

# Religious Authority in Islam: Between Classical Fiqh and Hadith Traditions in Contemporary Epistemological Discourse

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## Abstract

*This study aims to analyze the paradigm of religious authority in the historical context of the early generation of Islam through the relationship between hadith narration (pernyataan) and fiqh ijtihad. The formation of a religious paradigm requires a comprehensive understanding of religious texts by combining normative and historical approaches. However, in the development of Islamic intellectualism, academic problems arose regarding religious authority, particularly in the relationship between hadith narration and fiqh ijtihad in the generation early Islam. The debate over the authority of hadith and methods of understanding religious texts gave rise to various religious paradigms that continue to be influential into the contemporary. This study uses a descriptive-analytical method with a socio-historical approach*

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*and type of research by literature study. Data were analyzed through a systematic depiction of the social, political, and intellectual dynamics that influenced the formation of religious authority in the early Islam. The results of the study indicate three main findings. First, the Qur'an and hadith are the highest authorities in Islam, understood through normative and historical approaches by scholars who possess scholarly authority and are recognized in the Islamic scholarly tradition, particularly in the discipline of hadith. Second, the debate on the authority of hadith has been ongoing since the time of the imams of the madhhab between ahl al-fiqh and ahl al-hadith, which was then synthesized by Imam al-Shafi'i and Imam Ibn Qutaybah, and continues into the contemporary era with the emergence of a tendency towards textualism in understanding hadith. Third, the formation of religious authority in the early Islamic period was influenced by political, social, and scholarly background factors, but scholarly factors most effective influence and benefit in building the legitimacy of authority in the public sphere. This research recommends the need for further study in early of Islamic history in more depth by tracing the genealogy of scholarship, politics, and theology in various Islamic intellectual centers, such as Kufa, Egypt, Syria, and Bukhara, in order to strengthen contemporary readings of the legacy of early Islamic scholarship.*

**Keywords:** *Religious Authority; Hadith Transmission; Fiqh Ijtihad; Diversity Paradigm; Socio-historical Approach.*

## Abstrak

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis paradigma otoritas keagamaan dalam konteks historis generasi awal Islam melalui relasi antara periwiyatan hadis dan ijtihad fikih. Pembentukan paradigma keberagaman memerlukan pemahaman yang komprehensif terhadap teks agama dengan memadukan pendekatan normatif dan historis. Namun, dalam perkembangan intelektual Islam, muncul problem akademik mengenai otoritas keagamaan, khususnya dalam relasi antara periwiyatan hadis dan ijtihad fikih pada generasi awal Islam. Perdebatan mengenai otoritas hadis dan metode memahami teks agama melahirkan berbagai paradigma keagamaan yang terus berpengaruh hingga masa kontemporer. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif-analitis dengan pendekatan sosio-historis serta jenis penelitian studi literatur. Data dianalisis melalui penggambaran sistematis terhadap dinamika sosial, politik, dan intelektual yang memengaruhi pembentukan otoritas keagamaan pada masa awal Islam. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan ada tiga temuan utama. Pertama, Al-Qur'an dan hadis merupakan otoritas tertinggi dalam Islam yang dipahami melalui pendekatan normatif dan historis oleh para ulama yang memiliki otoritas keilmuan dan diakui dalam tradisi keilmuan Islam, khususnya dalam disiplin hadis. Kedua, perdebatan mengenai otoritas hadis telah berlangsung sejak masa imam madhhab antara ahli fikih dan ahli hadis, yang kemudian disintesis oleh Imam al-Shafi'i dan Imam Ibn Qutaybah, serta berlanjut hingga era kontemporer dengan munculnya kecenderungan tekstualisme dalam memahami hadis. Ketiga, pembentukan otoritas keagamaan pada*

*masa awal Islam dipengaruhi oleh faktor politik, sosial, dan latar belakang keilmuan, namun faktor keilmuan memiliki pengaruh paling efektif dan manfaat dalam membangun legitimasi otoritas di ruang publik. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan perlunya kajian lanjutan mengenai kajian sejarah awal Islam secara lebih mendalam melalui penelusuran genealogi keilmuan, politik, dan teologi di berbagai pusat intelektual Islam, seperti Kufah, Mesir, Syam, dan Bukhara, guna memperkuat pembacaan kontemporer terhadap warisan keilmuan Islam awal.*

**Kata Kunci:** Otoritas Keagamaan; Perinayatan Hadis; Ijtihad Fikih; Paradigma Keberagaman; Pendekatan Sosio-historis.

## Introduction

The study of Islam has evolved in part through the interpretation of religious texts by Muslim scholars, adapting to the current situation. Religious texts serve as sacred foundations that provide guidance for teachings and serve as references for resolving all manner of life's challenges. The Qur'an is the primary source of teachings for Muslims and is recognized as a revelation of a *mutawātir* nature, meaning its truth is beyond doubt. Therefore, its authenticity is non-negotiable. Meanwhile, the hadith serves as the second source of teachings for Muslims after the Qur'an. Its position as a source of Islamic teachings following the Qur'an has drawn the attention of both Muslim and non-Muslim scholars to study it in depth, as it is used as evidence in various contexts - whether of the *mutawātir*, *ahad*, or other types. The authenticity of *mutawātir* hadith is beyond doubt, as numerous narrators transmit them and they can't lie, ensuring that information about the Prophet can be directly attributed to him. Meanwhile, there remains doubt about the authenticity of *aḥādīts*,<sup>1</sup> making them a field of research for scholars of Islamic studies to determine their

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<sup>1</sup> Utsman b. 'Abd al-Raḥman al-Syahrāzuri, *'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth li Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr al-Mu'aṣir; Damaskus: Dār al-Fikr, tt), 265-271; Al-Khatīb al-Baḡhdādī, *'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*, 125-127; Muḥammad Hashim Kamālī, *Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence*, (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 2003), 62-63; Muḥammad Zubayr Shiddīqī, *Ḥadīth Literature: Its Origin, Development & Special Features*, (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1999), 113.

validity as evidence. This is because a hadith fall within the realm of conjecture (*dẓannīy*) and thus remain open to debate.

Only Hadiths that are not affected by deficiencies in either their *sanad* (chain of transmission) or *matn* (textual content) can serve as valid bases of authority and reference. However, some scholar of Hadith argued that weak Hadith may be used in a limited capacity, provided that they are not related to doctrinal matters (‘Aqidah) or legal injunctions concerning the permissible (halal) and the prohibited (haram).<sup>2</sup> In the perspective of the *muhādditsīn* (hadith scholars), there are two typologies of understanding hadith. According to Amin Abdullah, scholars’ views and the function of hadith for the Muslim community can be categorized into two groups.

The first typology consists of those who believe that hadith is the second source of Islamic teachings after the Qur’an, without paying attention to the long historical processes of its collection, codification, and the formation of orthodoxy that shaped the hadith tradition. Therefore, social scientists classify this approach as an ahistorical mode of thinking. This group is commonly known as textualists. The second typology also regards hadith as the second source of Islamic teachings. However, unlike the first group, its proponents examine hadith through a critical-historical approach, taking into consideration the original circumstances surrounding the emergence of a hadith and interpreting it contextually.<sup>3</sup> Although these two typologies appear similar, they differ significantly in their underlying assumptions and methodological approaches.

Religiosity is always grounded in sacred religious texts. The Qur’an and Hadith serve as the primary sources of Islamic

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<sup>2</sup> Mahmud Taḥḥan, *Taisīr Muṣṭalah al-Ḥadīṣ*, (Iskandaria: Markaz al-Huda li al-Dirasat, 1415 H), 51-53, Lihat lebih lengkap Ibn al-Salah, ‘*Ulūm al-Ḥadīṣ*, (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr al-Mu‘āsir, 1986), (Damaskus: Dar al-Fikr, 1986), 93; Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, *Al-Kifāyah fī Ma‘rifat Uṣūl ‘Ilm al-Riwayah*, (Kairo: Dar al-Huda: 2003), 93-94.

<sup>3</sup> Amin Abdullah, *Studi Agama Normativitas atau Historisitas?*, (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2015), 315; Lihat lebih lengkap, Muhammad Quraish Shihab, “Kata Pengantar” dalam *Studi Kritis*, ...473-4.

teachings in interpreting the religious values conveyed by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). In the modern era, religion—referred to in Arabic as *al-dīn*—is no longer understood solely from its normative dimension but has increasingly been approached through a variety of analytical perspectives. There are two major perspectives in understanding religion. First, religion is viewed as *al-dīn*, possessing a normative character that requires adherence to its revealed teachings and doctrines. Second, religion is approached as a field of Islamic Studies, where it is examined through diverse methodological and disciplinary perspectives.<sup>4</sup> This latter approach aims to establish common ground between normative religious understanding and academic religious studies, thereby enabling a more comprehensive understanding of religion.

According to Mandaville, authority should not be understood as a stagnant and monolithic entity confined to a single aspect of religious life. Rather, authority is dynamic in nature, leading to the view that no single, exclusive authority exists. In the context of the modern world, Islam can no longer rely solely on an absolute and centralized form of authority; instead, it operates through a plurality of authorities that transcend spatial and temporal boundaries.<sup>5</sup> This suggests that authority in the modern era is relative rather than absolute. Such a condition differs significantly from the early period of Islam, particularly during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad, who served as the primary religious authority for the Muslim community. Following his death, religious authority was inherited and exercised by the Companions (*ṣaḥābah*) and subsequently by the Successors (*tābi'ūn*). However, as society has evolved and technological advancements have accelerated

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<sup>4</sup> Nella Lucky, “Mendamaikan Logika Normatifitas dan Historisitas dalam Studi Agama”, *Toleransi: Media Komunikasi Umat Beragama*, Vol. 6, No. 1 Januari-Juni 2014, 123-132.

<sup>5</sup> Peter Mandaville, “Globalization and Politics of Religious Knowledge: Pluralizing Authority in the Muslim World,” pada *Theory, Culture & Society* (2007) (SAGE, London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi), Vol. 24 (2): 101-115.

the circulation of knowledge, religious authority has become increasingly diverse and decentralized. Consequently, it has become more difficult to determine which authorities should be recognized as definitive. Nevertheless, this development does not imply the disappearance of traditional forms of authority rooted in the Prophetic era. Rather, modernity has expanded the landscape of authority, allowing both traditional and emerging authorities to coexist. As a result, questions concerning religious authority remain dynamic and continue to be actively debated and negotiated in contemporary Islamic discourse.

In the discussion of religious authority theory presented earlier, several scholars have offered perspectives on authority as an epistemological concept. Among them is Khaled Abou El Fadl, a contemporary scholar originally from Kuwait and a professor at UCLA in the United States. He argues that the ability to present persuasive arguments within one's area of expertise constitutes a fundamental aspect of exercising authority. An authority holder must possess trustworthiness and demonstrate conduct that preserves public trust, thereby strengthening and sustaining the authority entrusted to them.<sup>6</sup> The persuasive power of an argument gains legitimacy within society when the authority of its proponent is maintained and not undermined by breaches of trust. In the early Islamic period, the authority of religious scholars (*ulamā'*) in determining legal rulings was sometimes shared with, or influenced by, the political authorities governing the Muslim community. Consequently, religious authority was shaped through a complex interaction between scholarly expertise, communal trust, and political power. Accordingly, the central question addressed in this study is: How can the portrait of religious authority in the early Islamic period—particularly in relation to hadith transmission and juristic *ijtihād* be understood, and how did these developments contribute to the formation of paradigms of religious authority in

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<sup>6</sup> Khaled Abou el Fadl, *Atas Nama Tuhan: Dari Fikih Otoriter ke Fikih Otoritatif*, terj. Cecep Lukman Yasin (Jakarta: Serambi, 2004), 42.

the contemporary era?

The transmission of hadith and the development of juridical reasoning (*ijtihād fiqhī*) are historically interconnected with the emergence of Islamic legal schools (*madzāhib*). Any discussion of Islamic jurisprudence during the second and third centuries of the Hijri era inevitably involves examining the process through which these legal schools emerged, beginning with the school of Imam Abu Ḥanifah (d. 150 AH), whose intellectual legacy developed through a long historical process following the era of the Prophet's Companions. According to Wael B. Hallaq, jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and hadith possessed distinct forms of authority. Jurists were supported by official institutions under governmental patronage and functioned as holders of religious authority. Hallaq argues that the construction of *ijtihād* undertaken by the founders of the legal schools was pioneered by Imam Abu Ḥanifah. This process contributed to the establishment of the authority of the legal schools in formulating and articulating Islamic legal rulings during that period. In his research, Hallaq emphasizes that the foundations of scholarly authority in early Islam were initiated by a group of scholars based in Kufah.

The legal opinions of Imam Abu Ḥanifah were shaped by the teachings of his predecessors, including prominent figures from among the Companions and the Successors (*tābi'ūn*), such as Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (d. 30 AH), Alqamah ibn Qays (d. 62 AH), Ibrahim al-Nakha'i (d. 95 AH), and Hammad ibn Abi Sulayman (d. 119/120 AH). Jurists of the Ḥanafī school later expressed this intellectual lineage through an elegant poetic metaphor, illustrating the extent of Abu Ḥanifah's scholarly indebtedness to his teachers: "Fiqh was planted by 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, watered by 'Alqamah, harvested by Ibahim al-Nakha'i, threshed by Ḥammad, and ground into flour by Imam Abu Ḥanifah. It was then kneaded by Abu Yusuf (d. 181 AH) and baked by Imam al-Syaibani (d. 189 AH), while the Muslims are those who eat its bread."<sup>7</sup> The *ijtihād*

<sup>7</sup> Wael B. Hallaq, *Authority, Continuity and Change in Islamic Law*, (Cambridge:

undertaken by Imam Abu Ḥanifah thus emerged from a long process of intellectual development, eventually evolving into a distinguished school of jurisprudence in his time. Originating in the city of Kufa, the Ḥanafi school gradually expanded and became one of the most influential legal traditions in the Muslim world, spreading across large parts of South Asia and North Africa, where its influence continues to the present day.

The paradigm of Islamic jurisprudence that developed during the early period of Islam cannot be separated from the foundational sources of Islamic teachings, namely the Qur'an and the Hadith. Focusing on the study of Hadith, as explored in the research of Jonathan Brown, religious authority requires authentic sources that can serve as canonical texts. In his study of *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*, Brown argues that the canonization of these two collections reflects the highest level of hadith scholarship and transmission activity during the second and third centuries of the Hijri era.<sup>8</sup> By the end of the fourth century AH, *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim* had attained the status of canonical texts, serving as authoritative references for evaluating various aspects of religious belief and practice on the basis of the authenticity of their transmitted reports. During this period, legal schools (*madzāhib*) and theological movements also flourished, frequently employing hadith as a primary source for constructing and defending their doctrinal and juridical arguments.

In his research, Jonathan Brown emphasizes that the transmission of hadith, once documented in authoritative written compilations, played a significant role in shaping the intellectual dynamics of the third and fourth centuries AH. During this period, hadith scholarship, juridical reasoning (*ijtihād fiqhī*), and theology emerged as major intellectual forces that characterized scholarly discourse. Evidence of the growing authority of hadith can be

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Cambridge University Press, 2004). 26-34

<sup>8</sup> Jonathan AC Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim: The Formation and Function of the Sunni Hadīth Canon*, (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2007), 101-102.

seen in the works of both the Hanbali (or ultra-Sunni) circles and the Syafi'i-Asy'ari tradition, which frequently cited *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim* as authoritative sources in their scholarly writings.<sup>9</sup> This development reached its culmination with Al-Hakim al-Naysaburi (d. 405 AH), who established *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim* as benchmarks for determining authenticity (*measures of authenticity*). As a result, the expressions *ṣaḥīḥ 'ala ṣarṭ al-Bukhari* (“authentic according to al-Bukhari’s criteria”) and *ṣaḥīḥ 'ala ṣarṭ Muslim* (“authentic according to Muslim’s criteria”) became widely recognized and frequently employed in hadith criticism.<sup>10</sup> This development further elevated the status of *ḥadīṡ maqbūl* (accepted hadith) by evaluating reports according to the methodological criteria established in *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*. In contrast, the present article examines the nature of religious authority between jurists (*fuqahā'*) and hadith scholars (*muḥadditsūn*) during the formative period of Islam, as well as the position accorded to hadith by early Muslim scholars. It argues that a significant epistemological shift later occurred among the defenders of hadith, whose approach increasingly came to be characterized as textualist, emphasizing the literal authority of transmitted reports over other forms of legal and theological reasoning.

This study examines the paradigm of religious authority in early Islam through the lens of hadith transmission and juridical reasoning (*ijtihād fiqhī*). It employs a library research methodology, relying primarily on textual and documentary sources.<sup>11</sup> The principal method of analysis is descriptive-analytical, utilizing a socio-historical approach. This approach seeks to present, in a

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<sup>9</sup> Arif Chasanul Muna, “Wacana kritik Hadis-hadis Bernuansa Kekerasan terhadap Non Muslim dalam Sahih al-Bukhārī”, (Disertasi: UIN Walisongo, 2019), 155; Lihat lebih lengkap, Jonathan AC Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim: The Formation and Function of the Sunni Hadīṡ Canon*,....., 154.

<sup>10</sup> Jonathan AC Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim: The Formation and Function of the Sunni Hadīṡ Canon*,., 154.

<sup>11</sup> Muhammad Sabana dan Sudrajat, *Dasar-Dasar Penelitian Ilmiah*, (Bandung: Pustaka Setia, 2001),77.

systematic manner, the issues identified through the perspectives of both Western and Eastern contemporary scholars, while maintaining an objective assessment of the historical context under investigation.<sup>12</sup> Such a framework enables the study to provide a more focused and coherent depiction of the paradigm underlying the topic under discussion.

The study focuses on hadith scholars (*muhadditsūn*) and jurists (*fuqahā'*) and the forms of religious authority they exercised during the formative period of Islam, particularly in the second and third centuries AH. Special attention is given to the intellectual environments of Medina and Kufa, as well as to the broader scholarly developments surrounding these centers up to the period of hadith codification undertaken by the compilers of the *Kutub al-Sittah*, including Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari. The primary sources for this research consist of scholarly works addressing religious authority, hadith transmission, and Islamic jurisprudence during the formative generations of Islam. Particular emphasis is placed on the contributions of Abu Hanifah, Malik ibn Anas, and Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafi'i, whose intellectual legacies played a pivotal role in shaping the relationship between hadith scholarship and legal authority in early Islamic thought.

### **Authority of the Text between Normativity and Historicity**

Within the study of religion, the normative approach is generally understood as a classical method that emphasizes the transmission and internalization of religious values through doctrinal teachings. In contrast, the historical approach to religious studies increasingly incorporates empirical and factual evidence, enabling sacred religious texts to be understood in relation to changing social and historical contexts. Nevertheless, such interpretations must remain within certain boundaries that

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<sup>12</sup> Hadari Nawawi, *Metode Penelitian Bidang Sosial*, (Yogyakarta: Gajah Mada University Press, 2003), 63.

preserve the essential values conveyed through God's revelation to the Prophet. When Islamic studies are conducted through these approaches normative and historical they may yield different conclusions. The normative approach tends to be more textual, focusing closely on the explicit meaning and authority of religious texts, whereas the historical approach is generally more contextual, seeking to understand texts within their social, cultural, and historical settings. At the same time, Islam as a religion is traditionally regarded as *ṣāliḥ li-kulli z̤amān wa makān* (relevant and applicable for every time and place). Consequently, what differs is not the religion itself, but rather the interpretations through which believers understand religious teachings derived from the sacred texts of the Qur'an and Hadith. These interpretations emerge through diverse methodological approaches and intellectual frameworks. However, the interpretation of religious texts is not without limits. Certain methodological and theological boundaries must be observed to ensure that the understanding of religious texts remains within the accepted framework of Islamic scholarship and does not depart from the fundamental principles governing the interpretation of divine revelation.

According to Amin Abdullah, there exists a gap between normativity and historicity in the study of religion. What distinguishes various scholarly approaches is not the existence of this gap itself, but rather the extent or depth of the divide between the two.<sup>13</sup> This condition is influenced by numerous factors, including social circumstances, academic environments, available references, research facilities, libraries, and the quality of human resources involved in the scholarly process. This perspective suggests that normativity and historicity are separated by certain conceptual boundaries. However, the existence of such a gap does

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<sup>13</sup> The context conveyed in his book, "Merekonstruksi Pembelajaran Studi Islam di Perguruan Tinggi Islam". See more details at Amin Abdullah, *Islamic Studies di Perguruan Tinggi: Pendekatan Integratif-Interkonektif*, (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2012), 12-13.

not imply that the two approaches are entirely disconnected. On the contrary, bridges can be constructed between them, enabling the development of an integrated or mixed approach capable of producing more comprehensive conclusions that contribute to human welfare and the public good. In understanding religious texts, scholars cannot entirely separate normative and historical analyses if they seek to achieve a comprehensive interpretation. Religious texts are best understood when their normative teachings are examined alongside their historical contexts. Such an approach requires consideration of the circumstances surrounding the revelation or transmission of the Qur'anic verses and hadith reports, including to whom they were addressed, when they were conveyed, and under what social and historical conditions they were communicated. By combining these two perspectives, interpreters can arrive at a deeper and more holistic understanding of the meaning and objectives of religious texts.

In contrast, according to Bertrand Russell (1872–1970), the pursuit of truth requires a clear distinction between the subject and the object of inquiry. He approached religion through an epistemological framework aimed at discovering truth, commonly associated with the *Correspondence Theory of Truth*. This theory, which has been widely accepted among many Western philosophers, holds that a statement is true insofar as it corresponds to objective reality.<sup>14</sup> Consequently, researchers examine particular objects of study while maintaining a degree of separation between themselves as subjects and the phenomena being investigated. Within discussions of normativity and historicity, Western scholarship has often tended to place greater emphasis on historical analysis than on normative considerations. This methodological preference may contribute to differences in the conclusions reached by Western

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<sup>14</sup> Amin Abdullah, *Islamic Studies di Perguruan Tinggi: Pendekatan Integratif-Interkonektif*, (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2012), 15; Lihat lebih lengkap, Milton K. Munitz, *Contemporary Analytic Philosophy*, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co, INC, 1981), 270.

scholars when compared to those employing normative religious approaches. Russell's position reflects, in part, the epistemological legacy of Rene Descartes (1596-1650), who advocated a distinction between the knowing subject and the object of knowledge as a fundamental principle of inquiry.

A different perspective was offered by Martin Heidegger, who distinguished between *conceptual, verbal knowledge* and *preconceptual, preverbal knowledge*. Heidegger argued that genuine understanding does not necessarily require a strict separation between subject and object. For him, the correspondence model of truth should not be regarded as the sole valid path to knowledge, nor should it invalidate other approaches to the discovery of truth.<sup>15</sup> Rather, a balanced approach is necessary in order to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of reality. Accordingly, Heidegger sought to overcome the rigid divide between the conceptual and the preconceptual dimensions of knowledge. Applied to the study of religious texts, this perspective suggests that texts, as conceptual expressions, cannot be fully understood without consideration of their preconceptual dimensions—namely, the historical, social, and experiential contexts in which they were communicated and received. The meaning of the text is therefore illuminated not only through its linguistic and conceptual content but also through an understanding of the lived experiences of the individuals who first received it, including the context in which the Prophet conveyed the divine message revealed by Allah. Such an approach underscores the importance of integrating textual analysis with contextual understanding in the interpretation of religious sources.

In discussing the truth claims of religious texts, several concepts remain open to academic inquiry and debate, while others are regarded as definitive principles that safeguard the fundamental

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<sup>15</sup> Amin Abdullah, *Islamic Studies di Perguruan Tinggi: Pendekatan Integratif-Interkonektif*,..., 16-17; See more details at Robert S Solomon, *From Rationalism to Existentialism: The Existentialist and Their Nineteenth-Century Background* (New York: Herper & Row, Publisher, 1972), 198-91.

values of religious law. Although religious texts may give rise to diverse interpretations, religion itself, as a framework for guiding human life, requires the observance of certain boundaries and methodological principles. These boundaries serve as important considerations for scholars engaged in the study and interpretation of religious sources. Some critics argue that such limitations may render religion rigid and resistant to intellectual development. Nevertheless, within monotheistic theological traditions, certain doctrines are considered *ghayr qābil li al-niqāsy wa al-taghyīr* (not subject to dispute or alteration). These foundational beliefs are viewed as essential elements of faith and therefore remain beyond the scope of revision or modification. This distinction is elaborated by Salah al-Sawi in his book *Al-Tsawābit wa al-Mutaghayyirāt*,<sup>16</sup> where he identifies two broad categories within Islamic teachings. The first consists of *al-tsawābit* (constants), namely principles and rulings that are fixed and unchangeable. The second comprises *al-Mutaghayyirāt* (variables), which are matters that may adapt and evolve in response to changing circumstances, social conditions, and the development of human society over time.

Religious texts serve as a fundamental source for preserving the purity of religious values. Differences in human behavior in practicing the norms prescribed by religious texts are often rooted in the interpretations of those who read them. Thus, the Qur'an, as the sacred scripture of Muslims, has generated numerous works of *tafsīr* written by various exegetes, demonstrating that a text may be interpreted in different ways, provided that the interpreter meets the established qualifications and methodological requirements of a *mufasssīr*. The same applies to hadith. As the second source of Islamic teachings after the Qur'an, hadith has been the subject of numerous commentaries (*syurūḥ*). Among the primary hadith collections referenced after the Qur'an are *Sahih*

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<sup>16</sup> Salah al-Sawi, *al-Thawābit wa al-Mutaghayyirāt fī Masīrah al-'Amal al-Islāmī al-Mu'āṣir*, (pp :Sharia Academy of Amrica, 2009 M/1430 H).

*al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*. Both works have been accompanied by various commentaries written by scholars from different schools of Islamic jurisprudence.<sup>17</sup> From a normative perspective, these two collections are regarded as representative compilations of authentic hadith, although there are also other collections, such as the *Kutub al-Sittah*, the *Kutub al-Tis'ah*, and others, which contain hadith classified as *ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic), *ḥasan* (good), and *ḍa'īf* (weak).

From a historical perspective, the acceptance of hadith cannot be based solely on its classification as *ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic). Hadiths categorized as authentic are generally divided into two types: *āḥād* (solitary reports) and *mutawātir* (mass-transmitted reports). Among hadith scholars, the number of *mutawātir* hadiths has been a subject of debate. According to Ibn al-Salah (d. 643 AH), the number of hadiths that reach the level of *mutawātir* is relatively limited.<sup>18</sup> In contrast, Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (d. 852 AH) and Al-Suyuti (d. 911 AH) maintained that there are many *mutawātir* hadiths within the hadith literature.<sup>19</sup> In the research of Kamaruddin Amin, it is noted that Nur al-Din Itr (d. 2021 CE/1441 AH) attempted to reconcile this disagreement by classifying *mutawātir* hadith into two categories. According to this interpretation, Ibn al-Salah's assessment refers to *mutawātir lafẓī* (verbatim mass-transmitted hadith), whereas the assessments of Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani and al-Suyuti refer to

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<sup>17</sup> Kitab *Syarh* Hadis Sahih al-Bukhari di antaranya, 1) *Irsḥād al-Sāri ila Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* karya Shihabuddīn Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Khatḥb al-Qastalānī (w 923 H); 2) *Syarḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī li Ibn al-Battāl* karya Ibn Battal nama aslinya Abī Ḥ usayn Ali b. Khalaf b. Abd al-Malik (w 449 H); *Fath al-Bārī bi Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Imām Abī 'Abdullāh Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī* karya Imam Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (w 852 H); *'Umdāt al-Qārī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* karya Badr al-Dīn Abī Muḥammad Maḥmūd b. Aḥmad al-'Aynī (w 855 H).

<sup>18</sup> Utsman b. 'Abd al-Rahman al-Shahrazuri, *Ulūm al-Ḥadīth li Ibn al-Ṣalāh*, ..., 242.

<sup>19</sup> Ibn Ḥajar al-Asqalani, *Syarḥ Nukhbah al-Fikr fi Muṣṭalahāt Ahl al-Athār*, (Karachi: Maktabah al-Bushra, 2011), 6-7; Quoted from the work Nur al-Dīn Ítr, *Manhaj al-Naqd*, (Damaskus: Dar al-Fikr, 1979 M/1399 H), 407; Aḥmad 'Umar Hāsīyim, *Qawāid Uṣūl al-ḥadīth*, (Beirut: ...1984), 145.

*mutawātir ma'nawī* (mass-transmitted hadith in meaning)<sup>20</sup> This distinction between the two types of *mutawātir* hadith serves as a mediating solution to the disagreement between these scholars.

If *mutawātir* hadiths are regarded as occupying the highest position in terms of acceptance, what then of *āḥād* hadiths, whose number of transmitters does not reach the level required for *mutawātir* transmission? Such a question may be answered by examining the historical dimension of *āḥād* hadiths. The acceptance of a hadith does not depend primarily on the number of transmitters, but rather on the *thiqah* (trustworthiness and reliability) of its narrators.<sup>21</sup> The credibility of a narrator plays a decisive role in determining whether a hadith is accepted or rejected. Consequently, scholars possess the authority to classify a hadith as *ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic), *ḥasan* (good), or *ḍa'īf* (weak) based on an evaluation of its transmitters. Thus, from a historical perspective, the acceptance of hadith is shaped more by the reliability of its narrators than by the sheer number of individuals who transmitted it.

The application of hadith acceptance theory through both normative and historical approaches ultimately leads to the same conclusion. From a normative perspective, acceptance is determined by examining the *ṣūbat al-taḥammul* (mode of transmission), which indicates the manner in which a hadith was received by a narrator. From a historical perspective, a hadith may be accepted as a valid proof (*ḥujjah*) provided that its transmitters are free from defects and are not known to have engaged in dishonesty or fabrication. Both approaches therefore converge in affirming the acceptability of a hadith. Accordingly, even an *āḥād* hadith that falls into the category of *gharīb* (a report transmitted through a single chain at a particular level), such as the famous hadith concerning intention

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<sup>20</sup> Kamaruddin Amin, *Menguji Kembali Keakuratan Metode Kritik Hadis*, (Jakarta: Mizan Publika, 2009), 44-45.

<sup>21</sup> Utsman b. 'Abd al-Raḥman al-Shahrazuri, *'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth li Ibn al-Ṣalāh*,....., 68.

(*niyyah*),<sup>22</sup> narrated by Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him), is accepted as a *ṣaḥīḥ* hadith because its transmitters are *tsiqab* (trustworthy and reliable) and because the report is free from defects (*'illah*) and irregularities (*syudzūdz*).

Through this concept, hadith, as a component of religious texts, occupies the highest position after the Qur'an as a source of legal teachings in Islam. Therefore, the authority of religious texts, viewed through the lenses of both normativity and historicity, reflects the understanding that sacred texts constitute the highest authority in conveying God's messages through the words of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). To properly understand the messages in religious texts such as the Qur'an and hadith, a comprehensive approach is required. Examining the explicit textual content in detail through a normative approach enables a clearer understanding of the text. However, it is not sufficient to consider only the apparent (*dzāhir*) meaning of the text. A historical approach is also necessary to determine to whom the Qur'anic verses and hadith reports were addressed, as well as the circumstances and context in which they were revealed and conveyed by the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him).

## Discourse on the Authority of Hadith and Juristic Ijtihād

The status of hadith as one of the sources of Islamic teachings after the Qur'an underwent a long historical process. During the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), the writing of hadith was initially prohibited due to concerns that it might become mixed with the Qur'an. After some time, this prohibition was lifted through reports permitting the recording

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<sup>22</sup> Hadith from *ṣaḥābah* 'Umar ibn Khattab r.a., narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* in the chapter on good deeds depending on good intentions and every matter depends on intentions; Imam Muslim: 1907; Imam Abū Dāūd: 2201; Imam Tirmidhī: 1646; Imam Ibn Mājah: 4227; Imam al-Nasāī: 1/59-60; dan Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal in *Musnad*: 1/25, 43.

of hadith, thereby abrogating (*naskh*) the earlier prohibition.<sup>23</sup> Following the Prophet's death, there was a period during which the Companions sought to limit the transmission of hadith. This caution stemmed from concerns that hadith might spread among irresponsible individuals and be exploited for particular interests, thereby increasing the risk of fabrication.<sup>24</sup> The transmission of hadith continued to develop until the fifth century AH, a period recognized as the era of the formalization of hadith sciences and the establishment of hadith as the second source of Islamic teachings after the Qur'an.<sup>25</sup> The historical development of hadith has thus passed through numerous stages up to the contemporary era.

A detailed discussion of the historical development of hadith is beyond the scope of this study. Rather, the focus here is on the contestation surrounding the authority of hadith as a religious text during the formative period of Islam. The study of hadith intersects with questions of authority and authoritarianism as it matured into a recognized source of Islamic teachings. Many Western scholars have debated the status of hadith in early Islam, particularly its authenticity as divine guidance conveyed through the Prophet

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<sup>23</sup> Hadith narrated by Abī Sa'īd al-Khudrī ra.:

*Dari Abi Sa'īd al-Khudrī, bahwasanya Rasulullah ﷺ 'alayhi wa sallam, bersabda: Janganlah kalian menulis sesuatu dari-ku, barangsiapa yang menulis dari-ku (hadis), maka hapuslah dan berbicalah dari-ku dan tidak ada dosa. Dan barangsiapa yang berdusta atas nama-ku, Hammam berkata: Aku kira ia (Zaid) berkata: dengan sengaja maka bersiap-siap untuk mendapat tempat di neraka. (HR. Imam Muslim: 3004).*

The above hadith is *naskh* with the hadith that it is permissible to write the hadith narrated by Abī Shah ra. *Rasulullah ﷺ 'alayhi wa sallam, bersabda: kecuali sesuatu yang berbau harum. Maka berdiri Abū Shah, pemuda yang berasal dari Yaman lalu berkata kepada Rasulullah ﷺ 'alayhi wa sallam, Tolong tuliskan untuk-ku wabai Rasulullah ﷺ 'alayhi wa sallam. Maka Rasulullah ﷺ 'alayhi wa sallam, berkata: tuliskan dari-ku untuk Abu Syah... (HR. Imam al-Bukhārī: 2434; Imam Muslim: 1355).*

<sup>24</sup> The process of the journey of the hadith in the early days of Islam until it became the second source of Islamic teachings can be read in more detail at, Muḥammad Abū Zahw, *The History of Hadith: Historiografi Hadis Nabi dari Masa ke Masa*, (Depok: Keira Publishing, 2015), 56.

<sup>25</sup> Muḥammad Abū Zahw, *The History of Hadith: Historiografi Hadits Nabi dari Masa ke Masa*,....., 344-352.

Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him).<sup>26</sup> Although the debate over hadith authenticity has largely been settled within the Muslim scholarly tradition, revisiting these discussions remains relevant for responding to the findings of Western scholars who have approached hadith through socio-historical methodologies.<sup>27</sup> These scholars often reached skeptical conclusions regarding the authenticity of hadith, arguing that hadith literature did not originate during the Prophet's lifetime but emerged only after the first century AH. Such conclusions were notably advanced by Joseph Schacht (d. 1969), a student in the intellectual tradition of Ignaz Goldziher (d. 1921).

According to Daniel Brown in his book *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought*, debates concerning the authenticity of hadith remain active.<sup>28</sup> The ongoing controversy demonstrates that discussions of hadith authenticity and authority continue to occupy an important place in academic discourse. In India, for example, these debates were advanced by intellectuals influenced by Sayyid Ahmad Khan (d. 1898), who argued that hadith often impeded the progress of Islam. His engagements with Orientalists and Christian missionaries appear to have left him feeling intellectually disadvantaged when discussing hadith.<sup>29</sup> Consequently, he did not regard hadith as possessing the same sacred authority as the Qur'an.

This perspective stimulated the emergence of groups committed to defending the authority of the Prophetic Sunnah. Scholars such as Shah Waliullah al-Dahlawi (1704–1762) and Ahmad

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<sup>26</sup> See more details at Aḥmad Muḥammad Jamāl, *Muṣṭarayāt 'alā al-Islām* (Beirut: Dar al-Ilm li al-Malayin, 1987), 98-99.

<sup>27</sup> Among the skeptical views of Western scholars regarding hadith are Ignaz Goldziher and Joseph Schacht, who believe that hadith did not originate from the Prophet, but rather emerged in the first and second centuries of the Hijriah due to the development of Islam. See at Idri, *Hadis dan Orientalis: Perspektif Ulama Hadis dan Para Orientalis tentang Hadis Nabi*, (Depok: Kencana, 2017), 79-88.

<sup>28</sup> Daniel W Brown, *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 81-85.

<sup>29</sup> Daniel W Brown, *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought*...., 112-116.

Sirhindi maintained that hadith constituted a form of revelation from Allah granted to the Prophet and therefore represented the second source of Islamic teachings<sup>30</sup> The dispute between these two camps remained unresolved. India became a center for competing textualist tendencies, both emphasizing strict adherence to religious texts. While defenders of hadith sought to reinforce its religious authority, their efforts often failed to persuade adherents of the Qur'an-only approach associated with Sayyid Ahmad Khan.

The contestation over hadith authority did not begin in tenth-century AH India. Similar debates had already emerged during the second century AH, particularly in the era of Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafi'i (d. 204 AH). As a leading jurist, al-Syafi'i, together with Ibn Qutaybah (d. 276 AH), defended the authority of the Sunnah against those who challenged hadith. This dispute involved the *Ahl al-Hadiths*, centered in Medina, and the *Ahl al-Ra'y*, centered in Kufa.<sup>31</sup> Hadith played a crucial role in this debate, and al-Syafi'i's contribution was particularly significant in reconciling these competing approaches.

With regard to the *Ahl al-Ra'y* of Kufa, the Egyptian intellectual Ahmad Amin argued that their mode of reasoning was influenced by the Companion Muadh ibn Jabal (d. 18 AH),<sup>32</sup> whom the Prophet sent to Yemen as a judge. When asked how he would

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<sup>30</sup> Daniel W Brown, *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought*....., 22-24.

<sup>31</sup> Imam Shāfi'i's defense was not only aimed at the ahl al-ra'y in prioritizing reason over hadith in the method of determining law, but also among the ahl al-hadith in several cases where they used dhoif hadith and in prioritizing 'amal ahl al-Madinah (practices of the people of Madinah). What Imam al-Shafi'i (150-204 H/767-820 AD) did was the fruit of his thoughts which could not be separated from his background which he had studied from these two environments, namely from Imam Mālik and (93-179 H/713-793 AD) and Imam al-Shaybāni (132-189 H). See at Adi Abdullah Muslim, *Pengaruh Mazhab Ahl al-Ra'y dalam Kajian Hadis: Kajian Pemikiran Karya-karya Shaikh Abu Ghuddab*, (Tagerang Selatan: Young Progressive Muslim, 2016), 3. See also Minhajuddin, "Ikhtilaf Ulama dan Pengaruhnya terhadap Perkembangan Fiqh Islam", (Disertasi Program Pascasarjana, IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2001), 2.

<sup>32</sup> Read more see at Aḥmad Amīn, *Dubā' al-Islām* (Kairo: Maṭba'ah al-I'timād, 1934), 2/181-183.

resolve issues not explicitly addressed in revelation, Mu'adh replied that he would exercise personal reasoning (*ijtihad*) if no guidance could be found in the Qur'an or Sunnah. Ahmad Amin maintained that the intellectual culture of Kufa reflected this approach. Among the leading Kufan scholars were Ibrahim al-Nakha'i (d. 96 AH) and Al-Aswad ibn Yazid al-Nakha'i (d. 73 AH), the latter being one of Mu'adh's students. Ahmad Amin further noted that the Nakha'i tribe originated from Yemen.

By contrast, the scholarly culture of Medina, as the center of hadith scholarship, was characterized by a more textual understanding of religious sources. Malik ibn Anas was influenced by the legacy of leading Companions who resided there, including Abu Bakr al-Siddiq, Umar ibn al-Khattab, Ali ibn Abi Talib, Zayd ibn Thabit, Abdullah ibn Umar, Aisha bint Abi Bakr, and Abu Hurairah.<sup>33</sup> Their presence shaped the development of hadith scholarship in Medina, where the practices of the people of Medina (*'amal ahl al-Madīnah*) came to function as an important source of law.

In *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*, Joseph Schacht argued that Islamic law emerged only after the first century AH because systematic *isnād* transmission began in the second century AH. This view extended the earlier ideas of Ignaz Goldziher in *Muhammedanische Studien*.<sup>34</sup> Their conclusions were challenged by numerous Muslim and Western scholars, including Muhammad Mustafa al-Azami, Mustafa al-Sibai, Fuat Sezgin, Nabia Abbott, and Harald Motzki.<sup>35</sup> Their conclusions were challenged by numerous Muslim and Western scholars, including Muhammad Mustafa al-Azami, Mustafa al-Sibai, Fuat Sezgin, Nabia Abbott, and Harald

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<sup>33</sup> Mustafa Abu 'Imarah, *Aḍwā' 'alā Madāris al-Hadīthīyah: al-Nash'ah wa al-Taḍawwur* (Kairo: Maktabah Iman, 2010), 11-71.

<sup>34</sup> *Muhammedanische Studien*, karya Ignaz Goldziher ditulis pertama menggunakan bahasa Jerman pada tahun tahun 1889-1890.

<sup>35</sup> Joseph Schacht, *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950), 5.

Motzki. Motzki explicitly stated that the conclusions of Goldziher and Schacht were inaccurate. These responses argued that hadith was transmitted orally and recorded in unofficial documents from the Prophet's time, later preserved by the Companions and formally compiled in the third century AH.<sup>36</sup> Thus, the process began during the first century AH rather than afterward.

Before the large-scale collection and codification of hadith, the second century AH witnessed the rise of jurists possessing the authority to engage in legal reasoning. Among them were the founders of the four major Sunni legal schools: Abu Hanifah (d. 150 AH), Malik ibn Anas (d. 179 AH), Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafi'i (d. 204 AH), and Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 241 AH). Following their era, the canonization of hadith collections emerged, marked by the appearance of the *Kutub al-Sittah* and *Kutub al-Tis'ah*. From this period onward, the designation *Ahl al-Sunnah* increasingly became associated with *Ahl al-Hadiths*. This development reflected not merely a change in terminology but also a strategic shift aimed at reviving the Prophetic tradition.<sup>37</sup> The hadith community increasingly relied upon the canonical collections as the foundation for new scholarly institutions and intellectual traditions.<sup>38</sup>

Hadith occupies a crucial position as a source of Islamic teachings. Unlike the Qur'an, however, hadith requires scrutiny regarding its authenticity. The authenticity of a hadith depends significantly on its transmitters. A report may be classified as weak, good, or authentic depending upon the reliability of those who narrated it.<sup>39</sup> Ibn Sirin (d. 110 AH) emphasized that reports

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<sup>36</sup> Muḥammad Mustafā al-A'zami, *Studies in Early Hadith Literature: with a Critical Edition of Some Early Texts* (1968); Nabia Abbott, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri II: Qur'anic and Tradition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), Kamaruddin Amin, *Menguji Kembali Keakuratan Metode Kritik Hadis, ...*, 4.

<sup>37</sup> Ahmad Ubaydi Hasbillah, *Nalar Tekstual Ahli Hadis: Formula Kultur Moderat Berbasis Tekstualisme*, (Ciputat: Maktabah Dar al-Sunnah, 2017), 90 – 106.

<sup>38</sup> Christopher Melchert, "The Piety of the Hadith Folk", dalam *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (Aug., 2002), pp. 425 – 439.

<sup>39</sup> Defects in the transmission of hadith are called *illat*. What is meant by defect

should only be accepted when transmitters identify their teachers in a continuous chain reaching back to the Prophet.<sup>40</sup> This principle became foundational in determining whether a hadith could function as authoritative evidence in religious matters.

Turning to juristic *ijtihād*, the focus shifts toward religious legal opinions (*fatāwā*). In early Islam, judges (*qādīs*) were deeply engaged in issuing legal rulings. One notable figure from Kufa was Ibn Abi Layla (d. 148 AH), who served as a judge. Scholarly evaluations of his reliability varied considerably. Some authorities regarded him as trustworthy (*tsiqah*),<sup>41</sup> while others, including Ahmad ibn Hanbal and Al-Tirmidzi, criticized his memory and did not consider his hadith suitable as evidence. This may have been due to his extensive judicial responsibilities, which left him less engaged in hadith transmission and more occupied with issuing legal opinions and advising political authorities.<sup>42</sup>

Another important figure was Sufyan al-Thawri (d. 161 AH), renowned for his expertise in hadith, jurisprudence, and legal theory. He received widespread praise from scholars such as Shubah ibn al-Hajjaj, Yahya ibn Main, and Sufyan ibn Uyaynah. He was even described as *Amīr al-Mu'minīn fī al-Ḥadīth* (“Commander of the Faithful in Hadith”). His students were found across Medina, Kufa, Basra, Egypt, Damascus, Nishapur, and Transoxiana. Numerous scholars regarded him *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* in Hadith. Ibnu Mubarak said that he wrote the Hadith from his teachers, who

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here is that the narrator has characteristics that make his hadith unacceptable, such as lying.

<sup>40</sup> Imam Ibn Sirin said, “previously people did not ask about isnad. When there was a fitna incident (the killing of the third caliph ‘Uthmān ibn Affān) then, they started asking where you got the news from. They accepted hadith if it was narrated by a hadith expert and they did not accept hadith if it was brought by a bid’ah expert.” See at Maḥmūd Taḥḥān, *Taisīr Muṣṭalah al-Ḥadīth*, (Iskandaria: Markaz al-Huda li al-Dirasat, 1415 H), 11; *Muqaddimah Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, al-Tirmidzi, *al-‘Ilal al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, 739.

<sup>41</sup> Jamāl al-Din Yūsuf al-Mizzī, *Tabdhīb al-Kamāl fī Asmā al-Rijāl*, di-taḥqīq oleh Bashār ‘Awwād Ma’rūf, (Beirut: Muassasah al-Risalah, 1992), jld. 17, 375-376.

<sup>42</sup> Jamāluddīn Yūsuf al-Mizzī, *Tabdhīb al-Kamāl fī Asmā’ al-Rijāl*,....., jld. 17, 377.

numbered more than 1100, and he still said that Sufyan al-Thawri had knowledge, memory, and scholarly excellence.<sup>43</sup> His reputation extended beyond Iraq to Mecca, where both political authorities and students sought him out. His refusal to accept official appointments led to tensions with Abbasid rulers, including al-Mansur and al-Mahdi. At one point, Sufyan al-Thawri was requested to leave Mecca by the Commander of the Faithful, Al-Mahdi, through Muḥammad ibn Ibrahim. When Sufyan al-Thawri was already in Mecca, Muḥammad ibn Ibrahim informed him of the matter and said, “If you wish to meet the people, come and I will send them to you. But if you do not wish to do so, then you may remain in hiding.” Subsequently, news of Sufyan al-Thawri’s presence in Mecca was circulated, and only selected individuals—those eager to learn and those who were not fearful of any consequences—came to visit him.<sup>44</sup> Because of his reputation as a scholar distinguished in various branches of knowledge, the caliph intended to appoint him as a mufti. In Kufa, he was pursued by Al-Mansur after he refused an official appointment offered by the caliph. Likewise, in Mecca, he was sought by Caliph al-Mahdi for a similar reason.

Sufyan al-Thawri transmitted 2,917 hadiths from his teachers. He belonged to the seventh *ṭabaqah* (generation) of hadith transmitters and resided primarily in Kufa and Basra. He was born in 97 AH during the Umayyad caliphate of Sulayman ibn Abd al-Malik and died in Basra in Sha'bān 161 AH during the reign of al-Mahdi. His students became dispersed across numerous regions, including Medina, Kufa, Basra, Egypt, Damascus, Nishapur, and Transoxiana (*Mā Warā' al-Nahr*). Yahya al-Qattan once remarked concerning Sufyan al-Thawri: “I have never seen a transmitter

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<sup>43</sup> For a more complete expression from hadith experts regarding Sufyān al-Thawri’s expertise in the field of hadith, it is mentioned as ‘Abdullāh b. al-Mubārak, al-Barra’ b. Al-Rustum al-Baṣī, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Al-Mahdī, Yahyā b. Sa’īd al-Qaṭṭān and others. See more details at Muḥammad Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* atau *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr*, (Kairo: Maktabah al-Khanji, 2001), jld. 8. 164-167.

<sup>44</sup> Muḥammad Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, di-*taḥqīq* oleh ‘Alī Muḥammad ‘Umar, ..., jld. 8. 493.

with a stronger memory than him, and he surpassed Imam Malik ibn Anas in every field.” Likewise, Abdullah ibn al-Mubarak (d. 181 AH) stated, “I do not know anyone in this world more knowledgeable than Sufyan al-Thawri.” Meanwhile, Al-Awzai (d. 157 AH) commented, “No one in this community has attained such universal acceptance, approval, and recognition of truthfulness as Sufyan al-Thawri.” Waki ibn al-Jarrah described him as “an ocean of knowledge.” Similarly, a scholar from Medina, Ibn Dhi’b, observed, “I have not seen anyone in Iraq whose scholarship resembles that of Sufyan al-Thawri.”<sup>45</sup> The intellectual stature of Sufyan al-Thawri was therefore highly respected by the scholars of his time, who regarded him as one of the most outstanding authorities in hadith, jurisprudence, and Islamic scholarship as a whole.

When discussing the authority of hadith, it is necessary to define the concept through the perspectives of scholars who have examined it. The Muslim scholar Khaled Abou El Fadl, drawing upon the terminology of R. B. Friedman, argues that two concepts must be understood before engaging in a deeper discussion of authority. The first is *being in authority*, and the second is *being an authority*. A person who is *in authority* may be understood as someone who occupies an official or structural position and, by virtue of that position, possesses the power to issue commands and directives that others are expected to obey. Others may hold differing opinions, but they have little choice except to comply with those who hold authority because they recognize the legitimacy of that authority.

In contrast, a person who *is an authority* derives influence from the knowledge, wisdom, or superior understanding that he or she possesses. Such expertise becomes the basis upon which others accept and follow that person’s views, even when they do not fully understand the arguments underlying those views.<sup>46</sup> Both categories

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<sup>45</sup> Sharaf Maḥmūd Muḥammad Qudah, *Madrasah al-Ḥadīth fī al-Kūfah*, (Kulliyah al-Shari’ah al-Jāmi’ah al-Urduniyyah, 1980), 189.

<sup>46</sup> Kadi, “Menjadi Wakil Tuhan: Memahami Pemikiran Khaled Abou el Fadl tentang Konsep Otoritas Penafsir Pesan Tuhan”, *Jurnal al-Ibkam*, Vol. 7, No. 1, (2012).

represent positions of influence in decision-making processes within a community, institution, or organization. Therefore, the exercise of authority carries with it the responsibility to promote the welfare and well-being of those who fall under its influence. This constitutes an ideal model for the application of authority in practice. The concept proposed by Khaled Abou El Fadl serves as an important framework for cultivating a harmonious society by shaping leaders who exercise authority responsibly and who represent and convey divine teachings through the religious values communicated by the Prophet as God's messenger.

Among the prominent figures of Kufa during the second century AH were Ibn Abi Layla (d. 148 AH) and Sufyan al-Thawri (d. 161 AH). Ibn Abi Layla served as a *qāḍī* (judge) within the caliphal administration and was primarily occupied with issuing religious legal opinions (*fatāwā*), while he transmitted relatively few hadiths. According to Khaled Abou El Fadl's theory of authority, Ibn Abi Layla may therefore be categorized as an example of *being in authority*. By contrast, Sufyān al-Thawrī was a leading hadith scholar who became a central reference point for religious learning, particularly in the field of hadith, where he transmitted a large number of reports. As such, he may be classified as an example of *being an authority*. Accordingly, within this framework, the jurists represented by caliphal judges (*quḍāt*) belong to the category of *being in authority*, whereas hadith scholars are more appropriately classified under the category of *being an authority*.

## **Classical Religious Authority between the Prophetic Tradition, Jurisprudence and Politics**

Religious authority ultimately originates from God, is conveyed through the prophets, and is subsequently inherited and represented by scholars (*'ulamā'*) as the successors of the

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See also at Khaled Abou el Fadl, *Atas Nama Tuban: Dari Fikih Otoritater ke Fikih Otoritatif*, terj. Cecep Lukman Yasin (Jakarta: Serambi, 2004), 37.

prophets in transmitting religious teachings through the framework of Islamic law (*syari'ah*).<sup>47</sup> This differs from political authority, which operates within the sphere of state governance and public administration. Secularist thought maintains that religion and the state should be separated in the administration of political affairs.<sup>48</sup> Such a concept, however, does not accord with Islamic teachings, which regulate all aspects of human life, including political matters. In Islam, political activity and governance are expected to be guided by religious values, as religion and politics are regarded as closely interconnected within the life of the state.

The caliphate played a central role in exercising political authority throughout its territories. During the Umayyad and Abbasid periods, political dynamics are extensively documented in works of early Islamic history, including *Al-Kamil fī al-Tarikh* by Ibn al-Athir (d. 630 AH). At times, the authority of the caliph was limited by the authority of the Sunnah. This was because the primary custodians and defenders of the Sunnah were the scholars rather than the caliphs themselves. Three factors contributed to the relative limitation of caliphal authority. First, the principal supporters and transmitters of the Prophetic Sunnah were the scholars, not the caliphs. Second, the Sunnah contained concrete regulations governing both theological matters and socio-religious affairs. Third, the Sunnah was generally resistant to reinterpretation and served as an authoritative explanation of religious norms, a

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<sup>47</sup> Hadis Riwayat Imam al-Bukhārī *kitāb 'Ilm, bāb al-'ilm qabla al-qaul*; Imam Abī Dāūd: *kitāb 'Ilm, bāb al-hathibhu 'alā talab al-'ilm*. 3641, 3642; Imam Tirmidhī: *abwāb al-'ilm 'an Rasūlillāh Ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam, bāb mā jā'a fī faḍli al-fiqh 'alā al-'ibādah*; Imam Ibn Mājah: *Muqaddimah, bāb Faḍlu al-'ulamā wa al-hathibhu 'alā talab al-'ilm*. 223; Imam al-Darimi: *Muqaddimah, bāb fī faḍli al-'ilm wa al-'ulamā*. 354; Imam Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal: *Musnad al-Anṣar, ḥadīth Abī Dardā'*: 21715, 21716.

إن العلماء ورثة الأنبياء , وإن الأنبياء لم يورثوا دينارا ولا درهما إنما ورثوا العلم فمن أخذه أخذ بحظ وافر

<sup>48</sup> Rd. Datoek A. Pachoer, "Sekularisasi dan Sekularisme Agama", *Religions: Jurnal Agama dan Lintas Budaya*. Vol. 1. No. 1, (September 2016), 91-102; See also at Rodney Stark, *Secularism R.I.P.*, *Sociology of Religion* 60, no. 3, (1999), 250.

position that the caliph did not necessarily occupy.<sup>49</sup> Nevertheless, the classical conception of authority preserved the status of the Prophetic Sunnah as the primary source of authority after the Qur'an, rather than locating such authority in the person of the caliph.<sup>50</sup> At the same time, a caliph who possessed extensive knowledge of hadith and a sound understanding of religious teachings could also be recognized as an authoritative figure within the religious and political life of the Muslim community.

Discussions concerning religion and politics have become an important arena of contestation in the modern world. The relationship between religion and the state continues to attract significant attention because it remains a subject of debate in academic scholarship and research. Islam has a long history of building and governing civilizations since the death of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). Political tensions can be traced back to the latter period of the caliphate of Uthman ibn Affan (may Allah be pleased with him), whose death was the result of political unrest and dissatisfaction among certain groups with his leadership. Similar challenges emerged during the caliphate of Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him). Criticism of 'Alī arose from a faction that eventually split from his supporters, opposing his decision to engage in arbitration with Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan (may Allah be pleased with him). This group argued that 'Alī had failed to implement God's judgment and had instead resorted to human arbitration. They later became known as the Kharijites (*Khawārij*), who maintained that no judgment was valid except God's judgment alone.<sup>51</sup> 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭalib rejected this interpretation. He argued that government and political authority

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<sup>49</sup> Patricia Crone & Martin Hinds, *God's Caliph: Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 58.

<sup>50</sup> Patricia Crone & Martin Hinds, *God's Caliph: Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam*, ..., 59.

<sup>51</sup> Ibn Abi al-Ḥadid, *Syarḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, Muḥammad Ibrāhīm (ed), (Baghdad: Dar al-Kitab al-Gharby, 1428 H/2007 M), jld. 1, 417.

also belong to God and serve essential functions, including protecting the community, defending the rights of the weak, expelling aggressors, and upholding justice and truth.

The struggle over religious authority as the embodiment of divine sovereignty therefore existed from the earliest period of Islamic history. Historical reports indicate that the Kharijites accused 'Ali of submitting to human judgment when judgment belonged exclusively to Allah. In response to this accusation, 'Ali gathered the people and brought forth a copy of the Qur'an. He then addressed the Qur'an, saying, "O Qur'an, inform these people of God's judgment." The people responded by saying that he was mocking them. They understood that the Qur'an consisted of written pages and that human beings speak on its behalf. The text requires interpretation by people to be understood and applied.<sup>52</sup> This historical episode demonstrates that debates and contestations concerning divine authority and its interpretation were already present in the earliest period of Islam.

The practice of hadith-based values by the early generations of Muslims later came to be known as the *Sunnah*, which subsequently developed into the Prophetic tradition. The Sunnah is not identical to the Qur'an in terms of authenticity or permanence. Rather, it is understood as a non-codified corpus encompassing the Prophet's actions, biographical accounts (*sīrah*), sayings, and various reports concerning his Companions. Initially, the Sunnah was transmitted orally and later documented in written collections such as the *masānīd* and *sunan* compilations. The oral transmission of the

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<sup>52</sup> أيها المصحف حدث الناس. فقال: ماذا إنسان؟ إنما هو مداد وورق ونحن نتكلم بما روينا منه , فقال: بيني و نين هؤلاء, يقبل الله في امرأة رجل ( وَإِنْ حَفِثْتُمْ شِقَاقَ بَيْنِهِمَا... ) النساء: ٥٣.

See at Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, *Fath al-Bārī bi Syarḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 'Abd al-Raḥman Nasir al-Barrak, Abu Qutaybah Naẓar Muḥammad al-Faryabi (ed), (Riyadh: Dar Ṭ'ayyibah li al-Nashr wa al-Tauzī', 1426 H/2005 M), jld. 16, 185-186; Farid Esack, *Qur'an Liberation and Pluralism*, (cc: tt), 50.

Sunnah preserved the traditions of the early Muslim community.<sup>53</sup> Once these traditions were recorded in written form, they ceased to evolve as fluid oral reports and instead became organized within structured literary frameworks.<sup>54</sup>

According to Wael B. Hallaq, during the period of Abu Hanifah, who is regarded as the first formally recognized *mujtahid mutlaq* (independent jurist) in Islamic jurisprudence, the legal school established by Abu Hanifah in Kufa faced a rival intellectual tradition in Medina, represented by the hadith-oriented school led by Malik ibn Anas (d. 179 AH). During the formative period of the legal schools, the emergence of Abu Hanifah in Kufa and Malik ibn Anas in Medina generated a degree of intellectual tension between the two traditions. The people of Kufa, who were largely associated with the *Ahl al-Ra'y* (the people of reasoned opinion), tended toward a more rationalist approach. In contrast, the followers of Malik ibn Anas were more inclined toward a textualist understanding of religious sources.<sup>55</sup> During this period, Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafi'i (d. 204 AH) emerged as a mediating figure between these two tendencies. He succeeded in encouraging the *Ahl al-Hadiths* not to abandon rational inquiry while simultaneously persuading the *Ahl al-Ra'y* to give greater consideration to hadith as a source of legal authority.

During the time of al-Syafi'i, the authority of hadith was not universally accepted across all sectors of society. Al-Syafi'i encountered groups that refused to recognize the authority of *ahād* hadith as a basis for religious doctrine and legal reasoning. According

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<sup>53</sup> Noel J. Coulson, *A History of Islamic Law*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1978), 39; Joseph Schacht, *An Introduction to Islamic Law*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 17, 29-32; Yasin Dutton, *The Origin of Islamic Law: The Qur'an, the Muwaṭṭa' and Madinan 'Amal*, (New Delhi: Lawman Private Limited, 2000), 164-166; Fazlur Rahman, *Islamic Methodology in History*, (Islamabad: Islamic Research Institute Islamabad, 1995), 27-31.

<sup>54</sup> Yasin Dutton, *The Origin of Islamic Law: The Qur'an, the Muwaṭṭa' and Madinan 'Amal*,... 168-173; Fazlur Rahman, *Islamic Methodology in History*,..... 33.

<sup>55</sup> Wael B. Hallaq, *Authority, Continuity and Change in Islamic Law*....., 31.

to Ahmad El Shamsy, the Abbasid government played a role in the formulation of Islamic law as local traditions inherited from the Prophet gradually declined. Within the history of Sunni Islam, al-Syafi'i also directed criticism toward Malik's school in Medina, particularly regarding methodological and theoretical issues in legal reasoning. Sunni scholars generally sought to avoid theological disputes that could lead to mutual condemnation or accusations of unbelief against other groups.<sup>56</sup> According to Muhammad Abu Zahw, defenders of hadith often found themselves debating groups that rejected hadith authority altogether.

Research conducted by Volkan Yildiran Stodolsky in his study entitled "*A New Historical Model and Periodization for the Perception of the Sunnah of the Prophet and His Companions*" argues that the emergence of theological factions in Kufa was initially driven by political differences between groups sympathetic to the Umayyad dynasty and those who supported Ali ibn Abi Talib. Political considerations thus constituted a primary factor behind the differing intellectual and theological orientations that developed among the various groups in Kufa.<sup>57</sup> Thus, the development of theological schools in Kufa cannot be separated from the political dynamics of the early Islamic period, as political allegiances significantly shaped the intellectual and doctrinal orientations of the emerging factions.

In a study conducted by Scout C. Lucas entitled "*The Legal Principles of Muhammad b. Isma'il al-Bukhari and Their Relationship to Classical Salafi Islam*," it is argued that Imam al-Bukhari (d. 256 AH), a prominent hadith scholar who lived during the second and third centuries of the Hijri era, did not rely on *qiyās* (analogical reasoning) in his legal methodology. Rather, he developed an independent

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<sup>56</sup> Ahmad el-Shamsy, *The Canonization of Islamic Law: A Social and Intellectual History*, Chapter 2: *Debate on Hadith Consensus*, (Downloaded from <https://www.cambridge.org/core>. University of Sussex Library), (cc: pp, 2015) 62-64.

<sup>57</sup> Volkan Yildiran Stodolsky, "A New Historical Model and Periodization for the Perception of the Sunnah of the Prophet and his Companions", (Dissertation: Chicago Illinois, 2012), 196-197.

legal framework in deriving Islamic rulings. According to Lucas, al-Bukhari's legal reasoning (*ijtihād*) demonstrates his effort to formulate a distinct jurisprudential approach, indicating that hadith scholars possessed their own methods for issuing legal judgments and employing textual evidence as the foundation of religious practice.<sup>58</sup> Therefore, al-Bukhari's legal methodology illustrates that hadith scholars were not merely transmitters of traditions but also independent jurists who developed distinctive approaches to legal reasoning based primarily on textual evidence.

As one of the most influential hadith scholars of his time and continuing to the present day, Imam al-Bukhari attracted numerous students and transmitters who studied under him and narrated hadith from him. This is evidenced by the transmission of his monumental work, *al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, by several of his students, including Ḥammad b. Syakir (Abu Muḥammad al-Nasafi, d. 311 AH), Maṣṣūr b. Muḥammad b. 'Alī (Abu Ṭalḥah al-Bazdawī al-Nasafi, d. 329 AH), Ibrahim b. Mu'aqqil al-Nasafi (d. 295 AH), and Muḥammad b. Yusuf b. Maṭar al-Firabri (d. 320 AH).<sup>59</sup> Mahir Yasin Fahl, in his work on the transmitters of Imam al-Bukhārī, discusses these students who preserved and transmitted the narrations of *al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ*.

Discussions of contextual interpretation are often regarded as a field predominantly developed by Western scholars. This assessment assumes that contextual approaches in Western scholarship employ social-scientific and historical methodologies. However, within the Islamic tradition, both the Qur'an and Hadith possess disciplines that address historical context. In Qur'anic studies, the science of *asbāb al-nuzūl* examines the circumstances surrounding the revelation of verses, while in Hadith studies, the

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<sup>58</sup> Scout C. Lucas, "The Legal Principles of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī and Their Relationship to Classical Salafī Islam", *Islamic Law and Society*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (2006), 289-324.

<sup>59</sup> Mahir Yasin Fahl, *Ibrāẓu Ṣan'atu al-Ḥadīṡi fī Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī Wājib al-Waqtī*, (N.C: Dar al-Anshar, 1436 H), 40-47.

science of *asbāb al-wurūd* investigates the historical circumstances in which prophetic traditions were uttered. Both disciplines serve to situate religious texts within their original contexts. The ability to interpret texts with a balanced, moderate understanding reflects a key principle of Islam as a religion of *rahmatan li al-'ālamīn* (mercy to all creation).

Syah Waliyullah al-Dahlawi, in his work *Syarh Tarājim Abwāb al-Bukhārī*, states that prior to the time of Imam al-Bukhari, hadith literature had already developed into four major scholarly orientations. *First*, there were works with a strong jurisprudential (*fiqh*) orientation, such as al-Muwatta' by Imam Malik ibn Anas and the *Jāmi'* of Sufyan al-Thawri. *Second*, there were works characterized by a tafsir (Qur'anic exegesis) orientation, such as those of Ibn Jurayj. *Third*, there were works devoted to *sīrah* (Prophetic biography), such as those authored by Muhammad ibn Ishaq. *Fourth*, there were works focusing on *zuhd* (asceticism) and moral virtues, such as those written by Abdullah ibn al-Mubarak.<sup>60</sup> This observation indicates that al-Dahlawi did not regard Imam al-Bukhari as the originator of hadith compilation in book form. Rather, hadith writing and classification had already existed in various scholarly forms before his time. Al-Dahlawi's view, as cited by Rif'at Fauzi, supports the argument that Imam al-Bukhari's contribution was not the initiation of hadith compilation itself, but the refinement and systematic development of an already established scholarly tradition.

Regarding the earliest official collection of hadith, it is generally recognized that this process took place during the caliphate of Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz. The caliph entrusted this task to Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri, who was commissioned to carry out

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<sup>60</sup> Abu Bakr Kafi, *Manhaj al-Imām al-Bukhārī fī Tashīḥ al-Aḥādīth wa Ta'līlīhā (Min Khilāl al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ)*, (.....: Dar Ibn Hazm, ...), 14-30; See also at Shah Waliyullah al-Dahlawi, *Syarh Tarājim Abwāb Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, (Kairo: Dar al-Kitāb al-Mishrī, 1999 M/1420 H), (Beirut: Dar al-Kitāb al-Lubnāni, 1999 M/1420 H), 7; Rif'at Fauzī 'Abd al-Muṭallib, *Kutub al-Sunnah Dirāsatan Tauthīqīyyatan*, (.....: Maktabah Khanji, 1979), 78.

the project. The collection of hadith during this period differed significantly from the compilations produced by later hadith scholars, such as Imam al-Bukhari, Imam Muslim, and the authors of the major hadith collections (*Kutub al-Hadith*). At that stage, the hadiths were not yet organized according to the chapters of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). Rather, the primary objective was to preserve hadith reports in a centralized collection, making them accessible and easier to trace for scholars and students of hadith transmission.

The early period of the second century and the beginning of the third century AH marked the peak of hadith collection and dissemination during the era of the major juristic schools founded by the leading imams of Islamic law. The last of these great juristic imams whose school has continued to survive until the present day was Ahmad ibn Hanbal, who passed away in 241 AH. Following the period of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, a new phase began with the compilation of the canonical hadith collections, pioneered by the composition of al-Jami' al-Sahih by Imam al-Bukhari. Considering that Imam al-Bukhari died in 256 AH, this period may be viewed as the beginning of large-scale hadith compilation by scholars from regions outside the Arab heartlands, particularly from Bukhara, during the third century AH. It was also during this period that the authors of the *Kutub al-Sittab* (the Six Canonical Hadith Collections) emerged. As noted by Muhammad Abu Zahw in his research, several major hadith works appeared during the third century AH, including: al-Jami' al-Sahih by Imam al-Bukhari (194–256 AH / 810–870 CE) from Bukhara,<sup>61</sup> al-Jami' al-Sahih Muslim by Imam Muslim (204–261 AH / 820–875 CE) from Nishapur., Sunan Ibn Majah by Ibn Majah (207–273 AH / 824–887 CE), Sunan Abi Dawud by Abu Dawud al-Sijistani (202–275 AH / 817–889 CE), Sunan al-Tirmidhi by Al-Tirmidhi (209–279 AH / 825–892 CE), Sunan al-Nasa'i by Al-Nasa'i (225–303 AH / 839–915 CE), Sunan

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<sup>61</sup> Muḥammad Abu Zahw, *The History of Hadith: Historiografi Hadits Nabi dari Masa ke Masa*, translated from the book *al-Ḥadīth wa al-Muḥaddithīn*, ..., 277-293.

al-Darimi by Al-Darimi (181–255 AH / 797–869 CE).<sup>62</sup>

This emergence represents a crucial historical development in the field of hadith studies and demonstrates the growing dominance of the *ahl al-hadith* school during the third century AH through the production of major hadith compilations. However, an important question remains: what was the role of hadith in Kufa, a city that served as a political center and was widely associated with the dominance of *ahl al-ra'y* (the proponents of reason-based legal reasoning)? This question opens an interesting avenue for examining the development of hadith scholarship in Iraq, particularly in Kufa and Baghdad during the second and third centuries AH. In other regions, hadith compilation during the third century AH increasingly adopted a systematic structure in which chapters were organized according to legal themes and topics of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). This arrangement is clearly reflected in the structure of the *Kutub al-Sittah* and other major hadith collections, whose contents are organized according to juristic subjects. An interesting exception to this pattern can be found in the hadith compilation of Ibn Hibban, whose methodology differed significantly from that of many other hadith compilers.

Most hadith collections were arranged by *fiqh* chapter. In contrast, the hadith collection of Ibn Hibban (d. 354 AH) was organized according to the framework of *Usul al-Fiqh* (principles of Islamic jurisprudence) and was entitled *al-Taqaṣim wa al-Anwā'*.<sup>63</sup> The work begins with discussions on *al-amr* (commands) and *al-awamir* (injunctions), followed by *al-nahy* and *al-nawahi* (prohibitions), and spans eight volumes in the edition published by Dar Ibn Hazm

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<sup>62</sup> Book of hadith collections from the second to the fourth century Hijriah, See at Muḥammad Zubayr Shiddiqi, *Hadith Literature: Its Origin, Development & Special Features*, (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1999), 43-73; Sobhi Mahmasaani, *Falsafah al-Tashri' fi al-Islām*, (cc: Dar al-Kashshāf li al-Nashr wa al-Ṭibā'ah wa al-Tauzī', 1371 H/1952 M), 110-112.

<sup>63</sup> Imam Ibn Ḥibbān, *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ 'ala al-Taqaṣīm wa al-Anwā'*, (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 1433 H/2012 M), Muḥammad 'Alī Sunimaz dan Halis Ai Damir (ed).

in Beirut in 2012. However, when his student, Ibn Balban, later reorganized the work, the chapters were rearranged according to the conventional structure of *fiqh* topics. The intellectual journey of hadith scholars in their engagement with and understanding of Islamic jurisprudence is a highly fascinating subject of study. Their contributions extended beyond hadith scholarship into the field of *Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, an area that is perhaps less familiar to many in the modern era. These scholars were not only specialists in hadith but were also authorities in the principles of jurisprudence. The combination of these two disciplines required a high level of intellectual rigor and analytical ability, enabling them to produce sophisticated and enduring scholarly works.

## Conclusion

Religious texts occupy the highest position of authority in conveying the message of God (Allah, Glorified and Exalted). However, not all texts can be understood easily. The capacity and competence to interpret religious texts serve as important indicators for ensuring that religious authority is transmitted through a holistic understanding. Classical jurists (*fuqahā'*) and hadith scholars (*muḥadditsūn*) emerged from diverse social, political, and intellectual backgrounds. Religious authority in the formative period of Islam significantly shaped the development of Islamic scholarship. Differences in methods and perspectives for understanding religious texts were inevitable and became part of the rich intellectual heritage of early Islamic civilization, reflecting the diversity and richness of its scholarly tradition.

This study presents three main findings based on an examination of the paradigms employed by both Eastern and Western scholars in portraying the early Islamic period. First, the religious texts of the Qur'an and Hadith occupy the highest position as the primary sources of Islamic teachings. Their detailed explanation and comprehensive interpretation require both

normative and historical considerations and must be undertaken by scholars whose expertise is widely recognized according to the standards of the hadith scholarly tradition. Such authority is established through the acknowledgment of their expertise by other qualified scholars. Second, debates concerning the authority of hadith have existed since the second century AH, particularly between Abu Hanifah in Kufa and Malik ibn Anas in Medina. Likewise, the intellectual rivalry in Kufa between the scholars of jurisprudence and the scholars of hadith was later reconciled through the contributions of Al-Shafi'i and Ibn Qutaybah. The influence of this paradigmatic debate continues to the present day, often resulting in defenders of hadith being characterized as textualists. Third, religious authority during the early Islamic period was influenced by political, social, and intellectual factors. However, paradigms of religious authority that were grounded in strong scholarly foundations exerted the most significant and lasting influence when they reached the broader public. Intellectual credibility proved to be a crucial element in establishing enduring religious authority.

Contemporary scholars exhibit diverse approaches in interpreting the historical development of Islamic studies. This research suggests that religious authority, even within an academic framework, can be shaped by political, social, and spiritual factors. Furthermore, this study opens avenues for future research on early Islamic history through the application of alternative scholarly approaches and methodologies. The history of early Islam constitutes an invaluable intellectual legacy that should be examined comprehensively. Interpreting this legacy through contemporary perspectives enables the preservation and further development of the early Islamic tradition, ensuring that the rich heritage of Islamic scholarship is maintained and transmitted to future generations.[]

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