AL-HADITH AL-GHARIB IN THE DISCOURSE OF HADITH STUDIES; THE AUTHENTICITY AND THE AUTHORITY

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Abstract
This article aims to examine the concept of al-hadith al-Gharib from the perspective of hadith scholars. The primary research questions address: (1) What defines al-hadith al-Gharib in the terminology of hadith science? (2) How can the authenticity of al-hadith al-Gharib be assessed? (3) What are the debates among scholars regarding the authority of al-hadith al-Gharib? This study is categorized as library research, focusing on the concepts of al-hadith al-Gharib, its authenticity, and its authority. The findings indicate that al-hadith al-Gharib refers to a narration reported by a single narrator at any point in the chain of transmission, whether at the beginning, middle, or end of the isnad. Regarding authenticity, al-hadith al-Gharib may be classified as either authentic—such as sahih or hasan hadith—or inauthentic, such as da'if or fabricated hadith. The process of determining the authenticity of al-hadith al-Gharib primarily involves assessing the reliability of the singular narrator and comparing the hadith with other transmission chains. A hadith narrated by a trustworthy individual that does not contradict other reliable traditions is deemed authentic, while contradictory or unreliable narrations are considered weak. Regarding authority, scholars differ in their evaluation of al-hadith al-Gharib. The majority of scholars maintain that al-hadith al-Gharib can serve as a legal basis if it is authentic. In contrast, the Mu'tazilites reject the use of Ahad (single-narrator) hadith as a source of law. Meanwhile, the Hanafi school accepts al-hadith al-Gharib as a legal foundation, provided it is not part of the 'umum al-balwa (general public affairs).

Keywords: *al-hadith al-Gharib, Authenticity, Authority.*

INTRODUCTION

Hadith is one of the most important aspects of Islamic teachings. Scholars agree that the hadith is the second source of law after the Qur'an. Hadith serves as an explanation as well as a detail of the generality of the explanations contained in the Qur'an. Therefore, the position of the Prophet Muhammad is very important in guiding Muslims to apply the teachings of Islam in accordance with intention of God.[1] However, the authority of the hadith as a source of law was also challenged by some religious sects within the Muslim community. The motives for this rejection were manifold. Some of them rejected the authority of the hadith in its entirety as a source of law. Others rejected the authority of *ahad* of hadith (*hadith al-ahad*) recognizing and accepting only *mutawatir* of hadith.[2] In addition, the rejection of the authority of the hadith is also oriented towards the position of the hadith that explains the

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[1] Muhammad 'Ajjaj al-Khatib, *As-Sunnah Qabla at-Tadwin*, 3rd ed., vol. 1 (Beirut: Dar al-Fikri, 1980), 1.
[2] Mutawatir of hadith are traditions that are narrated by a large number of narrators and it is impossible for them to agree to lie in the name of the Prophet Muhammad. Scholars agree that the requirement for a mutawatir tradition is that it has a minimum of ten narrators at each level of transmission. On the other hand, ahad of hadith are traditions that do not fulfill the criteria of a mutawatir of hadith in the sense that the number of narrators transmitting the tradition is less than ten narrators. See; Mahmud Thahhan, *Taysir Mushtalah Al-Hadis*, 10th ed. (Maktabah al-Ma'arif, 2004), 23–24.

generality of the explanation found in the Quran or the position of the hadith that explains a ruling that is never mentioned in the Quran, such as the issue of *zakat al-fithr*.[3]

From this explanation it is understood that the debate on the authority of hadith in the past focused on the function of the authority of hadith in explaining the content of the Quran, explaining new laws that are not mentioned in the Quran, and also on the issue of *ahad* of hadith that were only narrated by some transmitters. These debates prompted Shafi'i, one of the founders of the third century school of jurisprudence, to develop an argument to refute the negative views of some Islamic groups on the authority of the sunnah. Shafi'i very clearly explained the strong arguments for accepting hadiths as one of the principles that could be used in formulating the law. In fact, Shafii's debate with the opponents of the authority of hadith is described in great detail in his monumental work al-Umm.[4]

Furthermore, hadith studies among Muslim scholars focus on how to verify a hadith in order to distinguish between authentic and inauthentic traditions. This study involves the hadith scholar's critique of the narrator's capability in narrating the hadith as well as comparing one narration with another. This is to ensure that the hadith received is truly from the Prophet Muhammad. Therefore, hadith scholars formulated several conditions that must be met to prove the authenticity of a hadith, namely that its isnad is connected to the Prophet Muhammad, that it is narrated by fair and *dhabith* narrators (trustworthy), and that the narrated hadith is free from indications of *shaz* (contradiction with the narrations of more authoritative narrators) as well as *'illat* (a vague defect found in the hadith).[5]

In the modern era, the discourse on hadith continues to evolve. In fact, the study of the authenticity of hadith not only involves Muslim scholars but has also attracted the attention of western scholars to take part in the study of hadith. The involvement of western scholars in the study of hadith began with the rise of historical studies in general and was supported by the expansion of Europeans to expand their power over the east. This then attracted their attention to study the various cultures and belief systems that developed in the areas they wanted to dominate, including Islam. In addition, their interest in hadith studies was also influenced by the emergence of critical studies on the life of Jesus and the development of critical studies on biblical sources. Therefore, this also encouraged them to study the figure of the Prophet Muhammad who became an important figure among Muslims, and of course the study of the Prophet Muhammad would involve their study of the Hadith which described much of the personality of the Prophet Muhammad as a religious leader.[6]

While Muslim scholars focus more on verifying between authentic and inauthentic hadiths, Western scholars emphasize their attention on the aspect of dating hadiths in order to find out the origin or source of a hadith. This is based on the sceptic paradigm of western scholars such as Goldziher and Joseph Schacht who considered that the hadith cannot be used as a historical source to describe the figure of Prophet Muhammad. This sceptic view presupposes that every hadith cannot be accepted until its authenticity can be proven. This view is in stark contrast to the paradigm of Muslim scholars who believe that all traditions are believed to be authentic until it can be proven that there are defects that found in the *matn* or isnads and these defects can eliminate their authenticity.[7] Thus, most of these orientalists came to the conclusion that only a few traditions could be historically attributed to the Prophet Muhammad.[8]

In the discourse of hadith, western scholars have produced several methods and approaches in criticizing the authenticity of hadith both as historical sources and as important components in formulating Islamic law. One of the most familiar methods in hadith discourse among orientalists is the common link theory. This theory was originally initiated by an orientalist named Joseph Schacht. According to him, no hadith can be attributed to the Prophet Muhammad. This is because hadith isnads

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[3] Mustafa as-Sibá'i, *As-Sunnah Wa Makanánathu Fí at-Tasrí'* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islami, 1982), 143.

[4] Muhammad bin Idris as-Shafi'i, *Al-Umm*, 2nd ed., vol. 7 (Beirut: Dar al-Fikri, 1990), 287–300.

[5] Thahhan, *Taysir Mushtalah Al-Hadis*, 44.

[6] Harald Motzki, *Hadith: Origins and Developments (The Formation of the Classical Islamic World)*, 1st ed. (Routledge, 2016), xiv.

[7] Motzki, xxvii.

[8] Kamaruddin Amin, *Menguji Kembali Keakuratan Metode Kritik Hadis* (Penerbit Hikmah, 2009), 155.

tend to grow backwards. Then he elaborated the isnads of the traditions and tried to identify the common transmitter of the traditions. He concluded that the appearance of a common link in almost all the isnad paths indicates that the hadith first appeared during the time of the common link.[9]

Subsequently, this method was elaborated more deeply by G.H.A Juynboll. Although Juynboll was not the first to introduce this method, he is more often known as the owner of this method. This is because Joseph Schacht did not often apply the common link method to the hadith in his book *The Origins of Muhammadan Juriprudence*. This gap was then filled by Juynboll in order to continue what Joseph Schacht had started. Juynboll has successfully applied the method to a number of traditions and then expanded it. He is known to have been the first to apply the common link method to traditions involving examples found in al-Khatib's *Tarikh Bagdad* and Ibn al-Jawzi's *Kitab al-Mawdu'át*.[10] Although Juynboll initially agreed with Schacht's argument that the common link is seen as the originator of the hadith, but then it seems that he tried to develop and criticize Schacht's thesis. Juynboll views that the real of common link is not the common link itself. According to him, the person responsible for attributing the hadith to the common link and reaching the Prophet Muhammad is the partial common link or the disciple of the common link. Not only that, Juynboll also concludes that isnad that had only one line of transmission (single strand) are considered unhistorical, because according to him single strands must be suspected of having been fabricated.[11]

This negative assessment of single strands becomes problematic when confronted with the concept of *al-hadith al-gharib* found in hadith science (*mustalah hadith*). In the terminology of Muslim scholarship, *al-hadith al-gharib* is one that has only one transmitter on any level of the isnad.[12] The *al-hadith al-gharib* itself falls into the category of *ahad* of hadith, as opposed to *mutawatir* of hadiths, which was the subject of a long discussion between Shafi'I and the group who reject the authority of the *sunna* in the 3rd century, as mentioned at the beginning of this article. Hence, this article will try to further review the concept of *al-hadith al-gharib* in the Muslim scholarly tradition. In addition, elaborate the authority and the authenticity of *al-hadith al-gharib* in the perspective of hadith scholars.

METHOD

This research is included in library research. The research will use a descriptive analysis approach, namely by explaining in depth the discourse of hadith garib in the perspective of hadith experts and some scholars' views regarding its authority and authenticity. The main source of this project will involve several works of hadith science (*mustalah hadith*). It is served to understand the concept of hadith garib, especially fard garib based on the terminology of Muslim hadith scholars. The second source comes from articles and books by contemporary hadith scholars related to the theme of *al-hadith al-gharib*.

DISCUSSIONS AND RESULTS

Al-hadith al-gharib **in the Perspective of Muslim Hadith Scholars**

In hadith scholarship, hadith are divided into several divisions depending on the quality and quantity perspectives of the hadith. The division of the hadith in terms of quality means the division of the hadith based on the authenticity of the narrators as well as the content of the hadith. Meanwhile, the division of hadiths based on the number of narrators is the division of hadiths based on the number of narrators who narrated them. Therefore, these divisions will overlap, sometimes there are hadiths that are narrated by a large number of narrators in quantity, but at the same time when viewed from the aspect of the quality of the narrators who transmitted the traditions, there are some weak narrators. This may affect the authority of a hadith as a source of law. And vice versa, sometimes there are traditions that are not

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[9] Joseph Schacht, *The Origins of Mohammadan Jurisprudence*, 1st ed. (Oxford: The University Press Oxford, 1950), 172.

[10] Harald Motzki, "Dating Muslim Traditions: A Survey," *Arabica* 52, no. 2 (2005): 223, https://doi.org/10.1163/1570058053640349; Halit Ozkan, "The Common Link and Its Relation to the Madār," *Islamic Law and Society* 11, no. 1 (2004): 46, https://doi.org/10.1163/156851904772841417.

[11] Motzki, "Dating Muslim Traditions," 225.

[12] Thahhan, *Taysir Mushtalah Al-Hadis*.

narrated by many narrators, but when viewed from the aspect of the quality of these narrators, the traditions have trustworthy narrators. At that time, the hadiths can be considered sahih and authoritative to be used as a legal basis.[13]

The word of "*Gharib*" in Arabic term refers to something that is alone or away from relatives. Meanwhile, in the term of hadith scholars it is a hadith that is narrated by a narrator at one of the levels of the chain transmission whether the narrator is found at the beginning, in the middle or end of the isnads.[14] This means that if in the chain of transmission of the hadith one narrator is found who narrates it at one of the levels of the isnad chain, then this is called *al-hadith al-gharib*. However, Ibn Shalah not only limited *al-hadith al-gharib* in the chain of transmission, but *al-hadith al-gharib* could be found in the *matn* of hadith. This means that if a hadith is narrated by several narrators, but there are differences in the *matn* of the hadith narrated by one channel of transmission, then the hadith from one channel of transmission is also considered as *al-hadith al-gharib*. In addition, Ibn Shalah also emphasizes that the term *Gharib* does not only refer to the assessment of the hadith as a whole, *isnad* and *matn*, sometimes a hadith is found that consists of a familiar *matn*, but its chain of transmission is unfamiliar.[15]

Al-Hadith al-gharib is different from unfamiliar expression in hadith (*gharib al-hadith*). *Al-hadith al-gharib* is focused on the chain of transmission or the *matn* of hadith which only has one line of transmission. While unfamiliar expression in hadith is more focused on the content of hadith that contains strange words and is not widely known by many people. This means that unfamiliar expression of hadith is a discussion that examines the meaning of the *matn* of hadith that is not familiar. The issue of unfamiliar hadith *matn* is due to the great influence of non-Arabic languages, such as Persian and others, on the Arab region after the middle of the second century Hijri.[16]

Al-hadith al-gharib has two classifications; absolute *fard* of hadith (*al-fard al-mutlaq*) and relative *fard* of hadith (*al-fard al-nisbi*). As for the former then it refers to a hadith that is narrated by only one narrator at the beginning of its *isnad*, then there are several narrators who narrate the hadith from the one narrator at the beginning of the *isnad*. But sometimes the hadith is also narrated by one narrator from the first narrator and then there are several narrators who narrate the hadith from him and this also falls under the category of *al-fard al-mutlaq* of hadiths. However, the scholars of hadith have different views in determining the beginning of the isnad referred to in the definition of *al-fard al-mutlaq* of hadiths. Some of them consider that the beginning of the isnad is the companion, as explained by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani.[17] and also by some contemporary scholars of hadith, such as Mahmud al-Thahan [18]. Other scholars of hadith understand that the beginning of the isnad does not refer to the companions but to the narrators after the companions, namely the generation of the *tabiin*. This view was expressed by Mahfud Termas in Manhaj Zawin Nazhar. According to him, the origin of the isnad which is the axis of the narration path in the case of *al-hadith al-gharib* is at the level of the *tabiin* not at the level of the companions. Because the companions are people whose credibility in narrating hadith has been agreed upon.[19]

The second one, *al-fard al-nisbi*, is a tradition that is narrated by one narrator in the middle of the chain of transmission. Mahmud al-Thahan explains that *al-fard al-mutlak* is a tradition that is narrated by many narrators at the first level of the chain of transmission but then at a later level it is narrated by only one narrator.[20] Ibn Hajar explains the reason why this tradition is called *al-fard al-nisbi*. According

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[13] Thahhan.

[14] Ibnu Hajar al-'Asqalani, *Nuzhatu An-Nazar Fi Tawdihi Nukhbati al-Fikar*, 3rd ed. (Damaskus: Matba'ah as-Sibah, 2000), 50.

[15] Ibn Salah, *Muqaddimah Ibn Salah*, 1st ed. (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'ilmiyah, 2002), 271–72.

[16] Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *A Textbook of Ḥadīth Studies: Authenticity, Compilation, Classification and Criticism of Ḥadīth*, 2. impr (Markfield: The Islamic Foundation, 2009), 123.

[17] al-'Asqalani, *Nuzhatu An-Nazar Fi Tawdihi Nukhbati al-Fikar*, 56.

[18] Thahhan, *Taysir Mushtalah Al-Hadis*, 39.

[19] Muhammad Mahfuzh at-Tarmasi, *Manhaj Dzawin Nazhar Syarh Manzumah Ilmi Al-Asar* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'ilmiyah, 2003), 79.

[20] Thahhan, *Taysir Mushtalah Al-Hadis*, 40.

to him this tradition is basically a well-known tradition that is narrated by many narrators at every level. However, there is one route of narration of this hadith that differs from the common narration. Hence the "*tafarrud*" or isolation in the chain of transmission occurs because it is associated with a particular narrator, a particular region or a particular group.[21] So traditions in this category are found in Sunan at-Tirmidhi where Imam Tirmidhi comments on some traditions using the phrase, "This tradition is *gharib* from this route."[22]

Furthermore, hadith scholars differ in their use of the terms "*fard*" and "*gharib*." Some of them consider these two terms synonymous. It means that the use of these two terms in the tradition of hadith science has the same meaning. However, the majority of hadith scholars distinguish the use of these two terms. They prefer to use the term "*gharib*" for the Relative *fard* of hadith, and use the term "*fard*" for the Absolute *fard* of hadith. According to Ibn Hajar, the difference between the two terms only occurs in the way they give names. While in practice, they only use the term "*fard*" only, be it on *al-fard al-mutlaq* or on *al-fard al-nisbi* of hadiths.[23]

The Authenticity of *al-Hadith al-Gharib*.

As emphasized above, *al-hadith al-gharib* is an offshoot of the division of hadith based on the number of narrators rather than the quality and authenticity of the hadith itself. Therefore, the authenticity of *al-hadith al-gharib* varies greatly. Sometimes the *al-hadith al-gharib* is authentic and acceptable. But there are also *al-hadith al-gharib* that are not authentic and cannot be accepted. The assessment of the authenticity of *al-hadith al-gharib* still refers to the criteria of authentic (sahih) hadith according to hadith scholars as explained in the introduction.

Nevertheless, the existence of this *al-hadith al-gharib* category can help hadith scholars in determining the authenticity of hadith. This is because the main focus of research in determining whether a *al-hadith al-gharib* is authentic or not rests on two aspects. The first is the assessment of the capability of the single narrator who narrated the hadith. This single narrator has come to be known in the tradition of hadith science as *madar al-hadith* (the narrator at the center of hadith transmission). The critical study of this single figure emphasizes on whether the narrator is trustworthy or not. The second is to analyze whether or not the tradition he transmits contradicts other transmission routes. These two aspects play an important role in determining the authenticity of the *al-hadith al-gharib* which involves an in-depth analysis of the isnad as well as the *matn* of the hadith.

Madar al-Hadith

An explanation of the definition of *madar* of hadith itself is very difficult to find in hadith dictionaries. Halit Ozkan suggests several reasons why the definition of *madar al-hadith* is so difficult to find in the hadith literature. According to him, this is due to the fact that there is no standard provision from hadith scholars in the use of the term. Sometimes the term is used to describe narrators who are not authoritative in narrating hadith. But at other times the term is used for narrators who are credible in transmitting hadith.[24] However, in terms of its usage without interpreting whether the term is used for assessing the credibility of hadith narrators, it can be interpreted as the narrator who is the axis of hadith transmission or in other words, the narrator who is the only one who narrates the hadith from a certain narrator and then there are one or more other hadith narrators who narrate the hadith from him.

This can be seen in how hadith scholars have used the term in their works. For instance, there is a tradition narrated by Aishah that the Prophet Muhammad said, *"breaking the bones of a dead person is the same as breaking his bones while he is alive."*[25] Ibn al-Qaysarani commented on this tradition that the transmitter of this tradition is Sa'd b. Sa'id al-Anshary. Then he adds that there are several narrators

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[21] al-'Asqalani, *Nuzhatu An-Nazar Fi Tawdihi Nukhbati al-Fikar*, 57.

[22] Muhammad bin Isa Tirmidzi, *Sunan Tirmidzi*, vol. 3 (Beirut: Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 1996), 304.

[23] al-'Asqalani, *Nuzhatu An-Nazar Fi Tawdihi Nukhbati al-Fikar*, 57.

[24] Ozkan, "The Common Link and Its Relation to the Madār," 61.

[25] حدَّثَنا القَعْنَبِيُّ، حدَّثَنا عبدُ العزيز بن محمدٍ، عن سعْدٍ ـيعني ابنَ سعيدٍ ـ عن عَمْرةَ بنتِ عبد الرحمن عن عائشة، أن رسولَ الله ـصلَّى الله عليه وسلم ـ قال: "كَسْرُ عَظمِ الميّتِ ككَسرِهِ حيّاً

Abu Daud as-Sijiztani, *Sunan Abu Daud*, 5th ed. (Dar ar-Risalah al-'alamiyyah, 2009), 116.

who narrated this tradition from him, namely Ibn Jurayj, Sufyan Tsawri, ad-Darawardy and several other narrators.[26] This shows that the term Madar is used to denote the narrator who is the main axis in the transmission of a particular hadith regardless of whether he is credible or not.

Furthermore, in determining whether or not the single transmitter in the *al-hadith al-gharib* narration is trustworthy, hadith scholars differ on this issue. This all goes back to the judgment of the hadith critics which is discussed in depth in the literature of *al-Jarh wa Ta'dil*. The assessment of the credibility of this single narrator is very important since it is the key word in determining the authenticity of the subsequent transmission. So, in this case, even if there are many narrators who narrate traditions from this narrator who is considered to be the madar al-hadith, it all means nothing if the *madar* of the narration line is not a trustworthy person. This means that all the lines of transmission that pivot on this *Madar* can be categorized as weak or false traditions. And vice versa, if the *madar* of the hadith is a trustworthy person then the hadith he narrates can be accepted. Therefore, Ibn Shalah classifies the *al-hadith al-gharib* in terms of its authenticity into two divisions, namely authentic (sahih) and inauthentic (invalid). According to him, the category of authentic *al-hadith al-gharib* is found in Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim. But he emphasized that most of the *al-hadith al-gharib* are *dhaif* (inauthentic).[27]

Ibn Shalah's opinion emphasizes the importance of studying the *al-hadith al-gharib* in determining its authenticity. This is because only a few of the *al-hadith al-gharib* are authentic. Ibn Shalah's view is also based on some statements of early hadith scholars where they were very cautious in narrating Gharib hadith. For instance, Ahmad bin Hanbal revealed that, *"Do not write Gharib hadiths, for they are munkar, and most of them are dhaif (weak)."*[28] Not only Ahmad b. Hanbal, the negative assessment of *al-hadith al-gharib* was also found by other scholars of hadith, such as Malik b. Anas, Ali b. Hasan, Abdur Razaq, Abu Yusuf and several other scholars. Even Malik bin Anas considered *al-hadith al-gharib* as the worst science.[29] This shows that most of the *al-hadith al-gharib* are weak (dhaif).

The negative assessment of *al-hadith al-gharib* sometimes also has a great impact on narrators who narrate many *al-hadith al-gharib*. There are some hadith narrators who are considered not authoritative in narrating hadiths because they narrate many *al-hadith al-gharib*. This was triggered by the negative assessment of most *al-hadith al-gharib*. For instance, az-Zahabi in Siyar A'lam an-Nubala criticizes people who narrate many *al-hadith al-gharib*. He mentions that during the time of 'Umar b. Khattab there was a restriction in narrating hadiths. This was done because it was feared that there would be mistakes in narrating traditions attributed to the Prophet Muhammad. Whereas in that era, there were many companions who narrated the same hadith from the Prophet Muhammad. Then he emphasized that if in the era of Umar there had been restrictions in narrating hadith, then minimizing the narration of *al-hadith al-gharib* in the present era is very necessary. Because most of the *al-hadith al-gharib* are weak and even fabricated.[30]

However, it should be noted that the above view of hadith scholars cannot be generalized to all *al-hadith al-gharib*. This is because not all *al-hadith al-gharib* are considered as weak hadith, as Ibn Shalah explained earlier. Therefore, the above view also needs to be understood professionally. Perhaps what the hadith scholars meant above refers to the division of weak *al-hadith al-gharib* only, not the entire *al-hadith al-gharib*. In this regard, Mutaz Khatib quotes Abu Daud's view regarding *al-hadith al-gharib*. Abu Daud initially also considered *al-hadith al-gharib* as weak traditions. According to him, *al-hadith al-gharib* cannot be used as a legal basis (hujjah) even though it is narrated by narrators who are famous for their credibility, such as Malik bin Anas, Yahya bin Said al-Qathan and other hadith scholars. However, Mutaz Khatib tried to explore the meaning of Abu Daud's view. According to Mutaz Khatib, it is impossible for Abu Daud to categorize all *al-hadith al-gharib* as weak. This is because in

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[26] Ibn al-Qaysarani, *Zakhirah Al-Huffazh*, 1st ed., vol. 4 (Riyadh: Dar al-Salaf, 1996), 1836.

[27] Ibn Salah, *Muqaddimah Ibn Salah*, 270–71.

[28] Ibn 'Adi al-Jurjani, *Al-Kamil Fi Dhu'afa Ar-Rijal*, 1st ed., vol. 1 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyah, 1997), 111.

[29] Malik Ibn Anas said "شر العلم الغريب", See: at-Tarmasi, *Manhaj Dzawin Nazhar Syarh Manzumah Ilmi Al-Asar*, 82.

[30] Syamsuddin, *Siyar A'lam an-Nubala*, vol. 2 (Muassasah ar-Risalah, 1985), 601.

Sunan Abu Daud itself there are many *al-hadith al-gharib*. Therefore, he understood Abu Daud's view as his assessment of the Shaz of *al-hadith al-gharib*.[31]

In addition, not all narrators who narrate *al-hadith al-gharib* are absolutely considered not credible according to hadith critics, such as Ibn Shihab az-Zuhri. According to Muslim ibn Hajjaj, Ibn Shihab az-Zuhri had about 90 collections of *al-hadith al-gharib* which he transmitted from the Prophet Muhammad and none of his contemporaries had the same isnad with his own.[32] Thus, people who narrate many *al-hadith al-gharib* are not automatically considered as problematic narrators, although in determining their credibility in the *al-hadith al-gharib* requires in-depth research by comparing with other lines of narration.

This is where the importance of comparative analysis between one hadith and another or between one line of transmission and another. This is because determining the authenticity of a hadith is not limited to the assessment of the narrator alone but also involves an in-depth study of the hadith text itself. In practice, Muslim scholars of hadith have paid great attention to the study of the hadith's text. As a simple example, in the five criteria of authentic hadith mentioned above, there are two very basic requirements in the critical study of the hadith text, namely the issue of *shaz* and *illat* contained in the hadith. Therefore, the study of the *isnad* is not sufficient in determining the authenticity of the hadith.[33]

Comparing the Chain of Transmission of *al-Hadith al-Gharib*

In determining the authenticity of *al-hadith al-gharib*, it is not enough to assess the credibility of the narrators. After determining the credibility of the narrators of the hadith, the next step that needs attention is whether the hadith contradicts other traditions or not. This greatly affects the authenticity of the *al-hadith al-gharib*. This discussion is closely related to the *Shaz* and *Munkar* of hadith. In this regard, Ibn Shalah has provided details on determining the authenticity of *al-hadith al-gharib* by comparing it with other lines of transmission.

If a *al-hadith al-gharib* is narrated by a trustworthy narrator and it does not contradict a hadith narrated by a more authoritative narrator, meaning a narrator who has higher credibility than the previous hadith narrator, then in this case there are two possibilities. The first is that if the narrator's credibility and memory (the narrator who has the highest credibility in narrating the hadith) can be guaranteed, then the hadith is considered authentic. Secondly, if the narrator of the hadith is not credible but his memory is not at risk, meaning that he makes very few mistakes in narrating the hadith, then the hadith he narrates is categorized as *al-hadith al-hasan*.[34] For instance, the tradition narrated by Malik b. Anas from Zuhri. This hadith does not contradict any other hadith and is therefore considered authentic.[35]

However, if a Gharib hadith narrated by an untrustworthy narrator contradicts a hadith narrated by a narrator who is more authoritative than him, then the hadith is considered as *Shaz*. For instance, the hadith narrated by al-Bayhaqi through the route of Hammad b. Zaid about inheritance for freed slaves. However, the chain of transmission only reaches the level of the *tabiin*, namely 'Awsajah.[36] Meanwhile there is another route of transmission of this hadith through Sufyan Ibn Uyaynah. This chain of transmission indicates that there was a narrator between 'Ajusah and the Prophet Muhammad, namely Ibn Abbas, a companion of the Prophet.[37] So here there is a conflict of two lines of narration between the narration of Hammad bin Zaid and Sufyan bin Uyaynah. So, the line of narration of Sufyan bin Uyaynah is considered authentic. Whereas the line of narration of Hammad is considered *Shaz*. Because according to Ibn Hajar, although Hammad b. Zayd was a trustworthy person, if the tradition he narrated contradicts a more credible narrator such as Sufyan b. Uyaynah, then the tradition of Hammad is

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[31] Mutaz Khatib, *Radd Al-Hadith Min Jihah al-Matn; Dirasah Fii Manahij al-Muhaddisin Wa al-Usuliyyin* (Arab Network For Research And Publishing, n.d.), 240–41.

[32] Ibn Salah, *Muqaddimah Ibn Salah*, 78.

[33] Musfir ad-Damini, *Maqayis Naqd Mutun As-Sunnah*, 1st ed. (Riyadh: Muhammad bin Su'ud University, 1984), 50.

[34] Ibn Salah, *Muqaddimah Ibn Salah*, 79.

[35] Muhammad bin Ismail al-Bukhari, *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, 5th ed. (Damaskus: Dar Ibnu Katsir, 1993), 655.

[36] Abu Bakr al-Bayhaqi, *As-Sunan al-Kubra*, 3rd ed., vol. 6 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'ilmiyah, 2003), 397.

[37] Tirmidzi, *Sunan Tirmidzi*, 3:609.

considered weak.[38] Furthermore, if the narrator of the *al-hadith al-gharib* is not trustworthy or credible and the hadith he narrates contradicts a hadith narrated by a trustworthy narrator, then the hadith is considered as *al-hadith al-munkar*. It still falls under the category of inauthentic hadith.[39]

The Authority of *al-Hadith al-Gharib*

The discussion on the authority of the hadith focuses on the question whether the hadith can be used as a legal basis or not? This question is very important in relation to the discussion of *al-hadith al-gharib*. *Al-hadith al-gharib* are traditions that have few transmission routes. Most of them are traditions whose authenticity is disputed. In addition, *al-hadith al-gharib* fall into the category of *hadith al-ahad*, where this section has been debated by scholars in classical times.

In general, the majority of hadith scholars consider the hadith in terms of their authority to be of two divisions. The first is those traditions that can be accepted as a legal basis (*maqbul*), such as sahih and hasan. The second are those traditions that cannot be used as a legal basis (*mardud*) such as weak and false hadiths.[40] This shows that the authority of *ahad* traditions depends on their authenticity. This view is shared by the majority of scholars of hadith. Even according to ar-Razi the view that *hadith al-ahad* are authoritative as a legal basis is the consensus of the Companions (*ijma al-Sahabah*).[41] In contrast to the opinion of the majority of hadith scholars, the authority of *hadith al-ahad* was not accepted by some other Islamic groups such as the Muktazilah. For the Muktazilahs ahad traditions cannot be used as a legal basis. However, this view of the Muktazilahs has been refuted by Shafii in al-Umm.

Furthermore, the Hanafi school has a different view regarding *hadith al-ahad*. According to them, *hadith al-ahad* can be used as a legal basis if they do not fall under the category of *'umum al-balwa*. It is a tradition that describes an event which at that time should have been attended by many people. Thus, if a tradition contains content that should involve a large number of people but is later narrated by only one or two people, then the tradition is considered inauthentic and cannot be used as a legal basis.[42]

The Hanafi school based their view on the companions' rejection of the hadith that was narrated by only one person. One of them is based on Abu Bakr's rejection of the hadith delivered by Mugirah bin Shu'bah. The context of this hadith is that at that time an old woman came to Abu Bakr and asked about the amount of inheritance that the woman should receive. Then Mughirah replied that he had attended the majlis of the Prophet Muhammad, then he witnessed the Prophet Muhammad giving inheritance to a grandmother as much as one-sixth. Then Abu Bakr questioned whether anyone other than Mughirah b. Shu'bah had heard the tradition from the Prophet Muhammad. Then Muhammad b. Maslamah al-Anshari replied as what was conveyed by Mughirah b. Shu'bah. After that, Abu Bakr gave one-sixth of the wealth to the grandmother.[43] Abu Bakr's question to Mughirah in this hadith is understood by the Hanafi school to be Abu Bakr's rejection of a hadith narrated by only one person. Thus, they do not accept the authority of traditions that are narrated by only one or two narrators.[44] Thus, in the view of the Hanafi school, a tradition narrated by one or two narrators cannot be used as a source of law if the content of the tradition is supposed to be known by many people.

Nevertheless, Abu Bakr's rejection cannot be taken as a complete rejection of all traditions narrated by only one narrator. This is because if we look at the hadith itself, we do not find Abu Bakr's words explicitly rejecting what Mughirah b. Shu'bah had said. However, Abu Bakr's question was an attempt by Abu Bakr to confirm what Mughirah had said.[45] In addition, Abu Bakr's attitude was a form of

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[38] al-'Asqalani, *Nuzhatu An-Nazar Fi Tawdihi Nukhbati al-Fikar*, 72.

[39] Ibn Salah, *Muqaddimah Ibn Salah*, 81.

[40] Thahhan, *Taysir Mushtalah Al-Hadis*, 43.

[41] as-Sibá'i, *As-Sunnah Wa Makanánathu Fí at-Tasrí'*, 190.

[42] Maher Yassen al-Fahhal, *Asru "Ilal al-Hadith Fi Ikhtilaf al-Fuqaha"* (Oman: Daru 'Ammar li an-Nasyr, 2000), 165.

[43] Abdur Razaq al-San'ani, *Mushannaf Abdur Razaq*, 3rd ed., vol. 10 (Beirut: Tawzi' al-Maktab al-Islami, 1983), 274.

[44] al-Fahhal, *Asru "Ilal al-Hadith Fi Ikhtilaf al-Fuqaha,"* 165.

[45] al-Fahhal, 168.

caution in accepting traditions from his contemporaries because at that time there were many people who claimed to be the Prophet Muhammad and some other conflicts.

Conclusion

From the above explanation it can be concluded that *al-hadith al-gharib* is a hadith narrated by one transmitter at one level of the transmission path. This *al-hadith al-gharib* has two classifications, namely absolute *al-fard al-mutlak* and *al-fard an-nisbi*. If viewed in terms of authenticity, then *al-hadith al-gharib* consists of authentic and inauthentic. The assessment of the authenticity of *al-hadith al-gharib* is based on the assessment of the authenticity of hadith in general. However, in *al-hadith al-gharib*, what is most often highlighted by hadith critics is the *madar* of hadith and comparing the hadith with other transmission routes. If the *al-hadith al-gharib* is narrated by a trustworthy narrator and does not contradict other traditions, then the *al-hadith al-gharib* is considered authentic (sahih) hadith. However, if the hadith narrated contradicts a hadith narrated by a more authoritative narrator, then the *al-hadith al-gharib* is considered as *al-hadith al-shaz*. Furthermore, if the narrator of the *al-hadith al-gharib* is not trustworthy, and contradicts the hadith narrated by a trustworthy narrator, then this hadith is considered as *al-hadith al-munkar*. Then regarding the authority of *al-hadith al-gharib*, the majority of scholars agree that *al-hadith al-gharib* can be used as a legal basis if the hadith is authentic, such as *al-hadith al-sahih* and *al-hadith al-hasan*. As for Muktazilah, *al-hadith al-gharib* cannot be used as a basis in formulating the law. Interestingly, the Hanafi school provides one criterion in making *hadith al-ahad* a source of law, namely that they do not belong to the general category of *al-balwa*. They based this view on the fact that some companions did not accept the hadith from a single narrator.

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