Traditionalist and Revisionist Madzhabs' Perspectives Against the Sunni Hadith Criticism Method and Refutation

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Article Information	Abstract
	This research aims to reveal the traditionalist and revisionist madzhabs' perspectives on the criticism of Sunni hadith. As is well known, traditionalists and revisionists still doubt the authenticity and authority of hadith. According to them, one of the reasons for the unauthenticity of hadith is the inefficiency of the evaluation system and the concept of hadith criticism. Employing a historical approach, this research first analyzed the main reasons for this inefficiency, including the presence of inauthentic hadiths in collections of hadith books, the prevalence of falsification and fiction in hadiths, ignorance of internal criticism by hadith narrators, gaps in the principles the notion of Rijāl science, and the falsifications and distortions in the transmission chain. Moreover, it also discussed the responses of hadith defenders, including the possibility of justifying hadiths that have been considered inauthentic, ignorance of the different linguistic levels of hadiths, the constant efforts of hadith narrators to purify the legacy of hadiths and identify falsifications from the time of their publication, the efforts and attention of experts' hadiths on textual examination and rigorous investigation of Rijāl. The research results revealed that although the revisionist madzhab doubted the authenticity of the hadiths compiled by Sunni circles, they admitted that they had compiled were not without selection but had gone through external and internal criticism. Meanwhile, the traditionalist madzhab viewed that hadiths narrated by trusted narrators and considered valid by hadith experts should not be questioned or sorted out based on modern critical methods. This madzhab considered that the method of critique of hadith used by some modern scholars tended to doubt the authority and reliability of hadith and thus threatened the integrity

and oneness of religious teachings. Meanwhile, the refutation of Sunni hadith experts against the perspectives of traditionalist madzhab included: (1) historical and social context must be considered in assessing the validity and relevance of a hadith. It was what the traditionalist madzhab ignored; (2) it was necessary to assess the hadith narrators critically; (3) the method of hadith criticism developed over time allowed further disclosure of the authenticity of hadith; (4) Traditionalist madzhabs were frequently inconsistent in their assessment of hadith; and (5) Traditionalist madzhab might be influenced by particular cultural contexts, which could influence the interpretation of hadith and lead to bias

Kata Kunci	Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap pandangan mazhab tradisionalis dan revisionis atas kritik hadis yang dilakukan oleh kalangan sunni. Sebagaimana diketahui bahwa aliran tradisionalis dan revisionis masih ragu atas otentisitas dan otoritas hadis. Salah satu alas an ketidakaslian hadis menurut mereka adalah ketidakefisienan sistem evaluasi dan konsep kritik hadis. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan sejarah, penelitian ini menganalisis alasan utama mereka mengenai ketidakefisienan tersebut, termasuk keberadaan hadis yang tidak otentik dalam koleksi kitab hadis, prevalensi pemalsuan dan fiksi dalam hadis, ketidaktahuan kritik internal oleh para perawi hadis, adanya kesenjangan dalam prinsip-prinsip gagasan ilmu Rijāl, dan adanya pemalsuan serta distorsi dalam rantai transmisi. Di samping itu, juga dibahas tanggapan para pembela hadis, termasuk kemungkinan membenarkan hadis yang telah dianggap tidak otentik, ketidaktahuan tentang tingkat linguistik yang berbeda dari hadis, upaya konstan para perawi hadis untuk memurnikan warisan hadis dan mengidentifikasi pemalsuan dari waktu penerbitannya, upaya dan perhatian para ahli hadis pada pemeriksaan tekstual dan penyelidikan Rijal secara ketat. Hasil penelitian ini mengungkap bahwa mazhab revisionis meskipun mereka meragukan otentisitas hadis yang dihimpun oleh kalangan sunni, namun mereka mengakui bahwa hadis-hadis yang dihimpunnya bukan tanpa seleksi, melainkan telah melalui kritik eksternal dan kritik internal. Sementara itu, mazhab tradisionalis berpandangan bahwa hadis-hadis yang diriwayatkan oleh para perawi terpercaya dan dianggap sahih oleh para ahli hadis tidak boleh dipertanyakan atau dipilah-pilih berdasarkan metode kritis modern. Mazhab ini menganggap bahwa metode kritik hadis yang digunakan oleh sebagian ulama modern cenderung meragukan otoritas dan keandalan hadis, dan dengan demikian mengancam integritas dan keutuhan ajaran agama. Sedangkan sanggahan ahli hadis Sunni terhadap pandangan mazhab tradisionalis, di antaranya adalah: (1). Konteks historis dan sosial harus dipertimbangkan dalam

menilai keabsahan dan relevansi sebuah hadis. Hal inilah yang di-abaikan oleh mazhab tradisionalis, (2). Perlu menilai secara kritis terhadap perawi hadis, (3). Metode kritik hadis yang berkembang seiring waktu memungkinkan pengungkapan lebih lanjut tentang autentisitas hadis, (4). Mazhab tradisionalis seringkali tidak konsis-ten dalam penilaian hadis, dan (5). Mazhab tradisionalis mungkin terpengaruh oleh konteks budaya tertentu yang dapat mempen-garuhi penafsiran hadis dan menyebabkan bias

Introduction

One of the central studies in the hadith study is the hadith criticism, both *matan* and *sanad*. Hadith criticism is carried out to determine the authenticity of a hadith. In the history of the development of hadith criticism studies, *sanad* criticism has become a variable that has received more attention. It then led to accusations from the West, which stated that the writers of hadith books ignored the *matan* when incorporating a hadith into their works. As commonly known, the criticism of *sanad* is carried out massively in hadith studies. Until the 8th century Hijriyah, e.g., there were many books of *Rijal al-Hadith*. One well-known was *Tahdzib al-Kamal fi Asma' al-Rijal* by al-Mizzi. As a continuation of their previous accusations, Western scholars who participated in Islamic studies (orientalists) began to test the validity of a hadith by bringing various approaches, especially rationality, as the primary scientific basis. Their studies were not only limited to *sanad* hadith, but also *matan*. They employed many approaches and determined theories, thusinfluencing Muslim perspectives of hadith. These influences even led to negative perspectives and attitudes towards hadith.[1]

According to J. Koren and Y.D Nevo, western studies about early Islamic history, religion, and the position of the Qur'an have developed two different approaches. The first approach, called the traditional approach, limits its field of research to Islamic sources and examines them in a way that is under various assumptions and Islamic scientific traditions. While the second approach, which he calls a revisionist approach in analyzing various Islamic literature, uses source-critical methods and makes contemporary non-Arabic literature, archaeological, epigraphic, and numismatic findings as historical evidence, which are generally not studied by traditional sects.[2]

Revisionists believe that the Qur'an is the basis for understanding and interpreting their statements of belief as a summary of religious law and science and provides reasons to support this argument.[3] On the one side, they

[1]Hamam Faizin, "Kritik Matan Hadis Menurut James Robson,"*Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Hadis* 12, No. 1 (2011): 84–114; Farid Hasan, "Telaah Kritis Atas Pemikiran Zakaria Ouzon,"*Millati: Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities* 1, no. 2 (2016): 209–226. https://doi.org/10.18326/mlt.v1i2.209-226. Additional information can be found in Taufik Kurahman, "Rasionalitas Barat dan Pengaruhnya Terhadap Studi Hadis,"*Tajdid* 21, no. 1 (2022): 1–25. https://doi.org/10.30631/tjd.v21i1.221. Compare it with Abdul Mufid's writing, "Menimbang Interpretasi

Hadis Rukyat Hilal Yusuf al-Qaradawi," *Mutawatir: Jurnal Keilmuan Tafsir Hadis* 9, no. 1 (2019): 146-169. https://doi.org/10.15642/mutawatir.2019.9.1.146-169;Abdul Mufid's, "Unifikasi Kalender Hijriah Internasional dalam Perspektif Yusuf al-Qaradawi," *Hikmatuna: Journal for Integrative Islamic Studies* 5, no. 1 (2019): 71-83.https://doi.org/10.28918/hikmatuna.v5i1.1856.
[2]Ali Masrur, "Diskursus Metodologi Studi Hadis Kontemporer: Analisa Komparatif antara Pendekatan Tradisional dan Pendekatan Revisionis," *Journal of Qur'an and Hadith Studies* 1, no. 2, (2012): 237-249.https://doi.org/10.15408/quhas.v1i2.1326.; Naqiyah, "A Tafseer Study on Qur'an Reading in the Tradition of the Banyumas Muslim Community of Indonesia," *Ibda': Jurnal Kajian Islam dan Budaya* 19, no. 1 (2021): 190–204. https://doi.org/10.24090/ibda.v19i1.4719; Ahmad Ahnaf Rafif's writing, "Counter Discourse on the Idea of Islamic State and Formalization of Religion in the Qur'anic Exegesis of KH. Abdurahman Wahid," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Hadis* 22, no. 2 (2021): 427–448. https://doi.org/10.14421/qh.2021.2202-08
[3]Muhammad Qorib, "Ahmad Syafii Maarif: Kajian Sosial-

argue that the Qur'an is comprehensive and complete (an-Nahl: 89) and tangible (an-Nisa': 174) and does not need other sources. On the other side, it goes against the authority and authenticity of the Sunnah. A point that has made hadith experts act against it and defend the authenticity and authority of the Sunnah. Meanwhile, the outer scope of this article is a discussion of the arguments of the revisionist followers regarding the completeness and feasibility of the Qur'an for religious science inference;[4] however, researchers would discuss their opinion about the authority of the sunnah.

The existing contradictions also have various dimensions that have existed for a long time, including the emphasis on the non-divinity (read: non-revelation) dimension of the sunnah, the defamation of the sunnah, the prohibition of recording hadiths in a historical era, the delay in its development, conveying the meaning of hadith (*riwayah bi al-ma'na*), restrictions on the writing of hadith at the time of the Prophet, uncertainty regarding the maintenance of the majesty of hadith, errors in the selection and assessment of hadith experts, chain and textual criticism of hadith by the hadith experts themselves, and unpleasant consequences of sunnah authorities such as causing discord among Muslims.[5]

Meanwhile, the revisionist criticism of the hadiths of the Sunnis is focused on the *Ṣihahs*– especially *Ṣahih* Bukhari and *Ṣahih* Muslim –

as a new and essential approach because the belief in the authenticity of these hadiths has been the belief of the authentic Sunnis and has no longer been doubted for centuries. Any doubt in this belief could cast serious doubt based on Sunni hadith heritage. Therefore, Sunni hadith experts are strongly against it and attempt to give a proper response. It should be noted that this issue is part of a more extensive discussion, i.e., the system of evaluating Sunni traditions and their level of efficiency and effectiveness in identifying authentic hadiths – as a composition of the *Ṣihah* collections and other hadiths that are the result of this system and its principles. Despite their importance, this discussion dimension has not been tested. It should be emphasized that while several articles have been written about the revisionist movement, its historical background and context and revisionist perspectives on the sunnah have been written. However, these articles usually deal with the general discussion and history or present the doubts raised by revisionist groups broadly and briefly.

Much research has been conducted on Islamic studies from *outsider* perspectives, especially traditionalist and revisionist groups. In general, the research results found by the authors have discussed traditionalist and revisionist dialectics. However, those studies focused on the study of the Qur'an and hadith. The authors described the distinctions between the proposed research and previous research.

First, Ali Masrur's research entitled '*Discourse on Contemporary Hadith Study Methodology Comparative Analysis between Traditionalist and Revisionist Approaches*'.[6] Masrur, in this article, discusses the study of contemporary

hadith through traditionalist and revisionist perspectives. He sampled the opinions of Fuat Sezgin, Nabia Abbott, and Mustafa Azami as representatives of the traditionalists. Meanwhile, revisionist figures were represented by the perspectives of Ignaz Goldziher, Joseph Schacht, and G.H. A Juynboll. Masrur's research revealed that different perspectives could lead to different consequences and implications on the authenticity and validity of hadith.

Second, library research was conducted by Muzayyin and entitled '*Revisionist Scholars in al-Quran Studies (Efforts to Reconstruct the Initial Sources of the Emergence of al-Quran Texts)*'. Muzayyin, in this article, explored the latest trends in Quranic studies by bringing up revisionist Western scholarly opinions. Borrowing from the revisionist theory, he stated in his article that the Qur'an's source and writing process experienced controversy.[7]

Third, Yusuf Rahman's research entitled '*Traditionalist and Revisionist Approaches in the Study of the History of the Formation of the Qur'an and Interpretation in the Early Islamic Period*'. Yusuf Rahman's research focused on Mun'im Sirry's book, Early Islamic Controversies, especially those related to studying the Qur'an and commentary.[8]

Nonetheless, this research topic has not been studied directly in the past; some of the doubts raised have not been answered independently; and there has been no serious attempt to study and conclude the responses of hadith experts. The existing studies adopted a descriptive-analytic method to answer the following questions: (1) what did the revisionist followers put forward as the

reasons for proving the inefficiency of the Sunni hadith critique system? (2) What was the perspective of the traditionalist madzhab on criticism of the Sunni tradition? (3) How did hadith scholars challenge the reasons for the inefficiency of the critique system?

Revisionists' Reasons and Criticism for the Inefficiency of the Sunni Hadith Criticism System

Revisionists have attempted to discover that the Sunni hadith critique system made the development of hadith collections inefficient. The most critical reasons are as follows:

1. Existence of Inauthentic Hadith in the Collection of Hadith

The revisionists have studied the hadith books, especially *Ṣaḥīḥ* Bukhari and *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim, and have introduced several hadiths which, in their perspective, are contrary to reason or morally reprehensible; thus, they try to challenge the system of hadith criticism. Some revisionists even asserted that they had changed their approach to hadiths because of their acquaintance with them. For instance, Khajah Ahmad al-Din Amritsari introduced the accidental discovery of a hadith about Prophet Musa punched the eye of the angel of death as a turning point in his life, or similarly, Ghulam Jilani Barq revealed that finding detailed hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad's conjugal relations erased his belief in hadith.[9]

Hadiths on previous prophets such as information about Prophet Adam's height, Prophet Musa's clothes being seized with a stone and punched the eye of the Angel of Death, Prophet Sulaiman's sexual relations with 100 women in one night, insulting reports about the life practices and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad SAW such as having intercourse with his wives who are fasting or

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[7]Muzayyin, "Kesarjanaan Revisionis dalam Studi al-Quran (Upaya Merekonstruksi Sumber Awal Kemunculan Teks al-Quran," *Esensia: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 16, no. 2 (2015): 207-222. https://doi.org/10.14421/esensia.v16i2.998.

[8]Yusuf Rahman, "Pendekatan Tradisionalis dan Revisionis dalam Kajian Sejarah Pembentukan al-Quran dan Tafsir pada Masa Islam Awal," *Journal of Qur'an and Hadith Studies* 4, no. 1 (2015): 129-145. https://doi.org/10.15408/quhas. v4i1.2286.

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[9]Daniel Brown, *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 95.

menstruating or having intercourse with all his wives in one hour or praying without ablution, narrations about the Prophet seeing God on the night of resurrection (*mi'raj*), analysis of natural phenomena through metaphysical issues such as describing thunder as an angel sky or specifying the nature of the Hajar Aswad as a stone from heaven, placing the sunrise and sunset between the two horns of Satan, depicting metaphysical beings such as devils, heavenly cows, guarded memorial stones, divine reward narrations for good deeds, such as having to enter paradise after someone says *Lāllāha iḷlallāh* or especially says *Bismallāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm*, narrations about virtues such as sunsets, al-Aqsa mosque, and so on; narratives about abnormal phenomena such as the opening of the casket and resurrection, narrations of the occult, hadiths related to Imam Mahdi, the end times and events before his reappearance, medical traditions such as *dhababs*, and others narrations that were sorely rejected and criticized by the revisionists.[10]

Hadith experts' responses and refutations to these doubts can be categorized into several classes:[11]

a. Some of these traditions are incorrect and cannot be traced back to the Prophet; moreover, the hadith critics have pointed out the unauthenticity of these hadiths.

b. Using the statements of hadith narrators and interpreters of hadith books, one can find proper and logical justifications for these hadiths.

c. The language of some such hadiths is allegorical.

d. Using the Qur'an, one can ascertain the theme of these hadiths.

e. Exploring narrative books, one might regard some of these narrations as dispersing or successive hadiths.

f. Experience has shown the accuracy of some of these hadiths, while it has not revealed the inaccuracies of others.

g. Excessive distortion or fragmentation has occurred in reporting some of these traditions.

2. Rampant Forgery and Fabrication and Impossibility of Distinguishing Authentic Hadiths

From the perspective of critics of the sunnah, the existence of inauthentic hadiths in Sunni traditions raises a deeper problem. In their perspective, if elite narrators of hadith such as Bukhari and Muslims have not been able to distinguish fake hadiths, then the problem is not their commitment or honesty but rather the efficiency of their methods of evaluating hadiths. In their search for the factors that cause this lack of efficiency, the revisionists first trace the historical path that this hadith traversed up to the hadith collectors.

The hadith liars believe that the time gap between the development of the hadith books and the time of the Prophet was enormous and that widespread falsification had occurred during this time. Despite his warning that "*Whoever deliberately associates false speech with me will be sitting on fire,*" forgery began during the Prophet's lifetime and extended during the Umayyad caliphate, as forgers needed to fabricate hadiths for themselves and fought the Shi'ah to strengthen their sovereignty. The Abbasid caliphate also took the same route. In addition, ethnic, sectarian, and personal conflicts also led

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[10]Ghulam Ahmad Parwez, *The Statuse of Hadeeth in Islam, Through The Quranic and Historical Perspective* (Lahore: Tolu-e, 2016); Mahmud Abu Rayyah, *Aḍwa' 'ala al-Sunnah al-Muḥammadīyyah* (Qom: Ansariyan, 1999); Muhammad Syahrur, *Al-Sunnah al-Rasuliyyah wa al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah* (Beirut: Dâr al-Saqi, 2012).

[11]Musthafa as-Siba'i, *Al-Sunnah wa Makanatuha fi al-Tasyri' al-Islami* (Cairo: Dâr al-Waraq, 2006), 310-320; Imad Sayyid asy-Syirbini, *Kitabat A'da' al-Islam Haula al-Sunnah wa Munaqasyatuha* (Cairo: Dâr al-Kutub al-Masriyyah, 2001), 792-813; Abdurrahman bin Yahya al-Yamani (Beirut: Alam al-Kutub, 1981), 143-148.

to the falsification of hadith. For instance, *bid'ah* issued 12 thousand fictitious hadiths. Even good hadith narrators, such as Nuh bin Maryam, considered falsifying hadiths with good intentions and motivations permissible.[12]

The collective result of all these factors was the influx of many fictitious and fabricated hadiths into the Muslim hadith heritage. The number of problems arising from falsifying hadith can be evaluated based on the attestation of the transmitters. For instance, Bukhari chose 90 thousand traditions from among 700 thousand traditions. Hence, the falsified hadiths were numerous and even the most capable critics found it difficult to distinguish the authentic hadiths from the fictitious ones, and there was no section of works and collections of hadiths in which authentic and forged hadiths were not mixed.

By citing the seemingly justifiable problem of identifying several authentic hadiths in an extensive collection of fictitious hadiths, hadith deniers argue that the methods used by hadith narrators lack the efficiency required to undertake such an enormous effort. They slightly stated that the narrators of hadith were prone to errors and sloppiness and could not have complete knowledge of the matter.[13]

Response to Allegations of Revisionist Madzhab

The defenders of hadith agree with the phenomenon of falsification and fabrication of hadiths but disagree with the revisionists regarding the number, differences in probability, and success rate of hadith scholars in identifying fake hadiths. Their response is generally as follows:[14]

a. The calculation of hadiths is based on the number of ways and sequences of their distribution, and statistics on the selection of *Sahih* Bukhari hadiths out of 700 thousand are also based on this standard. Therefore, the deniers of hadith have exaggerated several hadiths which they consider fictitious.

b. The traditions that the *Ṣiḥāḥ* writers (collectors) did not include in their books are not necessarily untrue or fictitious; e.g., the full name of *Ṣahih* Bukhari – i.e., *al-Jami' al-Musnad al-Ṣahih al-mukhtaṣar min Umur Rasulullah (s) wa Sunanuh wa Ayyamuh* – it means Bukhari has narrated selected hadiths, not all the good hadiths he has.

c. The hadiths in the collection of hadith books other than *Ṣihah* are not necessarily fictitious.

d. Efforts to identify fictitious hadiths had not started since the 3rd century H at the time of the first inscriptions of collections of hadith books. On the other side, historical evidence and reports discovered that all the Companions and successors of the Companions of the Prophet were careful in narrating hadith and have attempted to have a critical view in this matter. Consequently, hadith criticism and opposition to fictitious hadiths have become a constant reality, necessary corrections have been applied to hadith heritage, and fictitious hadiths have been identified. Therefore, the gap that the critics of hadith claimed existed between the Prophet's era and the start of severe hadith criticism and analysis was utterly absent.

e. Hadith experts have determined and reviewed the criteria and rules to

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[12]Muhammad Akmaluddin, "Pembuktian Empiris dan Validasi Alternatif dalam Kajian Hadis Kontemporer," *Mutawatir: Jurnal Keilmuan Tafsir Hadis* 11, no. 2 (2021): 231–252. https://doi.org/10.15642/mutawatir.2021.11.02.231-252

[13]Khadim Husain Ilahi Bahsy, *Alquraniyyun wa Syubhatuhum haula al-Sunnah* (Saudi Arabia: Maktabah al-Siddiq, 2000).

[14]Musthafa as-Siba'i, *Al-Sunnah wa Makanatuha fi al-Tasyri'*

al-Islami (Cairo: Dâr al-Waraq, 2006); Abdurrahman bin Yahya al-Yamani, (Beirut: Alam al-Kutub, 1981); Muhammad Abu Zahw, *Al-Hadis wa al-Muhaddisun* (Riyad: Syirkah al-Tiba'ah al-Su'udiyyah, 1983).

identify fictitiously. It has made the task of identifying such hadiths easy and immediately recognizable.

f. Given their proximity to the era of publishing books of hadith and their access to sources inaccessible to us today, hadith scholars could better assess hadith and their narrators.

g. To prove the existence of falsification of hadith, the followers of the revisionist madzhab rely on several hadiths without doubting the authenticity of the hadiths they use.

3. The Stupidity of *Matan* Hadith Analysis and Attempts to Justify Inauthentic Hadiths

Sunni hadith critics believe that hadith experts have two responsibilities: checking the authenticity level of hadith narrators and evaluating the authenticity of *matan* hadith.[15]However, they are highly obsessed with discussions exploring the connection or disconnection of the dissemination chain, traceability or non-traceability, and authoritative or non-authoritative dissemination that has not made extraordinary efforts to textual criticism of its spread. It is compounded by the fact that hadith forgers form and refine hadith; thus, hadith scholars cannot identify disagreements with the Qur'an, reason, etc.[16]

Meanwhile, some believe that hadith scholars do not ignore criticism of the content. Moreover, instead of rejecting such hadiths, they attempt to interpret problematic hadiths

in a way that allows them to eliminate apparent inconsistencies. It explains the reason for the existence of irrational hadiths in hadith collections.[17]

Refutations

The main answers of hadith experts are:[18]

a. There are many cases of criticism of the contents of the hadith during the time of the Prophet's companions and the successors of the Prophet's companions. Hence, historically, the method mentioned above has been a well-known and practiced procedure among Muslim scholars.

b. Hadith scholars have developed clear and precise rules for criticism of hadith content, especially in identifying fictitious hadiths. It includes criteria such as not contradicting the Qur'an, not contradicting definite sunnah, consensus, history, sense or observation, religious requirements, and being free from literal or spiritual vulgarity, etc. Moreover, they have applied this rule in many cases and criticized the hadiths, thus consequently discarding some narrations regardless of the authenticity of their chain of transmission.

c. In addition to the criteria above, hadith experts have considered several criteria oriented toward the chain of transmission in examining various types of hadith and determining whether they are valid or invalid. For instance, they have tied the authenticity or reliability of a hadith chain with its freedom from textual abnormalities (i.e., opposition to the content of a well-known hadith or that narrated by a more authoritative narrator) and hidden textual defects (i.e., hidden errors in content

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[15]Muhammad Syuhudi Ismail, *Kaedah Kesahehan Sanad Hadits, Telaah Kritis dan Tinjauan dengan Pendekatan Sejarah* (Jakarta: PT. Bulan Bintang, 1995); Subhi as-Salih, *Ulum al-Hadis wa Mustalahuhu* (Beirut: Dâr al-Ilm li al-Malayin, 1977).

[16]Ahmad Amin, *Fajr al-Islam: Kitab fi Thalatha Ajza' Yabḥath 'an al-Ḥalat al-'Aqliyya wa al-Siyasiyya wa al-Adabiyya fī Ṣadr al-Islām ila Akhir al-Dawlat al-Umawiyya* (Beirut: Dâr al-kitab al-'Arabi, 1975); Mahmud Abu Rayyah, *Aḍwa' 'ala al-Sunnah al-Muḥammadīyyah* (Qom: Ansariyan, 1999).

[17]Daniel Brown, *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 7.

[18] Abdul Muttalib, *Tausiq al-Sunnah fi al-Qarn al-Sani al-Hijri: Ususuhu wa Ittijahatuhu* (Cairo: Maktabah al-Khanji, 1981); Imad Sayyid Syirbini, *Kitabat A'da' al-Islam Haula al-Sunnah wa Munaqasyatuha* (Cairo: Dâr al-Kutub al-Masriyyah, 2001).

that undermine the authenticity of the hadith) or have recorded hadiths that are heterogeneous (one that is narrated in a different and contradictory form), inverted (the internal elements are displaced), erroneous (the elements have changed to somewhat related but different elements), interpolated (where the external elements as explained by the narrators imported), and solutions to deal with it. An essential part of this discussion has to do with textual criticism.

d. Even in their discussions about the chain of transmission and verification of the requirements required by the narrators, the hadith experts have paid attention to the hadith texts, in which they have explored the hadith texts to confirm or deny the truth or goodness of the hadiths of the hadith narrators. In addition, they investigate whether a narrator is an actual narrator of hadith based on comparisons between the hadith texts he disseminates and the hadith texts of well-known, authoritative narrators and hadith recorders (terminologically called *i'tibār*).

e. Intellectual practice first ascertains the correctness of the publication of a transmission by a narrator and then verifies its theme. Hadith scholars follow this practice and focus more on publishing and transmission chains of hadiths.

f. Due to the strict criteria adhered to by the 'ulama in examining the condition of the narrators and the belief in their fairness, recording, preservation, and guardianship, the existence of lies, errors, and omissions in hadith texts are highly improbable.

g. The essence of hadith is different from human transmission and statements because first, the horizon of knowledge and talent of the original articulators of hadith – i.e., the Noble Prophet – is higher and nobler than the horizon of human

thought; thus, the use of human thoughts and initial assumptions as evaluation criteria is not always efficient. Second, the presence of ambiguity, allegorical language, and elements of figurative speech in some of the hadiths and their reports of miracles and extraordinary events indicates the difficulty of textual evaluation of hadiths and the need for rigor in this regard. Consequently, hadith scholars are careful in treating these hadiths, and instead of rejecting them, they vigorously attempt to justify and interpret them.

4. Weaknesses in the Basics of Perspective towards *Rijal*

This countering view has several versions. Some focus on the possibility of *Rijal's* accurate assessment, and others on *Rijal's* lack of Sunni heritage.[19] One of these versions is about the time lapse between hadith experts and hadith narrators. In other words, it is difficult to judge contemporary people, especially people who passed away a long time; it weakens the possibility of hadith experts' assessment of hadith narrators. On the other side, the presence or absence of authority and honesty is an internal trait, and definite disclosure is not possible.

Consequently, hadith experts cannot provide an accurate and perfect assessment of the narrators of hadith based on the speculative rules of *Rijal* science. In addition, the possible pretense, hypocrisy, and covert deception of some narrators and the inability of the *Rijāl* scholars to find out their true nature should not be discounted. Another problem that should be considered is the lack of information to ensure that all possible data have been collected about the narrators and that the correct conclusions have been drawn from them. Moreover, *Rijal's*

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[19]Mahmud Abu Rayyah, *Shaykh al-Muḍira Abu Hurairah* (Cairo: Dâr al-Ma'arif, 1965).

perspectives emerge in a situation rife with doctrinal, theological, and jurisprudential disagreements, and the effectiveness of these conditions against the criticism of narrators in an *isnad* cannot be denied. Ultimately, *Rijāl's* point of view mentioned that there are essentially multiple narrations and reports, and the deficiencies and errors that exist in other kinds of narrations – such as forgery, error, and ignorance – also apply to them, and their authenticity also in doubt.

Refutations

The responses of the hadith experts to the refutation above are:[20]

a. Although the *Rijāl* scriptures were developed formally with some delay after the era of the narrators, efforts by Muslim scholars to examine the conditions of the *Rijal* had been made before that time. In fact, later scriptures have been developed using words and the former sources. Hence, according to the chain of transmission, some of the data from these books have been narrated from contemporaries to the narrators. In addition, the narrator's critique is closer to the narrator's era, and their judgments are more accurate than those of later centuries. Consequently, the time lapse between the hadith specialists and narrators would not have been a problem due to the existing belief in *Rijal's* continued explorations and endeavors, as well as their possible lack of knowledge of the true nature of the narrators not being that strong and significant.

b. The cases of disagreements between the perspectives of *Rijāl* scholars and the times when their assumptions influence them are not comparable to cases of agreement. In addition, some of these multiplicities are

a sign of the caution and rigidity of hadith experts in dealing with hadith.

c. The principles and rules governing the evaluation of narrators have gradually developed and been resolved throughout history through confrontation with difficulties and problems such as falsification, fraud, and dishonesty in hadiths, such that the possibility of errors and misunderstandings in the identification of hadiths has resulted in a significant reduction in the condition of the narrator.

5. Counterfeiting and Distortion in the Distribution Chain

The revisionists believe that the chain of transmission has been falsified and distorted, similarly to the contents of the hadith.[21]Phenomena such as fraud or creating a chain of transmission to hide the false nature of a hadith confirm this statement. Therefore, the hadith experts may not be aware of; and cause them to rely on such a weak foundation in evaluating their hadiths.

Refutation

The hadith defenders accept phenomena such as fraud or a series of falsifications. However, according to the conventions of hadith, they have paid attention to these phenomena and discussed these issues in books on fabricated hadith, introduction to the *Rijal* collection, and *Rijāl* monographs on deceptive narrators, and so on; and have determined examples of these people in practice. Hence, cases of fraud or chain fabrication are apparent. Moreover, hadith experts have repeatedly mentioned that chain authenticity is not necessarily the same as text authenticity and originality.

[20]'Imad Sayyid Syirbini, *Kitabat A'da' al-Islam Haula al-Sunnah wa Munaqasyatuha* (Cairo: Dâr al-Kutub al-Masriyyah, 2001).

[21]John Burton, *The Collection of the Quran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

Perspectives of the Traditionalist Madzhab of Sunni Hadith Criticism

Traditionalist madzhab generally has a skeptical view of the hadith criticism method some modern scholars apply. They tend to maintain a more conservative approach in assessing hadiths and reject criticism of traditions considered valid by earlier hadith scholars. The perspective of the traditionalist madzhab of criticism of Sunni hadith can be explained as follows:

1. Belief in the existing authority of hadith

The traditionalist madzhab believes that the earlier scholars have done much hard work collecting, classifying, and verifying the validity of hadiths. They consider that hadiths widely accepted by the Muslim community and valid by hadith experts have sufficient authority and do not need to be questioned.

The response of Sunni hadith experts to the perspective of the traditionalist madzhab that believes in the authority of traditions that have been widely considered valid can vary. Some Sunni hadith scholars agree with this perspective and maintain a conservative approach to hadith assessment. They tend to view the hadiths considered valid by earlier experts as authoritative and unquestionable.

However, Sunni hadith experts are also more critical and open to reassessing hadiths. They admit that even though the previous scholars had made great efforts in collecting and evaluating hadiths, mistakes or misjudgments could still occur. Therefore, they support using the hadith critique method to evaluate the validity and authenticity of hadiths objectively.

For instance, some Sunni hadith scholars such as Imam al-Shafi'i, Imam Ibn al-Salah, and Imam Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani have a more flexible approach to dealing with criticism of hadith. They acknowledge that the method of hadith criticism can positively contribute to understanding the authenticity and legitimacy of hadith as long as it is applied carefully and is based on clear principles.

The response of Sunni hadith experts to traditionalist madzhab regarding the authority of hadith can also be affected by the historical context and the development of hadith science. In modern times, with the advancement of science and access to more comprehensive sources of hadith, some Sunni hadith experts also feel the need to use hadith criticism methods to ensure the accuracy and validity of hadith in facing the challenges of the times.

2. Perseverance in maintaining intellectual heritage

Traditionalist madzhab emphasizes the essence of preserving existing intellectual heritage and oral traditions. They argue that the method of hadith criticism adopted by some modern scholars can threaten the integrity and oneness of religious teachings. Therefore, they prefer to maintain existing traditions. Several reasons underlying this perspective include:

(a) *Continuity and stability*. The traditionalist madzhab regards tradition as a solid foundation for understanding and practicing religion. They believe that maintaining the continuity and stability of tradition is a safer way to ensure that religious teachings do not undergo unwanted changes or abuse.

(b) *Continuity of authority*. The traditionalist madzhab respects the authority of the previous scholars who compiled and classified the hadiths. They argue that these scholars have deep expertise and knowledge in interpreting and understanding religious teachings; thus, the traditions they set must be continued without significant modifications.

(c) *The diversity of interpretations*. Traditionalist Madzhab also considers

that adopting a freer method of hadith criticism can open the door to multiple interpretations and interpretations. They are worried that it can lead to divisions and diversity of perspectives within religious teachings, which can threaten the unity of the Muslim Ummah.

The responses of Sunni hadith experts to the perspectives of traditionalist madzhab that maintain oral traditions and intellectual heritage can vary, including:

1. *Respect for intellectual heritage.* Many Sunni hadith scholars appreciate the intellectual heritage transmitted through oral tradition and the efforts of earlier scholars in collecting, examining, and classifying hadiths. They recognize the value and continuity of tradition in understanding and maintaining religious teachings.
2. *Critical to one-sided understanding.* While respecting tradition, Sunni hadith experts also know that unilateral interpretations and interpretations can occur. Therefore, they encourage caution in assessing and understanding hadith and paying attention to the historical context and objective methods of criticism.
3. *The essence of accuracy and validity.* Some Sunni hadith experts recognize the importance of using hadith criticism methods to ensure the accuracy and validity of hadiths. They argue that an honest and objective assessment of the *sanad* (chain of narrators) and *matan* (hadith text) can help distinguish between valid and weak hadiths.
4. *A critical role in facing the challenges of the times.* Sunni hadith experts also admit that in facing the challenges of the times, especially with the emergence of criticism of hadith, the method of criticism can provide a more scientific and academic approach to answering questions and doubts that arise.

5. Doubts about the method of hadith criticism

Traditionalist madzhab doubts the adequacy of modern hadith criticism methods in assessing the validity of hadith. They argue that the methodology tends to be inconsistent and unreliable. They worry that an overly critical assessment of hadiths could pave the way for manipulation or abuse in determining religious law. It reflects their concern about problems that might arise in using the method.

The responses of Sunni hadith experts to the perspectives of traditionalist madzhab, which doubt the adequacy of modern hadith criticism methods in assessing the validity of hadith, can vary as follows:

- *Consistency and objectivity of hadith criticism methods.* Sunni hadith scholars who support the modern method of hadith criticism may argue that it has a consistent and objective framework. They emphasize the importance of carefully applying the method of hadith criticism based on clear principles and considering the historical and scientific context.
- *The reliability and accuracy of the hadith critique method.* Sunni hadith experts who support modern hadith criticism methods might argue that by using good and tested methods, researchers can ensure reliability and accuracy in assessing the validity of hadiths. They consider that the modern hadith critique method has a systematic framework for evaluating *sanad* (chain of narrators) and *matan* (hadith texts) and pays attention to scientific principles and strict methodology.
- *Protection from manipulation and abuse.* Sunni hadith experts who support modern hadith criticism methods can also argue that such methods protect religious teachings from manipulation or abuse. By objectively assessing the validity of hadiths, they

argue that they can avoid fake or distorted hadiths, leading to errors in determining religious law.

- *The importance of the hadith critique method in a more accurate understanding.* Many Sunni hadith scholars realize that modern hadith criticism methods can significantly contribute to understanding the validity of hadith. They admit that through a critical analysis of the *sanad* (chain of narrators) and *matan* (hadith texts), a more objective assessment of the hadiths in question can be made.

- *The need for a balanced approach.* Sunni hadith scholars who support the hadith-critical method advocate a balanced approach between respecting tradition and using the critical method. They argue that while oral traditions and intellectual heritage need to be respected, there is also a need for critical research and assessment to ensure the accuracy and legitimacy of the hadiths.

- *Protection against manipulation and abuse.* Sunni hadith experts who support the hadith critique method emphasize that it can protect religious teachings from manipulation and abuse. By making an objective assessment based on scientific principles, it is possible to avoid using fake or distorted hadiths in determining religious law.

- *Diversity of perspectives within the Sunni hadith expert community.* The Sunni hadith community significantly has different opinions. Some scholars may prefer a more traditionalist approach, while others are more open to modern methods of hadith criticism. Therefore, the response of Sunni hadith experts to this view can vary depending on perspective, education, and individual understanding.

Conclusion

The revisionists have questioned the authenticity of the Sunni collection of hadiths to challenge the authenticity and legitimacy of the sunnah. To this objective, they have analyzed the books of *Ṣahih* Muslim and *Ṣahih* Bukhari – the most authentic Sunni books of hadith – and have presented cases that they consider fabricated, and based on these counter-examples and inauthentic cases, they have attempted to destroy the belief into the authenticity of the hadith. In the second stage, they explored the historical period between the publication of hadith and their writing in books and believe that forgeries have been a constant and common reality in this period and have tainted the hadith heritage in such a way that identification of authentic hadith from fakes is practically impossible, for *Ṣihah* writers. Another objection they make to the transmission of hadith relates to the method of criticism of hadith that has been already common among hadith scholars. They believe that hadith scholars have largely criticized their transmission chain and neglected the more important textual and content criticism of the hadiths. When they know about some hadiths' textual errors and problems, they try to justify and interpret them instead of rejecting them.

The revisionists do not even consider the series of criticisms of the hadith scholars to be effective because they believe that the long time lapse between hadith experts and narrators, the impossibility of ensuring the enjoyment of internal qualities such as justice by some, the disagreements among the *Rijal* scholars and the differences between the assumptions and basics for their criticism of the transmitters of hadith in an *isnād*, as well as the possible introduction of fabrications and errors into the *Rijal* traditions which cast serious doubt on the accuracy of this method of criticism. The last reason they put forward is that, based on historical evidence, falsification, and fraud have seriously polluted the chain of transmission and the basis of chain criticism,

and the hadith scholars have not considered this. Hadith defenders insist on several points in their response. First, the nature and quiddity of hadith differ from other narrations and types of narration because it was issued by people whose knowledge is higher than that of ordinary people. In addition, several phenomena, such as analogies or figurative and allegorical language, can be seen in the hadith.

Therefore, observing initial disagreement between the different hadiths should not lead one to suggest fabrications and falsifications on personal grounds. The counter-example found by the revisionists or their criticism of the efforts of hadith experts to justify hadith can be answered in this way. Second, the defenders of hadith turn to historical evidence to substantiate the enormous, precise, rigid, constant, and thorough efforts of hadith scholars – whether in the realm of combating falsification, critiquing manuscripts, or critiquing the chain of transmission – to show that there is no gap between the publication of hadiths and their writing in hadith collections. This continuous examination also reveals the possibility of identifying inauthentic hadiths and realizing this possibility. Hence, although there are historical gaps and some texts or serial forgeries have occurred, hadith scholars have paid attention to them and have introduced people and examples of these forgeries to some extent. As a result, the existence of non-detailed knowledge about the existence of fabricated hadiths in *Ṣihah* is rejected.

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