



The narrator's challenges and their impact on the quality of hadith

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ABSTRACT

Hadith is one of the primary sources of Islamic teachings. Broadly speaking, it encompasses two key aspects: the *sanad* aspect and the *matan* aspect. Concerning the *sanad* aspect, the evolution of hadith scholarship involves numerous narrators, each representing a unique set of personal qualities when compared to one another. This study delves into the classification of hadith based on the authenticity of the *sanad* (chain of narrators) and the *matan* (content), emphasizing the critical role of the *sanad* in evaluating a hadith's authenticity. This study used library research to investigate the historical context of hadith transmission, including challenges like political turmoil and the fabrication of hadith for political purposes, is discussed. Assessing the justice of companions and non-companion narrators should not be done through a strict theological lens but rather within a broader framework that considers historical facts. There is diversity in the approach of hadith scholars when evaluating narrators, with some adopting stringent criteria while others have a more lenient perspective. This diversity can lead to varying judgments on the same narrators. The study essentially emphasizes the intricacy and depth of the science of hadith, highlighting the need for a careful and thorough evaluation of narrators' reliability and authenticity in the context of Islamic doctrines.

Keywords: Problematics; quality of *sanad* and *matan*; modern science.

1. INTRODUCTION

Hadith is one of the sources of Islamic teachings besides the Qur'an. However, in terms of its transmission, hadith differs significantly from the Qur'an. The Qur'an has been

fully documented since the era of the Messenger and standardized in the form of a *mushaf* during the reign of Uthman bin 'Affan. As for hadith, although there were companions who attempted to write down hadith, this practice was limited. This limitation arose because the Holy Prophet himself applied a different policy, allowing some companions to record hadith while prohibiting others. In fact, official efforts to collect and document hadith only began during the reign of 'Umar bin Abd al-'Aziz.

Subsequently, this had a significant impact on the dissemination and the level of authenticity of the history of hadith. Some hadiths were narrated with substantial support from narrators at each level of transmission, elevating their status to the level of *mutawatir*, comparable to the Qur'an. Meanwhile, those hadiths that did not meet the *mutawatir* standard can be categorized as well-known or less well-supported.

Meanwhile, in terms of quality, a hadith can be considered valid if both its *sanad* and *matan* aspects exhibit a convincing level of authenticity, while those of lesser quality can be categorized as *hasan* or *daif*.

The classification of hadith is closely tied to the process of evaluating and critiquing the credibility and competence of each narrator within a *sanad* (chain of narrators). Therefore, the *sanad* of a hadith serves as the primary basis for scrutinizing the authenticity of the hadith *matan* (content). Consequently, most hadith scholars maintain that if the *sanad* of a hadith is of valid quality, it is generally proportional to the authenticity of the hadith *matan*. Even if this is not the case, the weakness of the hadith can still be identified and may not be considered fatally flawed. Conversely, when the *sanad* of a hadith fails to meet the criteria for *sahih* (authentic), the hadith *matan* is more likely to be categorized as *daif* (weak) or inauthentic.

This pattern of study has been evolving since the era of hadith narration. Narrators with weaknesses, especially those pertaining to their religious integrity, would be rejected, and their narrations of hadith would be disregarded. However, if the weakness relates to their intellectual capacity, there is still room for clarification.

This approach is applied in accordance with the evolving state of the hadith itself. Since hadith serves as a primary source of Islamic teachings and is still in the process of narration and documentation, it is quite logical to adopt such a method. The transmission of hadith, as scrutinized by hadith scholars or *mukharrij*, tends to have limitations. Consequently, they often find it challenging to optimize the comparison of various *sanad* (chains of narrators) for a *matan* (content) of hadith that conveys a unified narrative.

As a result, at the post-hadith documentation stage, the examination of a narrator's credibility can be expanded more comprehensively. The primary focus is on the authenticity of the narrator, serving as a fundamental reference for the criticism of

narration. Essentially, the *matan* of a hadith narrated by an individual can be employed as tangible evidence to determine whether a narrator has committed omissions, errors, or irregularities in conveying the *matan* of the hadith.

Hence, the credibility of a narrator in the present era still requires evaluation based on the historical facts or *matan* that has been transmitted. In other words, a narrator's authenticity is largely determined by the credibility of the *matan* information, assessed through the method of comparing *sanad* and *matan* paths for a given hadith.

2. METHODS

The process of transmitting hadith from the era of the Holy Prophet (sa) to the stage of codification involved the contributions of many individuals. During the time of the Holy Prophet (sa) up to the reign of Caliph 'Uthman bin 'Affan, the Companions were able to exchange information on various matters related to Islamic teachings freely without arousing suspicion. Even when religious information required the testimony of others for acceptance, it was primarily done to exercise caution, following the precedent set by Caliph Abu Bakr in resolving inheritance cases.¹

However, during the reign of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, the Muslim community experienced political turmoil, leading to a civil war that bred hostility and suspicion among its members. This conflict not only disrupted the social fabric of society,² but also seeped into the realm of hadith narration.³

During this turbulent period, some individuals began to fabricate hadith for political gain. Irresponsible actors coined phrases and expressions intended to bolster their own positions or undermine rival groups in the name of the Holy Prophet (sa), using these as propaganda tools.⁴

In response to these historical challenges, scholars and experts in hadith embarked on efforts to organize and devise solutions for the issues plaguing the world of hadith narration. As a result, various methodologies were developed to assess the authenticity of a hadith.

¹See, M.M. Azami, *Dirasat fi al-Hadis al-Nabawi wa Tarikh Tadwinih* diterjemahkan oleh Ali Mustafa Yaqub entitled *Hadis Nabawi dan Sejarah Kodifikasinya* (Cet. I; Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus, 1994), p. 33

² See Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies* diterjemahkan oleh Ghufron A. Mas'ad dengan judul *Sejarah Sosial Umat Islam* (Cet. I; Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 1999), p. 84-87

³See, Muhammad 'Ajjaj al-Khatib, *al-Sunnah Qabl al-Tadwin* (Cet. V; Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1411H/1990M), p. 194-195

⁴See, Muhammad 'Ajjaj al-Khatib, *al-Sunnat Qabl al-Tadwin* (Cet. V; Bairut: Dar al-Fikr 1411H/1990 M), p. 194-195.

In the terminology of hadith, the primary focus for examining the validity of a hadith falls on the narrator conveying the information. Sufyan al-Sauri likened the *sanad* (chain of narrators) in hadith to a sword for a believer, emphasizing the importance of having this tool for engagement. Meanwhile, 'Abdullah bin al-Mubarak stressed that the *sanad* system is an integral part of religion, underscoring the necessity of a structured system; without it, individuals might freely proclaim their own interpretations.⁵ Early figures like Ibn Sirin, who criticized hadith narrators, reinforced the idea that the examination of the source of one's religious teachings is a fundamental aspect of religious knowledge.⁶

The series of narrators in a *sanad* (chain of narrators) of a hadith must undergo evaluation for their religious and intellectual qualifications. To facilitate this assessment process, various terms have been developed to precisely describe a narrator's condition, known as "al-jarh wa al-ta'dil," which focuses on aspects of criticism or endorsement of a narrator.

Criticism of a narrator's integrity can arise in cases related to their adherence to justice. This includes instances where a narrator has been found to propagate falsehoods, engage in a conspiracy of falsehoods, commit unethical acts, whether they involve beliefs contrary to Islam or not, and engage in heretical activities, both with and without elements of disbelief.⁷

In terms of a narrator's intellectual reproach, it often relates to their inaccuracy or deficiencies in narration. They may frequently err, display significant negligence, have a propensity for forgetfulness, maintain a distinct historical record from those categorized as *siqah* (trustworthy narrators), and possess poor memorization skills.⁸

This intellectual impairment can be discerned through the presence of *idraj* (additions or insertions) in the delivered hadith, whether it pertains to the *sanad* or *matan*. Similarly, if a narrator inserts additional content, causing the *sanad* and *matan* to become *maqlub* (confused), *mudtarib* (disordered), or inaccurate in conveying either the *sanad* or *matan*.⁹

⁵See, Nur al-Din 'Itir, *Manhaj al-Naqd fi 'Ulum al-Hadis* (Cet. XXIX; Beirut: Dar al-Fikr al-Mu'asir, 1429 H/2008 M), h. 244.

⁶See Muhammad Diya' al-Rahman al-A'zamiy, *Dirasat fi al-Jarh wa al-Ta'dil* (Cet. I; Saudi Arabia: Dar al-Salam, 1402H), p. 12

⁷See, *ibid.*, p. 93

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 94

⁹ *Ibid.*

Regarding the justice of a narrator, it hinges on their being a Muslim, having reached the age of puberty, possessed sound reasoning, and demonstrated piety by adhering to religious obligations and maintaining social ethics (*muru'ah*).

In the terminology of *hadith*, aspects related to the reproach of a narrator's character that diminish their credibility can be described through attributes such as: *متروك الحديث*, *متهم بالكذب*, *دجال*, *اكذب به*, *كذاب*, *واهي الحديث*, *الحديث لا مضطرب الحديث*, *منكر الحديث*, *ضعيف الحديث*. While attributes related to the reproach of the narrator's habitual side such as: *سيئ الحفظ*, *ليس بحجة*, *لين الحديث*, *ليس بقوى*, *يحتج به* unknown, unknown either in terms of personal or physical existence, or related to the circumstances of his daily life *مجهول الحال*, *مستور الحال*.¹⁰

The narrator's credibility can be called into question through various indicators, including the absence of a student-teacher relationship, an irrational age difference between the student and teacher, discrepancies between the conveyed information and that of honest individuals, the exclusive transmission of *hadith* information through a single *sanad* channel, the presentation of information in the form of minor practices while promising significant rewards, and the communication of information that contradicts reason and rationality.¹¹

In the process of determining the validity of *sanad* *hadith*, several factors come into play. These include a continuous *sanad*, fair narrators with a strong emphasis on Islam, individuals who have reached the age of puberty and possess sound judgment, adherence to religious provisions, and the maintenance of *muru'ah* or social ethical values. Habitation, on the other hand, is an aspect of intellectual intelligence that is illustrated by a narrator's ability to memorize the narrated *hadith* accurately. This is followed by their capacity to convey the *hadith* effectively and to have a deep understanding of its substance, all while leading a life in accordance with its teachings. Similarly, a valid *sanad* should not contain *shazz*, which refers to information submitted by a *siqah* (trustworthy narrator) that contradicts the established history of individuals recognized for their justice and good habits. It can also occur when *siqah* narrators relay *hadith*, but there is no corroborating history from other *siqahs*. *Shazz* may also manifest as *hadith* with a single *sanad* path without considering the quality status of the narrators involved.

Furthermore, the requirement for the validity of a *sanad* is that it is not *berillat*, which refers to a hidden cause that may damage the quality of the *hadith*. Although a *hadith* may initially appear to be of valid quality from a pragmatic standpoint, a comprehensive examination involving the compilation of all narration lines and a comparison with each

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 230

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 96-103

other, along with the response of the critic's judgment, will determine whether the position of the hadith is berillat or not berillat.¹²

On the other hand, narrators, being humans with physical bodies (biological), are susceptible to a decline in their abilities as they age. However, in contrast, through their bioplasmic bodies, humans tend to experience an increase in spiritual awareness, which is a fundamental aspect of human instincts.¹³

Humans have instincts that drive them to acquire, master, experience dissatisfaction, and possess the ability to freely choose and take action.¹⁴ Similarly, humans can find themselves in situations of fear, anger, neglect, jealousy, and love.¹⁵ Furthermore, human character can be categorized into several prototypes. For instance, individuals with a phlegmatic disposition exhibit relaxed and peaceful behavior, primarily focusing on their internal experiences. In contrast, those with a choleric temperament tend to be aggressive, assertive in pursuing their desires, and may exhibit a firm, hot-tempered, or irritable nature. Melancholic individuals are characterized by wisdom, analytical thinking, and a calm demeanor. Lastly, sanguine individuals are typically active, joyful, optimistic, sociable, enthusiastic, and possess a high zest for life.¹⁶

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Discourse on the Reality of the State of the Narrator

The structure of hadith consists of a series of names linked through the concept or practice of "*tahammul* al-hadith," which describes the process of transmitting hadith material. This structure also reveals the chain of narrators involved, starting from the companions who directly received teachings from the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) and extending to the last level represented by the *mukharrij*.

In general, scholars of hadith have documented the lives of narrators in various "rijal" books, which provide detailed biographies of each narrator along with critical assessments of their credibility. One such example is the book "Tahzib al-Kamal" authored by Imam al-Hafiz Jamal al-Din Abi al-Hujjaj Yusuf al-Mizzy. Similarly, these books summarize narrations, categorizing them among the companions and narrators within each generation or "tabaqat." Some scholars, like Imam al-Nasai, have even produced

¹² See, M. Syuhudi Ismail, *Kaedah Kesahihan Sanad Hadis, Telaah Kritis dan Tinjauan dengan Pendekatan Ilmu Sejarah* (Cet.I; Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1988), p. 111-131

¹³Lihat, Taufiq Pasiak, *Tuhan Dalam Otak Manusia* (Cet.I; Bandung: Mizan Pustaka, 2012), p. 196-201

¹⁴Sukanto MM., *Nafsiologi, Suatu Pendekatan Alternatif atas Psikologi* (Cet. I; Jakarta: Integrita Pres, 1985), p. 67-68

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¹⁶www.detik.com.edu.detik pedia. Download 17 June 2023

specialized works aimed at identifying narrators deemed unreliable, as seen in his book "al-Du'afa wa al-Matrukin.

When conducting an assessment of narrations, a broad categorization becomes evident, primarily distinguishing between two groups. The first group exclusively focuses on first-generation narrators, particularly the companions of the Prophet. The second group encompasses all other narrators who do not fall within the category of companions.

Ibn Hajar defines a companion as one who met the Prophet, embraced Islam, and passed away under Islamic conditions. The act of "meeting" is further defined as someone who spent a significant or brief period in the Prophet's company, participated in or abstained from battles alongside the Prophet, saw or met the Prophet (peace be upon him) at least once, which even includes blind individuals.¹⁷

Concerning the narration of hadith, scholars apply varying standards of judgment regarding the integrity of narrators who are companions compared to those who are not. Ibn Hajar al-Asqalaniy asserts that scholars of the Sunnah unanimously agree on the justice and integrity of all the Companions. Any deviations from this consensus are considered doubtful and are often attributed to the influence of heretics.¹⁸

When examining how hadith scholars determine the justice of companions, it becomes evident that this determination is grounded in theological normatives. Many Qur'anic verses are cited as supporting propositions in this regard. These verses shed light on the condition of the companions, particularly when they were revealed by Allah Almighty, and during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him).

However, a dilemma arises when considering whether significant historical events, such as the civil wars and political turmoil that occurred after the death of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) and involved many companions, can be completely exempt from scrutiny regarding their actions and justice. Notable examples include the rebellion during the caliphate of Uthman bin Affan, which culminated in his assassination. Similar challenges arose during the rule of Ali ibn Abi Talib, notably in the events of the Battle of Jamal and the Siffin war, which concluded with arbitration. These events marked a turning point in political struggles, evolving into theological nuances, particularly led by the

¹⁷ See Syihabuddin Abi al-Fadl Ahmad bin Hajar al-'Asqalaniy, *al-Ishabat fi Tamyiz al-Shahabat* (Dar: al-Fikr), p. 7

¹⁸ See Muhammad Saleh Ahmad al-Farisy, *Fashl al-Khuththab fi Mawqif al-Ashhab*, (Cet. I; Dar al-Salam, 1416 H/1996 M), p. 10

Kharijites.¹⁹ In light of these considerations, there may be a need for a reinterpretation of the criteria for assessing justice in the context of the treatment of hadith.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, questions arise about the presence of narrators who have previously received negative judgments regarding their justice from hadith critics. However, in certain instances, these narrators may have exhibited qualities aligning with those of *siqah* narrators or individuals possessing the requisite qualifications for justice and independence during their involvement in narrating hadith. For the purposes of this paper, attention will be focused on two specific cases: Ayyub bin Khuwat and Ishaq bin Najih.

a. Ayyub bin Khuwat

Imam al-Nasai judged Ayyub ibn Khuwat as "matruk al-hadith,"²⁰ categorizing him as one who has been abandoned or rejected due to these attributes, placing him in a category similar to those who are known for dishonesty in terms of their trustworthiness in narrating hadith.

Several hadiths have been transmitted through the narration of Ayyub bin Khuwat, including the hadith that commands people who laugh to renew their ablution and prayer.²¹ Regarding the distribution of hadith narration, various transmission paths have been identified based on the work of *mukharrij*, and these paths closely align with the content of the hadith. For example, Imam Dar al-Quthniy recorded 18 distinct *sanad* paths,²² Abd al-Razzaq documented 2 paths, Ibn Abi Shaiba identified 1 *sanad* path²³, Imam al-Shafii documented 2 *sanad* paths,²⁴ and al-Baihaqy recognized 5 paths.²⁵ This results in a total of 27 distinct *sanad* paths. From the perspective of narration, this hadith exhibits a fairly diverse transmission history. Initially, it was accepted by five narrators. However, according to al-Dar al-Quthniy, anyone who narrates the hadith through the Qatadah route, receiving it from Abi 'Aliyah, is considered to have the status of *mursal*.²⁶

¹⁹See Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arab*, translated by R. Cecep Lukman Yasin and Dedi Slamet Riyadi (Cet. I; Jakarta: Serambi Ilmu Semesta, 2008), p. 222-227

²⁰See Abi Abd al-Rahman bin Syaib al-Nasa'iy, *Kitab al-Duafa wa al-Matrukin* (Cet. II; Bairut: Dar al-Fikr, 1407H/1987M), p. 46

²¹See, Ali bin Ahmad bin Mas'ud al-Nu'man bin Dinar bin Abdillah al-Bagdady al-Dar al-Quthny, *Sunan al-Dar al-Quthniy*, Juz 2, p. 180

²² *Ibid*, p. 180-219

²³Abi Syaibah, *Mushannaf Abi Syaibah*, Juz I, h. 341 [CD Room Maktabah al—Syamilah]

²⁴Muhammad bin Idris al-Syafi'i, *Musnad al-Syafi'i*, Juz 3 p. 74

²⁵Al- Baihaqiy, *Sunan al-Kubra al-Baihaqiy*, [CD Room Maktabah al—Syamilah]

²⁶See, *Ibid.*, Juz 2, p. 180.

For this reason, Imam Shafi'i rejected the acceptance of the narration due to its *mursal* status. Nevertheless, it's important to note that Qatadah, the transmitter of this narration, received it not only from Abi 'Aliyah but also from Anas and al-Malih's father. Therefore, while the path through Abi 'Aliyah may be considered *mursal*, this restriction does not apply to other transmission paths, as is evident in the case of the path through al-Hasan bin al-Hasan.

Interestingly, despite the *mursal* nature of the narration, Abi 'Aliyah emerges as a central figure in its dissemination. He transmitted the hadith to three individuals: Qatadah, Hafsah, and Abi Hisham. In contrast, other narrators, such as Anas, al-Hasan ibn Abi al-Hasan, and al-Malih's father, conveyed it to only one person each. Ibrahim, on the other hand, narrated it to two individuals, namely al-A'masy and Qatadah. Notably, Hafsah, through the path of Abi 'Aliyah, stands out as an especially prolific transmitter of this information.

In the case of the narrator Ayyub ibn Khuwat, who was considered *matruk* (abandoned) by al-Nasaiy,²⁷ his narration traced back through the Qatadah route, which ultimately reached Anas, who had received it from the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him). However, the chain of narration did not progress further, as it was individually accepted at each level of transmission, culminating with al-Dar al-Qutniy.

Furthermore, al-Dar al-Qutniy provided additional information in the *sanad* line. It revealed that the narrator Dawud bin al-Muhabbar, who had received the narration from Ayyub bin Khuwat, was also deemed *matruk* because of his fabrication of hadith. Ayyub bin Khuwat himself was declared weak or *da'if* by scholars.²⁸

When assessing the quality, the *sanad* line appears to be very weak. Nevertheless, there are numerous alternative pathways that can serve as a basis for further evaluation. Simultaneously, the overall development of the historical *sanad* path was predominantly shaped by the *sanad* al-Dar al-Quthniy line, which encompassed as many as the initial six *sanads*. In contrast, figures like al-Baihaqiy, Abi Shaiba, and 'Abd al-Razzaq received their narrations through single-track channels.

Furthermore, a closer examination reveals that the transmission line of al-Dar al-Quthniy experienced fluctuations in narration development, particularly with a concentration on Abu Bakar al-Naisaburiy. Abu Bakr al-Naisaburiy received the narration from eight individuals, yet he, in turn, failed to transmit the hadith to many others. In fact, he only narrated it to two individuals: al-Dar al-Quthniy and 'Ali ibn 'Umar.

²⁷Abi 'Abd al-Rahman bin Syu'aib al-Nasaiy, *Kitab al-Du'afa wa al-Matrukin* (Cet.II; Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1407H/1987M), p. 46

²⁸See, al-Dar al-Qutniy, Juz 2, *Loc. Cit.*

Subsequently, the transmission path through 'Ali ibn 'Umar came to an end, as it was taken up by the *mukharrij* al-Baihaqiy.

Regarding the hierarchy of the transmission relationships, the shortest *sanad* path belongs to 'Abd al-Razzaq, followed by the transmission path of Abi Shaiba. However, 'Abd Razzaq's transmission path continues, becoming one of the final transmission pathways through the *mukharrij* al-Dar al-Quthniy.

On the other hand, the *sanad* pathway of al-Dar al-Quthniy, which includes Ayyub bin Khuwat, appears favorable when considering the pronunciation of *tahammul*. This is particularly noteworthy because Dawud bin Muhabbar, who has faced allegations of forging hadith, asserts that he directly received the hadith from Ayyub bin Khuwat. This connection can be traced through the *tahammul* pronunciation "haddasana." It's worth mentioning that Ayyub ibn Khuwat used the *tahammul* pronunciation "*tahammul*'an." Intriguingly, this same *tahammul* pronunciation, "*tahammul*'an," persists throughout the entire transmission chain, ultimately linking Qatadah and Anas in the final *sanad* connection.

Similarly, other *sanad* routes, such as those through Ibrahim and Hasan ibn al-Hasan, employ the recitation of *tahammul*'an for two or three levels of narration. In the realm of narration, a *sanad* that employs the symbol of the pronunciation *tahammul*'an carries allegations of uncertainty unless it can be substantiated that a contemporary relationship exists between the two narrators, such as a student-teacher connection, and that the narrator does not engage in *tadlis* (concealment of information).

However, from a historical perspective, it is evident that during the early generations of narration, there was no established terminology methodically used to signify the transfer of information between narrations. This implies that suspicion should be cast upon narrators involved in narration activities using the symbol 'an for *tadlis* or concealment of information, especially when considering the era when explicit studies of *tahammul* pronunciations were undertaken. Although the early generations did not employ such symbols, the usage of a between narrators still merits exploration.

Based on the narration path and the development of the *sanad*, the hadith about laughing while praying maintains a connection to the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him). This assertion is supported by the involvement of multiple paths aside from Abi 'Aliyah, backed by five *sanad* paths. Even though each *sanad* reference at each level is accepted by only one person up to the *mukharrij* level, the convergence of information from various paths suggests the continuity of this information throughout each historical generation. The level of accuracy will still be subject to testing, contingent on the standing of the individual narrators.

b. Ishaq bin Najih

Ishaq bin Najih is a narrator with the status of *matruk al-hadith*. Based on my research into his narration activities, whether in pre-codified hadith books or those during the codification and post-codification periods, it appears that he only narrated hadith related to war strategies involving the use of arrows and swords.

The narration by Ishaq ibn Najih is unique, even though it was reported by two *mukharrij*, namely Abu Dawud and al-Baihaqi. Al-Baihaqi obtained the hadith from two separate narration paths, but one of them was a continuation of the *sanad* path used by Abu Dawud, eventually merging into a single *sanad* path.

In general, this hadith has been documented by eight *mukharrij*, including those mentioned above, as well as Imam al-Bukhari, Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, 'Abd al-Razzaq, al-Hakim, Abu Bakr bin Abi Shaibah, and Abu 'Awwanah. The narration structure of this hadith begins with a direct transmission from the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) to only one person, Abi Asadiy. It then passed on to three individuals: al-Zubayr bin Munzir bin Abi Asadiy, Hamza bin Abi Asadiy, and 'Abbas bin Sahal.

As the narration developed, the path through Hamza ibn Asadiy, transmitted through 'Abd al-Rahman al-Gusail, became prominent. 'Abd al-Rahman al-Gusail narrated it to three people, including al-Fadl bin Dukain, who further conveyed it to Harun bin 'Abdullah. Meanwhile, the path through Abu Ahmad al-Zubayr also expanded, with four narrators, including Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, serving as *mukharrij*. Similarly, Abu Na'im conveyed the narration to four narrators, including Muhammad Halif al-'Asqalaniy and Abu Hatim, and two of them, namely Imam al-Bukhari and Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaibah, served as *mukharrij*.

The shortest narration path, involving only three narrators (Abi Asadiy, Hamza bin Abi Asadiy, and Ibrahim bin Malik bin Hamzah), ended with 'Abd al-Razzaq. Interestingly, this path consists of a familial lineage, encompassing grandfather, father, and son. On the other hand, the longest narration path, through mukharrij al-Baihaqi, includes nine narrators.

Considering the description of the *sanad*, although the hadith was initially narrated by Abi Asadiy alone, it garnered substantial attention after being transmitted by his own son. Even Imam al-Bukhari, a credible *mukharrij*, included the narration through two different narrators, 'Abdullah bin Muhammad al Ja'fiy and Abu Na'im, each following distinct *sanad* paths, with Abu Na'im tracing back through 'Abd al-Rahman al-Gusail and 'Abdullah bin Muhammad al Ja'fiy through Abu Ahmad al-Zubair.

At the final narration level, the three *mukharrij*, namely al-Bukhariy, Abu 'Awwanah, and al-Baihaqi, obtained the narration through two narrators each. One of these narrators served as a direct means of verification or corroboration, supporting the validity of each narration. On the other hand, through the paths of *mukharrij* al-Hakim, Abu Bakr bin Abi Shaibah, Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, and 'Abd al-Razzaq, the narration was conveyed via a single channel. Nevertheless, the multitude of narration paths suggests that the information, corroborated by narrators through different paths, holds historical significance.

Examining the activities of these two narrators who were considered *matruk al-hadith*, it becomes evident that narrators accused of lying did not consistently fabricate hadith. Their narration was rejected due to their status, resulting in limited recorded hadith from them. Reassessing the status of narrators with questionable integrity remains possible, as all hadith narrators have passed away, and their behavior and conditions remain unchanged. They have left a legacy of hadith-related information, which constitutes a historical fact and can be scrutinized within the limits of empirical analysis. Consequently, upholding the notion that all Companions are inherently just places undue constraints on an already limited and theologically normative evaluation. Moreover, when confronted with historical facts, such an approach leads to a problematic dichotomy.

The author finds that there is a double standard in establishing a framework for assessing narrators. The question arises: Are the Companions who participated in the process of narrating hadith completely free from actions that could challenge their integrity, as per the criteria of justice proposed by hadith scholars? If not, then a more comprehensive approach is needed, one that still positions the study of hadith as a systematic effort to assess all narrators within the same framework. This means that both the *sanad* path and the content of the narrator's information hold significant importance as the basis for classification.

In simpler terms, the evaluation of the integrity of all hadith narrators should suffice when considered in the context of hadith narration. Technical matters unrelated to the world of narration can be excluded from the assessment criteria. Additionally, the classification of Companions as just narrators should not burden the judgment when assessing non-Companion narrators. Although this may present challenges, there is a need for a new term that accommodates the reproach of historical justice while sharing the same historical context as *siqah* narrators. At the very least, it can be referred to as a status of quality, coupled with attributes of *ma'al al-gair*.

Narration activities are inherently linked to the individual characteristics of humans, and the judgments made by critics are influenced by their own character and approach. Consequently, within the realm of narration, there are critics of hadith who adopt strict

standards, such as Imam al-Nasai, Shu'bah, and Ibn al-Madini, while others have a more lenient approach, like Imam al-Turmudzi, al-Hakim, Ibn Hibban, al-Bazzar, and al-Baihaqi²⁹. These differences undoubtedly affect how a narrator is evaluated; strict hadith critics may categorize a narrator as having faults, whereas others may assess them more positively.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study delves into the classification of hadith based on the authenticity of both the *sanad* (chain of narrators) and the *matan* (content), emphasizing the critical role of the *sanad* in evaluating a hadith's authenticity. The scrutiny of a narrator's credibility and competence plays a central role in this process, with various terms used to describe their conditions, such as "al-jarh wa al-ta'dil" for criticism or endorsement. The historical context of hadith transmission, including challenges like political turmoil and the fabrication of hadith for political purposes, is discussed. Assessing the justice of companions and non-companion narrators should not be done through a strict theological lens but rather within a broader framework that considers historical facts. Furthermore, the study highlights the diversity in the approach of hadith scholars when evaluating narrators, with some adopting stringent criteria while others have a more lenient perspective. This diversity can lead to varying judgments on the same narrators. In essence, the study underscores the complexity and depth of the science of hadith, emphasizing the need for a nuanced and comprehensive approach to evaluate the credibility of narrators and authenticity in the context of Islamic teachings.

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