comprehensive epistemological framework that emphasizes intellectual humility, contextual understanding, critical inquiry, and epistemic patience. The narrative illustrates that

knowledge acquisition is not limited to the accumulation of information but involves a transformative process through which individuals learn to recognize the limitations of their own perspectives before making judgments. Through the three key events narrated in the story, the Qur'an teaches that reality often contains dimensions that cannot be fully understood through immediate observation alone. Consequently, the values embedded within the Musa–Khidir dialogue provide a relevant foundation for addressing contemporary challenges associated with misinformation, hoaxes, and information disorder in digital environments.

From a Maqashid Syariah perspective, these findings reinforce the significance of *ḥifẓ al-'aql* as a fundamental objective of Islamic teachings in preserving and developing human intellectual capacity. The study reveals that the principles of verification, reflective dialogue, and wisdom-oriented judgment contained within the *jidāl* process are highly relevant to contemporary digital literacy practices. One of the main contributions of this research is the formulation of a Qur'anic Digital Literacy Model consisting of verification (*tabayyun* and *tatsabbut*), clarification through constructive dialogue (*jidāl ḥakīm*), and transformation toward wisdom (*ḥikmah*). This model contributes theoretically to the development of interdisciplinary scholarship connecting Qur'anic studies, Maqashid Syariah, and digital literacy, while also offering practical guidance for educators, Islamic institutions, and digital literacy practitioners in fostering more critical, ethical, and responsible information behavior.

Despite these contributions, this study has several limitations. The analysis is confined to the narrative of QS. Al-Kahfi [18]: 60–82 and relies primarily on textual interpretation derived from classical and contemporary *tafsir* literature. Consequently, the proposed Qur'anic Digital Literacy Model remains conceptual and has not yet been empirically tested within educational settings or digital media communities. Future studies are therefore encouraged to examine additional Qur'anic narratives related to knowledge and communication, as well as to conduct empirical investigations assessing the effectiveness of the proposed model in enhancing digital literacy competencies, critical thinking skills, and responsible information behavior among students and social media users. Such efforts would further strengthen the contribution of Qur'anic epistemology to contemporary discussions on digital communication and information ethics.

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