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## **HISTORICITY OF SANAD HADITH THEORY: An Epistemological Review**

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### **Abstract**

Sanad is the most important element in a Hadith. Without a sanad, the authenticity of the hadith can be doubted, whether the hadith is from the Prophet or not. In fact, historical records prove that in practice, the sanad system has existed since the time of the Prophet Muhammad. However, entering the modern era, studies and criticisms of the theory of sanad are ample. In fact, this theory tends to be considered not to be used as a benchmark in determining the authenticity of a hadith, because it is considered to still have weaknesses. Based on this background, this paper aims to analyze the theory of sanad in the epistemological aspect. Some of the issues to be discussed in this research are discourses related to the concept of sanad, methodology of sanad and the authenticity value of sanad. The author focuses on these three main points, because they are the essence of epistemological issues. Thus, this paper is expected to provide an overview regarding the nature of sanad, its concepts and methodologies which are benchmarks in determining the validity, authenticity and historicity of a hadith.

**Keywords:** Historicity, Sanad, Epistemology

### Abstrak

Sanad merupakan unsur terpenting dalam sebuah hadis. Tanpa adanya sanad, maka keabsahan hadis dapat diragukan, apakah hadis tersebut berasal dari Nabi atau bukan. Faktanya, catatan sejarah membuktikan bahwa dalam praktiknya, sistem sanad sudah ada sejak zaman Nabi Muhammad SAW. Namun memasuki era modern, kajian dan kritik terhadap teori sanad sudah banyak. Faktanya, teori ini cenderung dianggap tidak bisa dijadikan tolak ukur dalam menentukan keabsahan suatu hadis, karena dianggap masih memiliki kelemahan. Berdasarkan latar belakang tersebut, maka tulisan ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis teori sanad dalam aspek epistemologis. Beberapa permasalahan yang akan dibahas dalam penelitian ini adalah wacana terkait konsep sanad, metodologi sanad dan nilai keaslian sanad. Penulis memusatkan perhatian pada ketiga pokok bahasan tersebut, karena merupakan inti permasalahan epistemologis. Dengan demikian, tulisan ini diharapkan dapat memberikan gambaran mengenai hakikat sanad, konsep dan metodologinya yang menjadi tolak ukur dalam menentukan keabsahan, kesahihan, dan historisitas suatu hadis.

**Kata kunci:** Historisitas, Sanad, Epistemologi

### Introduction

The rise of research related to Sanad Hadith began in the 19th and 20th centuries of Hijri (Burge, 2011, p. 169). Among the works that emerged came from western scholars who questioned the authenticity and role of the sanad (Reinhart, 2010, p. 417). The first scholar to talk about this was Ignaz Goldziher. By using the method of historical criticism, Goldziher views that sanad cannot guarantee or even be used as a benchmark for determining the authenticity of a hadith (Rakhmat, 2015, pp. 27–28). Apart from Goldziher, one of the influential figures who questioned the authenticity of the sanad was Joseph Schacht. In his work *The Origins of Muhammad Jurisprudence*, Schacht examines the sanad system based on the calendar system and at the same time

initiates a theory called the common link theory. This theory was then accommodated and developed by Juynboll through three of his works, namely *The Authenticity of the Tradition Literature: Discussion in Modern Egypt*, *Muslim Tradition: Studies and Cronology*, *Provenence and Autochip of Early Hadith* and *Studies on the Origins and Uses of Islamic Hadith*.<sup>1</sup>

Long before the sanad became a popular study in this century, in essence, the existence and the attention to it had started since the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Even though at that time, its existence was still in a simple form. This phenomenon is explicitly described by Muhammad Mustafa A'zami in his *Studies in Early Hadith Literature*. He stated that, Sahabahs since the time of the Prophet had an obligation to tell each other about the words of the Prophet when they met. They made a rule, anyone who attended the Prophet's gathering, had a moral obligation to inform other friends about what he heard or saw in the Prophet's assembly. In fact, the statement of this natural system was recommended directly by the Prophet in a shahih hadith narrated by Imam Abu Daud from the Sahabah of Ibn 'Abbas: "If you hear (then) it will be heard from you, and it will be heard from those who have heard from you (Azami, 1978, p. 212).

Even this phenomenon shows the importance of the sanad system in Islam. The urgency of this system is explicitly stated by several scholars in their works. For example, Ibn Sirrin (d. 110 H) stated that "Indeed knowledge of hadith is religion, so pay attention to who you take your religion from" (Abû al-Husein Muslim bin al-Hajjâj bin Muslim al-Qusyairî al-Nisâbûrî, 1955, p. 14). The same thing was also stated by Abu 'Amr al-Auza'i (d. 157 H), that "Loss of knowledge (hadith) will not occur; except when the Sanad hadith has been lost" (Nuruddin 'Itr, 1979, p. 345). In line with his two predecessors, Ibn Mubarak also considered

sanad as an urgent element. In fact, for him, sanad is part of religion. Ibn Mubarak stated that “Sanad is part of religion, if it were not Sanad, then really anyone would say whatever they wanted (Mahmûd al-Thahhân, 1978, p. 158).

Due to its urgent position, standardization or elements have been established as the basis for assessing the quality of a sanad which is aimed at determining the authenticity of a hadith. The establishment of this standardization was also a response to the development of fake hadiths in the first century of Hijriyah (Amin, 2009, p. 5). If in the western tradition, a research on sanad is based on the calendar system, then in the conventional tradition, a study on Sanad is based on the elements of time and the credibility of the narrator, namely relying on aspects of personal reality, time and place as well as feasibility and ability (the deepest side of a narrator), which when simplified becomes: continued sanad, fair and *dhabit* narrators, no *syudzudz* and not *illah* (al-Khathîb, 1989, pp. 32–33).

In the world of conventional sanad criticism, rigorous and complex research must be carried out before a narrator is declared *thiqah* (trusted). Meanwhile, someone who is known as a liar in his community, then his story will not be accepted. Although in fact he was honest in his story (Amrulloh, 2017, p. 13).

The presence of studies on sanad is essentially to reveal the originality and historicity of a hadith (Amin, 2009, p. 13). Is it really the words of the Prophet or is it the opinion of Sahabah? Can the sanad attributed to the *matan* represent the original transmission line or not?

This paper aims to describe the theory of sanad in an epistemological review. Several issues to be discussed in this research are discourses related to the concept of sanad, methodology of sanad and the value of the authenticity of sanad. The author focuses on these

three main points, because they are the essence of epistemological issues. Thus, this paper can provide an overview regarding the nature of the sanad which is a benchmark in determining the validity, authenticity and historicity of a hadith.

## Discourse on the Concept of Sanad

In classical Islamic scholarship, sanad has such an important position. The urgency of the sanad can be seen from every hadith narrated from a separate sanad that connects the speaker (rāwī) with the owner of the said word (the Prophet, Sahabah and Tab'in). Besides that, sanad is considered as part of hadith criticism which is designed to select which ones really came from the Prophet and which ones did not (Itr, 2014, p. 359). In simple terms, sanad can be understood as a historical link consisting of narrators who connect the recorders of hadith with the narrators, namely, Rasulullah saw (in marfu' hadith), Sahabah (in mauquf hadith) and tabi'in (in maqṭū' hadith).<sup>2</sup>

The discourse on the concept of sanad is essentially inseparable from the study of narrators. Because historically, the formation of a sanad is a process of a tradition of spreading news originating from the Prophet and then conveying it from one individual to another, or from one friend to another, or to the next generation. Each individual involved in this series of transmissions is referred to as a narrator, namely the person who narrated and transferred the hadith. Thus, the hadith-sanads in each of his ṭabaqāt (followers) are also referred to as narrators (Suryadilaga, 2015, p. 3). Therefore, sanad and narrator are two terms that are interrelated and cannot be separated.

Regarding the background of the emergence of the sanad, a contemporary Muslim scholar, Mustafa 'Azami, in his work Studies in Early Islam stated that the concept of the sanad had actually appeared

practically in the lives of the Sahabahs in the early days of Islam.<sup>3</sup> This is shown by the existence of a tradition among Sahabahs to tell each other the news they heard directly from the Prophet. Sahabahs who were present at the assembly had an obligation and a moral responsibility to tell what they saw and heard from the Prophet to Sahabahs who were unable to attend (‘Azami, 2004, p. 531). When they conveyed back the news they heard from the Prophet, they relied on him. As for Sahabahs who don’t listen to him directly, they always rely on the person who conveyed the news to him (Muhammad Abu Syuhbah, 2007). This activity did not only take place at the time of the Prophet, but also at the time of the Sahabahs. In fact, after the death of the Prophet the awareness of the importance of the Prophet’s traditions has increased. This awareness then gave birth to the spirit of every Muslim to carry out rihlah activities (journeys/travels). Through this ritual, the number of narrations increased and the Prophet’s traditions were successfully spread to various provinces in the Islamic world. According to Azami, this process has formed a narration system or what is called a sanad in Islam. Even so, at this time the concept of sanad had not yet become a structural discipline and theory. Its existence in the early days of Islam was still in a very simple form, not bound or free from certain conditions. This is not only due to the absence of definite evidence that hadith falsification has occurred, but also because it will be easier for someone to conduct an examination if there is a hadith which authenticity is doubtful. If there is a problem related to the history they receive, they can immediately check the truth with the Prophet. Because the Prophet was with them, hanging out and socializing with them. So, if there is a scribble error, pronunciation mistake or lack of understanding of the meaning of the text, they can refer it directly to the Prophet (Idri, 2016, pp. 31–32).

Unlike the case when the Prophet died, the Sahabahs showed a more careful attitude towards the transmission system. This is explicitly

recorded in two hadith books, Muwaṭṭa by Imam Mālik and Sunan Tirmizī. In the Muwaṭṭa it is stated that ‘Umar heard the hadith delivered by Abū Mūsā, after other friends, including AbūSa’īd, also stated that they had heard the hadith of the Prophet about what Ubay put forward. Finally ‘Umar said to Abū Mūsā: “I do not accuse you of lying, but I am worried that people will easily say in the name of the Messenger of Allah” (Ibn Anas, 1403). Apart from Umar, Abu Bakr also showed caution as recorded in Sunan Tirmizī. It is narrated that once upon a time there was a grandmother who came to the caliph Abu Bakr, asking for inheritance rights from the property left by her grandchild. Abu Bakr then replied that he had not seen the instructions in the Koran and the Prophet’s practice of giving inheritance to grandmothers. He also asked his friends, then al-Mughira bin Syu’bah told him that the Prophet had given his grandmother a share of one-sixth of the inheritance. Hearing this statement, Abu Bakr asked al-Mughira to present a witness. Then Muhammad bin Maslamah gave testimony on the truth of al-Mughirah’s statement. Finally, Abu Bakr determined the grandmother’s inheritance rights by giving one-sixth part based on the hadith of the Prophet conveyed by al-Mughirah (Abū ‘Īsā Muhammad ibn ‘Īsa al-Tirmizī, 1980, pp. 121–122).

The history mentioned above shows that the concept of naqd (criticism: sanad and matan) which emerged in the following centuries, in essence, had started since the early days of Islam which was pioneered by the Sahabahs. Although its existence at that time had not yet become a separate theory or discipline. This critical attitude was then increasingly carried out when entering the middle of the 2nd century H, after the death of khulafā al-Rāsyidūn. This is because the problems that arise related to hadith at this time are increasingly complex, which is made possible by the forgery of hadith that first appeared in this period for political reasons (Sumbulah, 2008, p. 34). The “political” slander that

occurred to Muslims made the ulamas more careful and began to scrutinize the sources of information that were given to them. Here, it is clear that the significance of the sanad as a bridge that can connect to the past is considered effective for determining and detecting the authenticity of hadith. This event is explicitly illustrated in Ibn Sirrin's statement quoted by Barmawi Mukri in his book *Contextualization of the Prophet's Hadith*, as follows:

“Previously they had not asked about the sanad, but after there was slander; they said, tell us the names of the narrators (those who narrated) and then they traced them. If the narrators are experts in sunnah, then the hadiths will be taken (used as evidence), but if they are experts in heresy, then the hadith will not be taken (not used as evidence)” (Barmawi Mukri, 2005, p. 15).

Ibn Sirin's statement above also confirms that the sanad system in essence existed in the early days of Islam. This is in line with what was stated by 'Azami in the previous description. But at this time, the sanad system was not very effective. Attention to Sanad is not so great compared to its use after the event of slander. At this time there have been various forgeries of hadith, even according to Badri Khaeruman, these forgeries were carried out by people with various backgrounds, from matters related to politics, economics, da'wah interests, to the sake of integrity and wara'an, which was pioneered by the Sufis in order to approach the authorities (Badri Khaeruman, 2004, p. 35). Unfortunately, Khaeruman's statement regarding this matter was not accompanied by fake hadith data from every interest he expressed, so this is not strong enough to be used as a guide regarding the background of the interests behind falsifying hadiths.

The occurrence of major events in the history of Muslims further emphasizes the significance of the sanad in the traditions of hadith



transmission. This is clearly seen during the bookkeeping of hadith, in the middle of the third century Hijriyah (Muhammad Abu Syuhbah, 2007, p. 13). It has previously explained the emergence of sanad in its practical form. So, in this century, sanad has been applied to hadith books. Ahmad ibn Hanbal is referred to as an early Muslim scholar who tried to compile a book of hadith with complete sanad to the Prophet in his book *Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal*.<sup>4</sup> However, even though the books of hadith in this century have been copied with complete sanad down to the Prophet, in them one can still find the traditions of *ḍa'īf*. This is due to the fact that no filtering system has been implemented for hadith narrations recorded in this century (Yusuf, 2018, p. 32).

The filtering system only took effect in the middle of the 3rd century Hijriyah. In this century attention has emerged to provide an explanation of the degree of hadith in terms of its *ṣaḥīḥ*'s and *ḍa'īf*'s. Scholars at this time felt the need to clarify hadiths, realizing the widespread forgery of the Prophet's hadiths, so that a critical analysis was carried out on a number of the Prophet's hadiths through criticism of the hadith sanad. They try to separate the fake hadiths from the *ṣaḥīḥ* hadiths. This activity resulted in some hadiths being eliminated and declared inauthentic (*ḍa'īf*), while some other hadiths were declared as authentic hadiths (*ṣaḥīḥ*) (Fatchur Rahman, 1987, p. 38). This filtering system was pioneered by two sunni scholars, namely Bukhārī and Muslim. Then it was continued by the following scholars, some of whom were students of the two. Like Abū Daud, Tirmizī, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah and others. However, even though in this century there has been a movement to separate between *ṣaḥīḥ* and *ḍa'īf* hadiths, it is not easy to trace the methodological aspects of the study of sanad that have been built. Because, unlike Muslim, al-Bukhārī, who is known as the man of hadith, does not provide a detailed explanation regarding his methodology in his book (Rusli & Hpw, 2013, p. 3) Therefore, an understanding of

the Bukhārī method can only be obtained from studies or statements addressed to him in other sources which will be discussed in the next section regarding the sanad methodology in this chapter.

The appearance of the two ṣaḥīḥ books in the middle of the 3rd century Hijriyah was a wave of what Brown called the Saḥīḥ Movement. Bukhārī and Muslim were the first to try to collect narrations with sanads which they believed fulfilled the authentic requirements (ṣaḥīḥ). Therefore, these two books became famous books in the history of Sunni Islam. Apart from Bukhārī and Muslim, several other scholars from the Sunni circle who also belong to the ṣaḥīḥ movement, such as Abū Daud, Tirmizī, Nasā'ī and Ibn Mājah also paid considerable attention to sanad. They focus their studies only on hadiths that have strong and reliable sanad (trustworthy).

The emergence of the ṣaḥīḥ movement in this century, gave a considerable influence in the following centuries, living sanad became a very visible characteristic in hadith books or literature circulating from the 2nd century Hijriyah to the 3rd century Hijriyah.<sup>5</sup> Entering the IV to V Hijriyah centuries, investigations and classifications of the hadith books that had been compiled began to be carried out. Studies on sanad and hadith narrators began to be formulated and compiled in special books. In this century, great figures of hadith critics emerged, such as Aḥmad ibn Naṣr al-Baghdādī (d. 323 H), Aḥmad ibn Muhammad ibn Sa'īd (d. 333 H), Ibn Hibbān (d. 354 H), al-Ṭabrānī (d. 360 H), Ibn 'Adī al-Jurjanī (d.365 H), al-Hasan ibn Muhammad al-Naisabūrī (d. 365 H), Muhammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Dawud al-Qumī (d. 368 H), Abū Bakar al-Ismā'īlī (d. 372 H), Ibn Babawaih (d. 381 H), al-Dāruquṭnī (d. 385 H), al-Hākim (d. 405 H), 'Abd Ghanī ibn Sa'īd (d. 409 H), Abū Bakr ibn Mardawaih al-Aṣfahānī (d. 416 H), Ibn Hazm (d. 456 H), al-Ṭūsī (d. 460 H), Ibn 'Abd al-Bar (d. 463 H), and al-Khātib al-Baghdādī (d. 463 H). (Saifuddin, 2011, p. 259)

The appearance of these hadith critics and their works indicates that the concept of sanad in this century is very well established and detailed. This was also marked by the birth of several works of 'ulūm al-hadīṣ such as al-Muhaddiṣ al-Fāṣil baina al-Rāwī wa al-Wā'ī by al-Ramahurmuzī (d. 360 H). This work is considered the first hadith book for ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah, but Ibn Hajar in his work Syarh al-Nukhbat states that the topic of this book does not cover all branches of hadith science (Ahmad ibn 'Ali ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, n.d., p. 27). Besides that, there is also a book compiled by al-Hākim (405 H) known as the Ma'rifah Book 'Ulūm al-Hadīṣ. However, this book according to al-Jaziri as quoted by Idri is not perfect and not systematic (Idri, 2015, p. 83). Furthermore, the Book of al-Kifayat fī 'Ilm al-Riwāyah and al-Jāmi' li Akhlāq al-Rāwī wa Adabī al-Sami' which was compiled by Abū Bakar al-Khātib al-Baghdādī (463 H). This work is considered as the pinnacle of maturity in the field of hadith knowledge among ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah (Ahmad ibn 'Ali ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, n.d., p. 27). However, even in this work, no concrete formulation has been found regarding the definition of the hadith ṣaḥīḥ. A clear formulation of the definition of hadith ṣaḥīḥ only took effect around the VII century H, pioneered by Uṣmān ibn 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Syahrazuri (643 H) or better known as Ibn Ṣalāh (Saifuddin, 2011, p. 258). Ibn Ṣalāh's formula for the hadith ṣaḥīḥ is the continuation of the sanad, 'ādil and ḍābit narrators are all in the sanad, and avoid from syaz and 'illah, avoid from mursal and munqaṭi narrations', and also avoid from all forms of *jarh* (Abū 'Umar 'Uṣmān bin 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Syahrazuri, 2010, p. 18).

Although Ibn Shalah is called the formulator of the hadith ṣaḥīḥ, the definition he gives is inseparable from the explanations and concepts that have been formulated by scholars in the previous century. This is proven by looking at the aspects of ittiṣāl al-sanad (sustainability of sanad) and ṣiqqah's formulated by Ibn Ṣalāh as a condition for the

authenticity of hadith in his work, in essence, it has been formulated beforehand by al-Bagdādī in his work *al-Kifayāt fī ‘Ilm al -History*. In this work, al-Bagdādī includes several statements of scholars which implicitly can be understood as formulas for the authenticity of hadiths in terms of the continuity of the sanad, as well as the ‘justice and dābit of the narrators. This is illustrated as follows:

Muhammad Ibn Na’īm said that he heard Muhammad ibn Yahya al-Zuhailī say: “It is not permissible to *hujjah* except with a continuous hadith, the chain of transmission which is not interrupted, in which there is no majhul or majruh narrator in it..”(Abu Bakar Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Khātib al-Bagdādī, n.d., p. 56).

Muhammad ibn Na’īm al-Ḍabbi al-Hāfiẓ said he read the writings of Abū ‘Amrū al-Mustamli that he heard Yahyā ibn Muhammad ibn Yahyā say: “And no narration was written that came from the Prophet Muhammad so that it was narrated by a *ṣiqqah* until it ended to The Prophet Muhammad, with this characteristic, and there are no majhul or majruh narrators in it. If such a narration has been determined from the Prophet, then it is obligatory to accept and practice it and leave what is contrary to it.”(Abu Bakar Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Khātib al-Bagdādī, n.d.).

Aḥmad ibn Muhammad ibn Abu al-Maut told us that Ahmad ibn Zaid ibn Harun said to us: “That (the hadith which was received and practiced) is from ṣālih from ṣālih, and from ṣālih from tābi’, and from tābi’ from ṣahabi from Rasulullah saw, from Jibril, from Allah swt.”(Abu Bakar Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Khātib al-Bagdādī, n.d.).

The first statement of the quotation above shows that a hadith can be used as Hujjah if the sanad is continuous and not narrated by majhul and majruh narrators. The second statement shows that apart from the two categories above, the *ṣiqqah* of the narrator is also an important condition for the acceptance of hadith as Hujjah. And the last

statement describes the *ṭabaqāt* (level of sanad), that is, starting from mukharrij who is *ṣālih*, *tābi'tābi'īn*, *tā'bi*, Sahabahs, Rasulullah PBUH, Jibril and ending with Allah SWT, known as Qudsi hadist.

Through the above statements, al-Bagdādī has implicitly laid down the standards and formulations of the *ṣaḥīḥ's* hadith through the study of the sanad by looking at aspects of the continuity of the sanad as well as the *siqqah* and fairness of the narrators. Other evidence which also shows the influence of previous scholars on Ibn Ṣalāh's formulation regarding the *ṣaḥīḥ's* hadiths, can be seen from Ibn Ṣalāh's statement which occasionally refers to the words of *muhaddisūn*. Like when he gave an explanation on the meaning of *'ādil*. He said: "The meaning of *'ādil* according to the *muhaddisūn* is a narrator who is Muslim, mature, wise, and safe from the causes of wickedness and bad *muruah*. (Abū 'Umar 'Usmān bin 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Syahrāzuri, 2010, p. 18) This substantially has similarities with the meaning of *'ādil* stated by *al-Bagdādī* in his work *al-Kifāyah*. *Al-Bagdādī* states that *'ādil* means one's consistency in religion, adheres to the pious acts, is far from *fasiq* and anything that will bring down his *'adalah*, whether from the actions of the five senses or actions of the heart (Abu Bakar Aḥmad ibn 'Alī al-Khātib al-Bagdādī, n.d., p. 78).

## Methodology of Sanad

After explaining and elaborating on the concept of sanad, in the following discussion we will describe in more detail the methodological tools of the sanad proposed by hadith scholars for the benefit of hadith criticism.

Discourses related to the concept of sanad and its methodology have essentially become an established scientific discipline since the 4th century of Hijri, although departing from concepts that existed at the

time of the Prophet and his Sahabahs. The difference is that at the time of the Prophet and Sahabahs, there were no standard rules regarding the methodology of sanad (Saifuddin, 2011, p. 273). Whereas in the 4th century H, each branch of hadith science had stood as a separate science. The scholars of this century tried to study deeper the books that had been compiled by the scholars of the previous century which were the pioneers in the bookkeeping of the Prophet's traditions. They collect information that is scattered and complete it based on the statements of other scholars who are narrated by the sanad that reaches the speaker, as was done by previous scholars (Itr, 2014, p. 53).

The explanation above illustrates that the methodology of the hadith sanad that has been formulated by the scholars did not appear suddenly, but through a long and complicated process. In the early days of Islam, research on sanad was more practical and applicable. There are no specific theories or rules in terms of transmission. This was because the source of the information at that time was still alive, so confirmation was still very easy to do (Idri, 2015, p. 87). Regarding the narration process, Idri said that there were two forms of narration during the time of the Prophet, namely: 1) narration through the Prophet directly, and 2) narration through Sahabah who heard from the Prophet (Idri, 2015). This second pattern encourages the birth of a critical attitude from Sahabah. If there is an error in the narration, the Sahabahs can directly refer it to the Prophet. In Suyūṭī's *Tadrīb al-Rāwī*, it is stated that the scholars agreed that the pattern of confirmation that was characteristic of this period was the forerunner to the birth of the science of hadith criticism (Jalal al-Din Abd al-Rahman al-Suyuthi, 1988, p. 45).

Meanwhile, during the time of the Sahabah, the critical attitude and caution in transmission became more intense. This is because the source of information, namely the Prophet SAW has gone. Hadiths are no longer narrated directly from the Prophet, but from his Sahabah.

Therefore, the intensity of criticism of narrators at this time is increasing. The critical attitude shown by the Sahabahs still goes through the pattern of confirmation as it existed during the time of the Prophet, but in addition to the pattern of confirmation, the Sahabahs also make comparisons with doubtful narrations. This is done by requiring someone to witness the history conveyed by the narrator. As recorded in several hadith books, such as the Book of Muwaṭṭa, Ṣaḥīḥal-Bukhārī, Sunan Tirmizī, Sunan Abū Daud and Sunan Ibn Mājah. In these books, there is a history that describes Abu Bakr's actions in requiring a witness to support the narrator's statement regarding the case of inheritance for a grandmother who was left by her grandchild (Abū 'Īsā Muhammad ibn 'Īsa al-Tirmizī, 1980). Likewise, when Umar asked a witness from among the Sahabahs regarding Abū Mūsa al-'Ash'arī's statement that it was permissible for someone to leave the house he was visiting if he had said greetings three times, but the owner of the house did not answer (Ibn Anas, 1403).

Edi Kuswadi in his work *Metodologi kritik Hadis antara Muhaddiṣūn versus Orientalis* even mentions a history from Aisyah which shows the use of sanad criticism in the early days which is reflected in the words *nasiya* and *akḥṭa'a* disclosed by Aisyah (Kuswadi, 2016, p. 183). These two words which meant *wrong* and *forgot* to be addressed by Aisyah towards Abdullah bin 'Umar who had made a mistake in his transmission. The history cited by Kuswadi tells of an incident narrated by *Abdullah bin 'Umar* regarding the crying of a living person which can be the cause of the torture of the dead. Hearing this history, 'Aisyah stated "Hopefully Allah will forgive *'Abd al-Rahmān* (Abdullah bin 'Umar), he did not lie, but he just forgot or was wrong. What actually happened was the Rasulullah passed the corpse of a Jewish woman who was being wept for, then the Messenger of Allah said, "They weep for her, even though the body is being tortured in its grave."

Edi Kuswadi stated that the two words in the history spoken by Aisyah, namely *nasiya* and *akhta'a* are part of the words used in one of the branches of hadith criticism, namely *Ilm al-Jarh wa al-Ta'dil* to assess the negative traits from a narrator.<sup>6</sup> Even though at that time they did not have scientific awareness of this science (*al-jarh wa al-ta'dil*), this history has shown the birth of hadith criticism methodology in later times, especially in the aspect of the sanad that departed from concepts that existed in the past, the time of the Prophet and his Sahabahs. This is also acknowledged by *Şalah al-Dīn ibn Ahmad al-Adlabi* quoted by Idri in his Epistemology, as follows:

“Since the time of the Sahabahs, Muslims have paid serious attention to the critical study of sanad, they have carried out accurate research on narrators regarding their *'adil* (personal integrity) as well as their *ḍābit* (intellectual capacity). From these two angles, they also carry out *al-ta'dil*, *al-tajrīh*, *al-tausīq* (declaring the *ṣiqqah*'s), and also *al-taḍ'īf* (declaring the *ḍa'īf*'s) of the narrators. When there are more and more narrators in the chain, the scholars also examine *al-ittiṣāl* (connection of sanad) or *al-inqitā'* (disconnection) between narrators. They did this because they were worried that there would be one of the names of narrators whose *adil* and *ḍābit*' could not be recognized (Idri, 2015, p. 154).

After the time of Sahabahs, the study of the sanad received greater attention, the authenticity of a later narration was not only seen from the presence of a witness, but from the ideological aspect of a narrator. If he belongs to the *ahl al-sunnah*, then his story will be accepted. However, if he is *ahl al-bid'ah*, then his story will be rejected. This kind of consensus occurred after the incident of slander which then resulted in divisions among the Muslims. This event also has implications for the occurrence of various falsifications of hadiths carried out by people who have goals



and political interests to defend their group (Muhammad Mustafa 'Azami, 1410, p. 8).

However, even though this event had a negative impact on the unity of the Muslims, it turned out that this event also had a positive impact on the development of the scientific structure of the hadith critique method. In fact, according to Umi Sumbulah, this momentum is a milestone for the development of a hadith research work system, because it has given positive motivation to hadith experts to work hard to develop knowledge, create various rules, compile various terms and make various research methods as a barometer and measure on whether or not a hadith can be used as *hujjah* or argument in terms of the conditions of the sanad and matan of the hadith (Sumbulah, 2008, p. 34). In this endeavor, they (hadith experts) travel to various regions to collect a number of narrations, select and compare them, until finally they are able to provide an assessment of each hadith.

*Al-Syāfi'ī* (d. 204 H) is an early Muslim scholar in the *mutaqaddimīn* era who has provided a formula or requirements that must be met by a narrator in the process of transmitting hadith (Zainul Arifin, 2013, p. 4). This formulation then became the basis for later scholars in selecting the hadiths of the Prophet (Zainul Arifin, 2013). He stated that a hadith narrator must be classified as someone who is trusted in his religion, known for being honest in what he says, understands what is narrated, is aware of words that can change meaning, memorizes the hadith if he narrates from his memorization, keeps his notes if he narrates from his notes, not *mudallis* (narrating from people who have hadiths that they have not heard from) and do not violate the narrations of people who are more trustworthy than them (Muhammad ibn Idris al-Syafi'i, 2012, pp. 370–371). The formulation of these requirements has been agreed upon by hadith experts as stated by *al-Baihaqi* in his work: "The requirements mentioned by al-Syāfi'ī are agreed upon by all experts on

hadith” (Al-Baihaqi, 1991, p. 120). The scholars then concluded that the requirements that a narrator had to fulfill were two, namely *‘adalah* and *ḍābit*. A narrator who fulfills these two criteria is called a *ṣiqah* narrator.

One of the branches of hadith science which was compiled to examine the aspects of *‘adil* and *ḍābit* of a narrator is the science of *jarh wa al-ta’dīl*.<sup>7</sup> The scholars are very careful in conducting tests in this regard. In *al-Kifāyah fī Ma’rifah al-Hadīṣ, al-Baghdādī* mentions that *jarh* cannot be simply accepted without first mentioning the causes of the *jarh*. This is because everyone has different opinions in determining the causes of a narrator’s *jarh*. It could be that he was considered *jarh* by someone, but not so for others. *Al-Baghdādī* exemplifies this by citing the opinion of Ṭabarī: “If there are two men who say that water is *najis*, then their words cannot be accepted until they explain the cause of the water’s *najis*, because there are various opinions regarding the things that cause water *najis*. (Abu Bakar Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Khātib al-Baghdādī, n.d., p. 101) In addition, al-Baghdady added that this statement was also the opinion of *Hafiz* imams, hadith critics, such as Bukhari, Muslim and other hadith scholars (Abu Bakar Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Khātib al-Baghdādī, n.d.).

As for the aspect of *‘adalah*, it is acceptable without the need to mention the reasons. This is because the reasons are many and to mention it, a *ta’dil* had to say something like: the narrator did not do this or violated that rule, so he was forced to mention all the things that cause wickedness when done or left by a narrator, and this is not an easy thing (Muhammad ibn Idris al-Syafi’i, 2012, pp. 370–371). Related to this aspect, Muhammad M. Noor, a scholar of hadith from Malaysia, stated that all Muslims are not questioned about their personality as long as their behavior is in line with religious rules and ethics. But in reality, no human being is free from mistakes, as Imam Syafi’i stated that: “No

one obeys Allah's commands so that they never sin. And there is also no one who is immoral so that he never obeys Allah." Therefore if most of a person's deeds are decorated with obedience then he is considered to have a commendable personality (*'ādil*) (Al-Baihaqi, 1991, p. 133).

Likewise, in the *ḍābit* aspect of the narrator. The *ahl al-hadīṣ* do this with great care and caution. They checked every word, even every letter conveyed by a narrator who would be assessed for its *ḍābit*. If the mistakes found in the practice of a narrator's history are very few, then the narrator is considered *ṣiqah*. The fewer the errors found, the higher the *ṣiqah* value of a narrator. On the other hand, if the errors in the narration practice predominate, then the narrator will be considered *ḍa'if*. Even if the mistake made by a narrator is considered very fatal, then the story will not be accepted. This is expressly stated by Syafī'i in his *Risalah*: "*Ahl al-hadīṣ* who make a lot of mistakes and don't have a record book, we don't accept their hadiths, just as people who make too many mistakes in testifying, we don't accept their testimonies" (Muhammad ibn Idris al-Syafī'i, 2012, p. 382).

The above statement indicates that in the judgment of the hadith scholars, a *ṣiqah* person can be wrong in the history, just as a *ḍa'if* narrator can be right. A person who is *ṣiqah* is not required to be free from mistakes (*ma'sum*). This statement is supported by the existence of criticisms directed at *ṣiqah* narrators in certain hadiths without reducing their credibility in other hadiths. As Imam Syafī'i's criticism of his teacher Imam Malik quoted by M. Noor in his work *Kritik Hadis: Mutaqaddimīn Vs Mutaakhhirīn*. Syafī'i said that "Imam Malik made a mistake in mentioning three names..." (Muhammad M. Noor, n.d., p. 6). Even so, Imam Syafī'i and other hadith scholars still view Imam Malik as a person who is *ṣiqah* (Muhammad M. Noor, n.d.).

Vice versa, there are narrators who are judged to be *ḍa'if*, but

their names are listed in the books whose *ṣahīḥ* are agreed upon. Like Fulaih bin Sulaimān in the book *Ṣahīḥal-Bukhārī* and Suwaid bin Sa'īd in *Ṣahīḥ Muslim* (and maybe there are several other narrators).<sup>8</sup> On the one hand, this shows the inconsistency of hadith scholars in terms of judging the narrators and the authenticity of their narrations. Because like Bukhārī and Muslim who are known as two scholars who are very strict in selecting narrations, in fact there are still narrators in their books who are considered *ḍa'īf*. However, hadith experts consider that what Bukhārī and Muslim did was caused by the existence of the same story narrated by the *Siqqah* narrator. Thus, on the other hand this shows the objective attitude of the *mutaqaddimīn* hadith experts who did not necessarily reject the narrators of *ḍa'īf*, even though they have been judged *ḍa'īf* by hadith critics.

In addition to *'ādil* and *ḍābit*, another requirement in the study of sanad that must be examined in the transmission of hadith is *ittiṣāl al-sanad* (sustainability of the sanad). Bukhārī and Muslim are two *mutaqaddimīn* hadith scholars who place great emphasis on the *ittiṣāl al-sanad* aspect in their assessment. However, there are differences between the two. Muslim emphasized the *mu'asyarah* aspect (both narrators live in one era) in assessing the connection of a hadith's sanad (Abu al-Husayn Muslim bin al-Hajjaj al-Naysabury, 1991, p. 8), whereas Bukhari does not only emphasize the *mu'asyarah* aspect alone, but also emphasizes the *liqa* aspect (the meeting of two narrators) ('Itr, 2014, pp. 366–367).

Nuruddin 'Itr explained that the difference of opinion that occurred between Bukhari and Muslim lies in their understanding of the hadith *mu'annan*.<sup>9</sup> In his judgment, Muslim does not require evidence of meetings and association between narrators as *jumhur* believes. Because

according to him, it is something that is made up and actually does not exist. When two narrators live in one period, according to Muslim, it is enough to prove that there was a meeting and association between the two narrators. Although, there is no information that they have ever met face to face during the teaching and learning process. Therefore, Muslim consider it sufficient to have “the mere possibility of a meeting between narrators” as evidence of the continuity of the hadith chain (Itr, 2014).

Several other scholars actually did not question the aspect of *mu'asyarah* or *liqa* as opposed by Bukhari and Muslim. For example, *al-Baghdady* in his work *al-Kifāyah*, he fulfills the requirement of *ṣiqqah* narrators from *ṣiqqah* narrators as proof of the continuity of the sanad, because according to him with *ṣiqqah*'s it will guarantee the meeting of students and its time (Abu Bakar Aḥmad ibn 'Alī al-Khātib al-Bagdādī, n.d., p. 56).

Apart from these differences, the methodology that has been built by the *mutaqaddimin* scholars has provided a basis for later scholars in compiling their works, even the principles of evaluating hadith owned by *mutaqaddimin* scholars have become the forerunner to the birth of works related to Ulumul Hadith in later eras.

## Authenticity Value of Sanad

Idri stated in his book *Epistemologi Ilmu Pengetahuan* that a theory or rule is said to be true can be seen in terms of its validity and reliability (Idri, 2015, p. 103). The validity test in this case relates to the level of reliability or validity of certain rules or theories. An instrument is said to be valid when it is used properly, that is, measuring what it is supposed to measure. As an example, Idri used a “Tape Measure”. A tape measure is said to be valid when it can be used to measure length accurately and correctly, because a tape measure is essentially a tool

for measuring length. This tool becomes invalid if it is used to measure weight (Idri, 2015). Meanwhile, from the aspect of the reliability of a tool or instrument, it relates to its consistency in measuring what is being measured. An instrument is called reliable if it is used several times to measure the same object and produces the same data (Idri, 2015, pp. 104–105).

The study of the validity of the sanad relates to the conditions set and used by hadith scholars in conducting research and selecting the hadiths of the Prophet included in the hadith criticism method. This method contains two important components which are the focus of research by hadith scholars related to sanad, namely a) the names of the narrators involved in the transmission of the relevant hadith, and b) the symbols of hadith transmission that have been used by each narrator in narrating the relevant hadith, such as the words *sami'tu*, *haddasanā/nī*, *anna* and others (Mariyatul Lathifah & Juni Pawestri, 2012, p. 21).

The first component is part of the study of the *ādil* and *dābit* of narrators, while the second component is part of the study of *ittiṣāl al-sanad*. In conducting studies on the narrators and aspects of *ittiṣāl al-sanad*, the principles contained in scientific disciplines were formed, such as *'ilm al-Jarh wa al-Ta'dīl*, *'ilm Rijal al-Hadīṣ*, science *Tārīkh al-Ruwāh* and others.<sup>10</sup> However, this scientific discipline did not appear instantly, but went through a long process, and experienced developments in each period as described in the previous discussion. The principles and theories summarized in these disciplines were made by hadith scholars based on the facts and experiences of hadith narrations that had taken place in the early days of Islam. Therefore, from a scientific perspective, according to Idri, most of the principles and theories embodied in the science of hadith are inductively obtained which are correspondence in nature (Idri, 2015). Yakni, para ulama hadis membuat teori dan kaidah-

kaidah dalam ilmu hadis berdasarkan pada fakta yang ada pada masa Nabi dan seterusnya, kemudian mereka membuat generalisasi yang menjadi kaidah-kaidah ilmu hadis.

The principles that have been formulated in the science of hadith are then used as a basis and benchmark in assessing and determining the authenticity of the hadiths of the Prophet. So, in testing the authenticity of hadith, a review must be based on the principles that have been formulated so that the truth can be recognized. For example, the rules of validity of the hadith that have been agreed upon by the scholars are that the sanad hadith is continued, all the narrators are *'adil* and *ḍābit* and avoid from *syaz* and *illah* (Muhammad Alwi al-Maliki, 2009, p. 52). If the hadith under study cannot meet these requirements, then the hadith is not classified as *ṣaḥīḥ*. Vice versa, if the results of the research show that all of these rules and conditions are met, then a hadith can be declared *ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic). This is where the validity of the hadith sanad lies.

As for the aspect of reliability, the truth of the rules and theory of sanad is seen from the consistency of research on sanad in determining the quality of the Prophet's hadith. Factually, the sanad is the most important part of the process of transmitting hadiths owned by Muslims. A hadith cannot be known for its quality without going through a research process on its sanad. In fact, *mutaqaddimīn* hadith scholars tend to place more emphasis on their research on the hadith sanad than on the content. As acknowledged by *'Itr* in his work *Ulumul Hadith*: "The muhaddiṣūn research and analyze sanad because the study of sanad has led to the success of criticism of matan, even criticism of matan cannot be successful without going through a study of sanad" (*'Itr*, 2014, p. 360).

In essence, if we refer to the history of Islamic transmission, the attitude of hadith scholars, especially *mutaqaddimīn*, seems to tend to pay more attention to the rules of sanad, not only—or not even

at all—related to the superiority of one rule over another, however, more to the conditions surrounding the life of the Ulama at that time. Namely, there have been various falsifications of hadith, which were carried out by people with various backgrounds and objectives (Endang Soetari, n.d., p. 35). Therefore, to be able to overcome this and in the mission of maintaining the purity of the Prophet's hadith, research and investigation of hadiths is carried out by referring directly to the messenger (narrators). As said by Ibn Khaldun (d. 808 H) that hadith scholars research the story by sticking to criticism of the story's narrator. If the narrators are people who can be trusted, then the story is declared valid, and vice versa if the narrators are not trusted people, then the narration they convey cannot be used as *hujjah* (dalil) of religion (Ibn Khaldun, 2002, p. 37). However, researching hadiths by relying solely on the study of sanad cannot provide valid conclusions on the quality of a story, considering the birth of a hadith cannot be separated from the socio-cultural context that surrounds it. Therefore, the scholars also emphasized the study of hadith matans. Because sometimes there are narrations that when viewed from the aspect of the sanad are of *hasan* quality, but *da'if* from the aspect of matan, or even seen from the aspect of the sanad, the narrations are of the quality *ḍa'if*, but when examined from the aspect of the matan it shows falsity.<sup>11</sup> So the reliability of the sanad as a rule is also supported by the rule of matan hadith. Because in determining the quality of a history, it does not only require one rule, but also requires other rules.

These rules are a unity that cannot be separated. The formulation of the scholars is correct regarding the requirements for the validity of hadith, which is a combination of the study of sanad and matan hadith: continuation throughout the hadith, the narrators were *'ādil* and *ḍābit* and avoids *syaz* (irregularities) and *'illat* (flaws).



## Conclusion

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that conceptually, the description regarding the sanad in this paper shows a process of development and continuity of the use of sanad from time to time, which in the early days of Islam was still used in a very simple form, until it reached perfection in the mid-3rd Hijri century. This was marked by its existence in the books of hadith which are written in full from the first sanad, namely the Prophet Muhammad up to the last sanad that narrated from him, *mukharrij al-hadīs* (authors of hadists such as Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Daud and others).

The development of the sanad system in the Islamic tradition was also inseparable from political disputes between ‘Alī and Mu’āwiyah which resulted in divisions within the Muslim community. So that each group tried to support and strengthen their respective principles which had implications for the rise of fake hadiths at that time. So the sanad system is considered as a tool that can maintain the purity of the Prophet’s hadith.

The urgency of the sanad at that time gave rise to the extraordinary attention and effort devoted by the *muhadditsun* to carefully collect and verify every history in order to ensure no entries of foreign elements that could tarnish the clarity of Islamic teachings. So that a method and formulation of the conditions were formed to be able to select and analyze critically whether historically these hadiths really came from the Prophet or not.

Thus, through the sanad methodology that has been established by these scholars, the authenticity of the hadith can be accounted for scientifically. Therefore, Islamic teachings, especially those contained in the Prophet’s traditions, are based on well-founded truths. The strength of its truth can be traced through an assessment of the authenticity of

the Sanad and Matan.

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