

An Introduction to Contemporary Hadith Science: A Critical Study of the Book *Al-Wasīṭ fī 'Ulūm Wa Muṣṭalah Al-Ḥadīṣ*

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Abstract

This paper discusses one of the contemporary hadith science books entitled *al-Wasīṭ fī 'Ulūm wa Muṣṭalah al-Ḥadīṣ* authored by Abu Syuhbah. There are at least several reasons that form the basis of the relevance of this study. First, in general, studies of 'Ulūm al-Ḥadīṣ books are now rarely found, especially in Indonesia. Research is now more aimed at a figure's thoughts, independently or comparatively. If this is not the case, then the research is more aimed at thematic studies. It is scarce to find discussions of 'Ulūm al-Ḥadīṣ books independently. Secondly, this book is unique to be studied. Among other things, (1) this book, by Abu Syuhbah in his introduction, is intended not only for those who are deeply engaged in the field of hadith but also for Muslims in general. (2) The book does not follow the organization of the previous books of hadith science. For example, in the previous books, the discussion would start from the definition of *saḥīḥ*, *ḥasan* and *ḍa'īf* traditions. In contrast, *al-Wasīṭ* discusses some technical terms related to hadith science. (3) It also discusses the development of terms that differ from their original meanings in the previous books. Therefore, this review aims to show the "face" of this book and to test the extent to which the author's introduction proves the content of his book.

Keywords: *al-wasīṭ*, *hadith book*, *hadis science*

Introduction

One of the sciences born from the "womb" of Islamic teachings is the science of hadith. This is evidenced by the emergence of works by scholars throughout the generations that discuss the science of hadith or what we commonly know as '*Ulūm al-Ḥadīṣ*'.¹ At the beginning of its development, '*Ulūm al-Ḥadīṣ*' can be found in several

¹ Ibn Hajar; Rahman; Zikri Darussamin Ansori, 'A Genealogy of 'Ilal Al-Hadith Study (Tracing the Historical Root Gene of Existence and Development The Study of 'Ilal Al-Hadith)', *Ushuluddin*, 28.1 (2020), 3–14 <<https://doi.org/DOI: 10.24014/Jush.v28i1.9215>>.

books such as *al-'Umm*² and *ar-Risālah*³ by Imam asy-Syafi'i, *Jāmi' at-Tirmizī*⁴, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*⁵ and other hadith books. The writing of *'Ulūm al-Ḥadīṣ* at that time was still mixed with the discussion of fiqh and other sciences.⁶

Hadith science became a discipline in its own right, starting from the writings of scholars who discussed branches of hadith science such as the science of *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl*, the science of *an-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh* and the science of *al-Asmā' wa al-Kunā'*.⁷ The scholar who played an important role in this phase was Yahya bin Main, who began compiling books containing biographies of narrators, such as Muhammad bin Saad, who collected the *ṭabaqāt* of narrators, and Ahmad bin Hanbal compiled the books *al-'Ilal wa al-Ma'rifah al-Rijāl* and *an-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh*.⁸

It was not until the 4th century Hijri that scholars began to compile books that dealt comprehensively with the various branches of hadith science.⁹ Historically, it is mentioned that Qadi Abu Muhammad ar-Ramāhurmuzī was the first to compile a comprehensive and systematic study of hadith in his book *al-Muḥaddiṣ al-Fāṣil Baina ar-Rāwi wa al-Wā'i*.¹⁰ After that, other books of *'Ulūm al-Ḥadīṣ* emerged, which developed and refined the study of hadith occasionally. For example, al-Ḥākīm al-Naisabūrī with his work *Ma'rifah 'Ulūm al-Ḥadīṣ*¹¹, al-Khatib al-Baghdadi with *Jāmi' li Ādab al-Rāwi wa al-Sāmi*¹² and also the popular until now *al-Kifāyah fī 'Ilm al-*

² Muhammad bin Idris Asy-Syafi'i, *Al-Umm Li Asy-Syafi'i* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1983).

³ Muhammad bin Idris Asy-Syafi'i, *Ar-Risalah Li Asy-Syafi'i*, ed. by Ahmad Muhammad Syakir (Mesir: Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi, 1938).

⁴ Muḥammad bin 'Isā At-Tirmizī, *Al-Jāmi' Al-Kabīr: Sunan at-Tirmidzy*, ed. by Bassyar 'Iwāḍ Ma'rūf (Beirut: Dār al-Garb al-Islāmī, 1998).

⁵ Muslim bin al-Hajjaj An-Naisaburi, *Shahih Muslim*, ed. by Muhammad Fu'ad Abd Al-Baqi (Mesir: Matba'ah Isa al-Babi al-Halabi, 1955).

⁶ Muhammad Akmaluddin, 'Understanding Hadith: Exoteric and Esoteric Dimensions by Al-Ḥākīm Al-Tirmizī, Al-Ghazālī, and Ibn Al-'Arabī Al-Mursī', *Jurnal Theologia*, 32.2 (2021), 211–32.

⁷ Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *A Textbook of Hadith Studies: Authenticity, Compilation, Classification and Criticism of Hadith* (Kube Publishing Ltd, 2014).

⁸ 'Itr Nur ad-Din, *Manhaj An-Naqd Fi 'Ulum Al-Hadis* (Damaskus: Dar al-Fikr).

⁹ Jonathan Brown, 'Scripture in the Modern Muslim World: The Quran and Hadith', in *Islam in the Modern World* (Routledge, 2013), pp. 13–33.

¹⁰ Muhammad al-Hasan bin Abd ar-Rahman Ar-Ramahurmuzi, *Al-Muhaddis Al-Fashil Baina Ar-Rawi Wa Al-Wa'i*, ed. by Muhammad Muhib ad-Din Abu Zaid (Mesir: Dar adz-Dzakha'ir).

¹¹ al-Hakim Muhammad bin Abdillah An-Naisaburi, *Ma'rifah Al-'Ulum Al-Hadis*, ed. by as-Sayyid Mu'zham Husain (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah).

¹² Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi, *Al-Jami Li Akhlaq Ar-Rawi Wa Adabi as-Sami'*, ed. by Mahmud Ath-Thahhan (Riyad: Maktabah al-Ma'arif).

*Riwāyah*¹³, then Qadi Iyad with *al-Ilmā*,¹⁴ The book that is still considered the pinnacle of hadith science in the seventh century is the book known as *Muqaddimah Ibn Ṣalāḥ* by Abu Amr Usman ibn Abd al-Rahman al-Syahrāzuri.¹⁵

In this paper, one of the books of *'Ulūm al-Ḥadīṣ* that came later will be discussed. The book of hadith is *al-Wasīṭ fī 'Ulūm wa Muṣṭalāḥ al-Ḥadīṣ* by Muhammad bin Muhammad Abu Syuhbah.¹⁶ This work is considered representative because so far, the study of the book of *'Ulūm al-Ḥadīṣ* generally discusses the works of past books such as ar-Ramāhurmuzi's work or al-Ḥākim's work, or what is considered the complete *Muqaddimah ibn Ṣalāḥ*. It is *al-Wasīṭ* trying to present a systematic *'ulūm al-ḥadīṣ* different from the books above. In addition, this book of hadith science is intended for all people, not only those involved in the world of hadith science. For this reason, this book deserves to be analyzed.

A Brief Biography of Muhammad Bin Muhammad Abu Syuhbah

Muhammad Abu Syuhbah is an Egyptian scholar who is very good at analyzing hadith (*taḥqīq*) and explaining the meaning of the hadith (*syarḥ*). He is *Syaikh 'Allamah* Abū al-Sādāt Muḥammad bin Muḥammad Abū Syuhbah. He was born in the village of *Minyah Jināḥ* of the *Dasuq* Center in *Kafr al-Syaikh* Governorate on Shawwal 25, 1332 AH, corresponding to September 15, 1914 AD. He received his primary and secondary education at Al-Azhar, then enrolled in the College of Fundamentals of Religion and graduated there. He received his doctorate with an excellent degree for his dissertation: "*al-Waḍ'ū fī al-Ḥadis wa Radd Syuhbah al-Mustasyriqin wa gairihim min al-Bāḥiṣin*," discussed in *ḏulhijjah*, 1365 AH = November 1946 AD. He worked as a professor of tafsir and hadith at the Faculty of Fundamentals of Religion at Al-Azhar University in Cairo, the Faculty of Shari'ah in Mecca, the Faculty of Shari'ah at Baghdad University, and Omdurman Islamic University in Sudan. When the first branch of Al-Azhar University

¹³ Al-Khatib Al-Bagdadi, *'Al-Kifayah Fi 'Ilm Al-Riwayah'*, 1988, pp. 1–451.

¹⁴ 'Iyadh bin Musa Al-Yahshabi, *Al-Ilma' Ila Ma'rifah Ushul Ar-Riwayah Wa Taqyid as-Sima'*, ed. by as-Sayyid Ahmad Shaqar (Kairo: Dar at-Turats).

¹⁵ 'Usman bin Abd ar-Rahman Ibn ash-Shalah, *Ma'rifah Anwa' 'Ulum Al-Hadis*, ed. by 'Itr Nur ad-Din (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr al-Mu'ashir).

¹⁶ Muhammad bin Muhammad Abu Syuhbah, *Al-Wasith Fi 'Ulum Wa Mushtalah Al-Hadis* (Mesir: Dar al-Fikr al-'Arabi, 1985).

in Egypt was established in Assiut Governorate in 1389 AH = 1964 AD, he was appointed Dean of the Faculty of Fundamentals of Religion there.¹⁷

Among his most famous teachers at Al-Azhar University are Sheikh Allama Muhammad al-Khodr Hussein, Sheikh Muhammad al-Sherbini, and others. He presented many programs on Egyptian radio and Saudi radio and formed a prestigious scientific school in various countries of the Islamic world; the most famous of them in Egypt are Sheikh Dr. Sheikh Muhammad al-Ahmadi Abu al-Nour, and our Sheikh Dr. Ahmed Mabel Abdul Karim and Sheikh Dr. Ezzat Ali Attia, among others.

He left a great collection of useful works in the sciences of the Qur'an and Hadith, the most important of which are: 1) *al-Wasīt fi 'Ulūm wa Muṣṭalaḥ al-Ḥadis*, 2) *as-Sīrah an-Nabawīyah fī Dau' al-Qur'ān wa as-Sunnah*, 3) *al-Madkhal li Dirāsah al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, 4) *al-Waḍ'ū fī al-Ḥadis wa Radd Syubah al-Mustasyriqīn wa gairihim min al-Bāḥiṣin* 5) *Difā' 'an as-Sunnah wa Radd Syubah al-Mustasyriqīna wa al-Kitāb al-Mu'āsirīn*, 6) *Isrā'illiyyāt wa al-Mauḍū'āt fī Kitāb at-Tafsīr*, 7) *A'lām al-Muhaddīsin*. The Islamic Research Academy printed several books for him, including: 1) *al-Ḥudūd fī al-Islam Muqāranah bi al-Qanūn al-Wad'i*, 2) *Fī Rihāb al-Kutub as-Sittah*, 3) *Nazrah al-Islām ila ar-Ribā*, and other useful works.

He died on the fifth day of Eid al-Fitr (5 Shawwal) in 1403 AH, corresponding to July 15, 1983 AD, and his funeral was held at Al-Azhar Mosque, and Sheikh Jad al-Haqq Ali Jad al-Haq, Sheikh of Al-Azhar Mosque at the time, may God have mercy on his grave.

Background and Purpose of the Book

In the opening of his book, Abu Shubah explains chronologically why he wrote this book and why it is called *al-Wasīt fi 'Ulūm al-Ḥadīs*. In 1382 AH/1962 AD, he wrote a book that discusses a small part of the science of hadith. This book was later called "*fī Uṣūl al-Ḥadīs*". Then, in 1385 AH/1977 CE, Abu Syuhbah wrote another book in which there were several discussions on the science of hadith, which revolved around the theme of the manners of writing hadith, the manners of narration, the manners of *muhaddīs* and the manners of the seeker of hadith. He called this book "*Ulūm al-Ḥadīs*." When Abu Syuhbah had some free time, a few months before the Hajj season and a

¹⁷ 'Ali Ahmad 'Abd al-Baqi, 'Tarjamah Asy-Syaikh Al-'Allamah Muhammad Abu Syuhbah', *Alukah.Net*, 2022 <<https://www.alukah.net/culture/0/152187/-شبهة-المتوفى-أبو-شهبه-العلامة-محمد-أبو-شهبه-المتوفى>> [accessed 22 July 2023].

month after, he revised the two books by including many other studies to complement them. The two books with different titles were combined and named "*Ulūm al-Ḥadīṣ wa Muṣṭalaḥuhu*."¹⁸

There was a specific factor that prompted and became the main reason for Abu Syuhbah to compile this book of hadith science. In his *muqaddimah*, he states that,

الثقافة الإسلامية الأصيلة اليهم ولا سيما علوم القرآن، وعلوم السنة ولما
قمت في «التلفزيون» بمصرنا العزيزة بتدوات في التعريف بالسنة
وأمتها وأشهر الكتب المدونة فيها نالت قبولا حسنا من رجال القانون
والقضاء، والأطباء، والمهندسين وعلماء الكون والفلكيين، والضباط
وغيرهم وقد مكثت في ذلك ما يقرب من عام في برنامج «نور على نور»
فعلمت ان هذه الأمة الإسلامية لا زالت بحير، ولكننا معاشر المشتغلين
بالعلوم الإسلامية بعامة والمشتغلين بالأحاديث والسنة بخاصة علينا
تبعات جسام في عدم قيامنا بما يجب علينا من تقريب وتيسير الثقافة
الإسلامية إلى الناس كافة، فهل نحن فاعلون؟ وليس من الخير للإسلام
والمسلمين ان يبقى العلم بهذه العلوم الإسلامية مقصوراً على أهل العلم
وطلابه.

Syuhbah is the awareness of the need to introduce hadith science as part of Islamic civilization. The problem, then, does not lie in the lack of interest or concern of Muslims in general for the science of hadith but in the absence of scholars working in the field of hadith who can present a book on *'ulūm al-ḥadīṣ* that is easily digested and understood by Muslims in general. So, this book is expected to fulfill the above expectations.¹⁹

For this reason, according to Abu Syuhbah, this book summarizes the essence of the book *'ulūm al-ḥadīṣ* since ar-Ramāhurmuzī until it is contextualized with the understanding of Muslims today. The nature of its ease of digestion makes the explanation relatively brief, which is why Abu Syuhbah added the name *al-Wasīṭ*. Ultimately, this book was titled *al-Wasīṭ fī al-'Ulūm wa al-Muṣṭalaḥ al-Ḥadīṣ*.

¹⁸ Abu Syuhbah... hlm. 5-8

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

Systematization of the Book

At the beginning of the discussion, Muhammad Abu Syuhbah gives a sub-theme entitled "*manhaj fī at-Ta`līf.*" In this sub-theme, he states:

ولم أتبع في هذا الكتاب المنهج الذي اتبعه الإمام ابن الصلاح في
«علومه» ومن تبع منهجه في هذا من جاء بعده بالبدء ببحوث
الصحيح والحسن والضعيف ولا المنهج الذي اتبعه الإمام الحافظ ابن
حجر. في «التحفة»، وشرحها «ولكني نهجت منهاجا آخر ألهمني الله
إياه.

Abu Syuhbah's statement, as quoted above, shows that he tries to systematize the discussions in this book differently from what is found in previous popular books of *'ulūm al-ḥadīṣ*, such as *Muqaddimah ibn aṣ-Ṣalāḥ*, which starts the explanation by discussing *ṣaḥīḥ*, *ḥasan*, and *ḍa'īf*.²⁰

As for the *manhaj* or systematics of the discussion in this book, he explains that. First, explain the definition of terms often used in the hadith science. Then the explanation of the *laqab* of hadith scholars. Secondly, the explanation of *'ulūm al-ḥadīṣ* which is divided into *'ilm ar-riwāyah* and *'ilm ad-dirāyah*. It also includes an explanation of the developments that these two sciences have undergone. It also includes a discussion of popular books, both past and present. There is also a discussion of narration, which is divided into several sections: its concept, its division, its conditions, its historical side, and the maintenance of the Arabs and Muslims in terms of the tradition of narration. There is also a special discussion about how *muttaṣil isnād* is a special part that only exists in Islam. This is also the case with the history of *tadwīn* during the time of the Prophet, the Companions, the *Khulafā' ar-Rāsyidīn*, and the *Tābi'īn*. The codification process, of course, also explains how the compilation of traditions, the *sunan* became an official and general compilation initiated by Caliph Umar ibn Abdul Aziz. This leads to a discussion of the conflicting traditions regarding whether it was permissible to write during the time of the Companions. Abu Syuhbah analyzes this issue by looking at the tradition of writing that the Companions were already engaged in during the Islamic period and how the Arabs used memorization and writing as part of their civilization, even though writing was still rare. In the end,

²⁰ *ibid*

every discussion leads to the conclusion that the writing and compilation of the sunnah occurred in the early centuries of Islam.²¹

Third, it explains the popular books composed during the second century AH. Such as the book of *al-Muwaṭṭa`*, which is a surviving book from that century. Then, the third century, or what is considered the golden age of hadith and Sunan compilation. Fourthly, it mentions the popular books composed in the fourth century. By this period, if not complete, then almost the entirety of the hadith and Sunan had been organized. They were revised and collected from separate books. This was completed in the fifth century. Fifth, it describes the method and systematization of the scholars in composing their books on hadith. Then, it explains the requirements of narrators in Islam, the difference between *'adl ar-riwāyah* and *'adl as-syahādah*, and how a person is said to have met the requirements of a complete narrator. It also explains reconciling a *sādiq* and a *kāzib* narrator, a *ḍābiṭ* narrator and a *gāflah* narrator. After that, the *turuq at-taḥammul wa al-ada'* is summarized in eight ways. This is so that scholars and researchers may know that the traditions are established on the sound basis of valid transmission routes. Then the *isnād 'ālī* and its division will be explained. The same applies to *an-nāzil* and its division. So that the seeker of knowledge knows that it is traditional to trace the *'uluw as-sanad*, we will mention several issues and rules relating to the characteristics of the author of the book and his soundness. The characteristics of narration, including narration by meaning, will also be mentioned, as well as the conditions for doing so.²²

Sixth, a description of the manners of hadith scholars and the manners of hadith claimants - especially in the case of their journeys in search of knowledge and hadith. It should also describe the period during which many hadith scholars composed works on hadith and how they strived to become proficient in hadith scholarship, and the purposes for which hadith scholarship was written as described by Imam an-Nawawi and others. Finally, the issues related to the division of hadith from the viewpoint of scholars are explained. In this regard Abu Syuhbah glorifies the division of hadith in terms of the quantity of narrators to the division in terms of other factors.²³

²¹ *Ibid*, hlm. 8-13

²² *Ibid*.

²³ *Ibid*

In this regard, the space has been widened in discussing *mutawātir*, *masyhūr* and their divisions and the books that have been written about popular traditions, and it is important to know when al-mutawatir becomes *ṣaḥīḥ*, *ḥasan*, or *ḍaʿīf*. In the second division, the traditions are divided according to their narrators. The first is *marfūʿ*, *mauqūf* and *maqṭūʿ*. In this discussion, I will discuss which *marfūʿ* are *ṣarāḥah* and which are *marfuʿ* by law. It is important to note that these three can be *ṣaḥīḥ*, *ḥasan*, or *ḍaʿīf* as opposed to what is understood by those who consider them to be part of the *ḍaʿīf* hadith.²⁴

Book Content

If we simply look at the table of contents of this book, it is known that there are at least 709 discussions discussed in it. Of course, it is impossible for the author to present each discussion in detail, given the limited time and ability of the author. In fact, the table of contents takes up 48 pages. At least from the 709 discussions, it is possible to map out what the focal points are,

1. Pages 8-13, explaining the introduction to the book, the background of the writing, the general systematics, and the purpose of the book.
2. Pages 15-26, this book provides a brief definition of the basic terms and concepts used in *ʿulūm al-ḥadīṣ*. Such as the meaning of *al-ḥadīṣ*, *khābar*, *aṣar*, *matn*, *musnad*, *musnid*, *isnād*. Likewise, the level of hadith experts or what Abu Syuhbah called *musytagilīn bi al-ḥadīṣ* such as *muḥaddiṣ*, *ṭālib al-ḥadīṣ*, *ḥāfiz*, *ḥujjah* and so on. It also includes an explanation of the study of hadith in general and the study of specific hadith divided into *riwāyah* and *dirāyah*.
3. Pages 27-38 discuss the history of hadith scholarship in terms of its *dirāyah*. It discusses the development of Hadith scholarship from before the scheduling period to after the scheduling of Hadith. Then, the branches of hadith science that developed are seen from the number of separate books that discuss one branch of hadith science, such as Qutaibah's *Mukhtalif al-Hadīṣ*, as-Syafi'i's *Ikhtilāf al-Ḥadīṣ*, and other popular books. Such as the books of ar-Rāmuhurmuzī, al-Hākim, Abi Ubaidillāh, Abi Nuaim, Khātib al-Bagdādī, and many more.

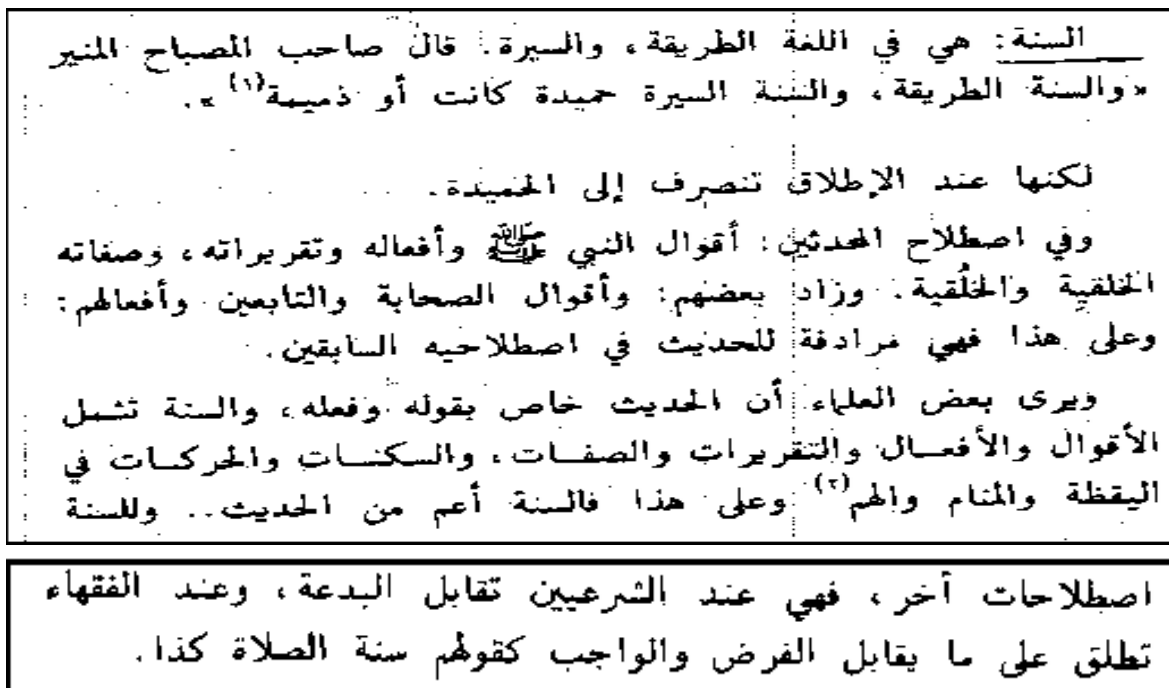
²⁴ *Ibid.*

4. 39-44, provides an extensive description of the construction of narration as part of the science of hadith. In this discussion, Abu Syuhbah, in the book *al-Wasīṭ*, first highlights how the tradition of narration existed in civilizations that were far more advanced than Arabia at that time. So, it was found that this hadith of narration had existed since the Greek civilization was established. Then in pre-Islamic Arabia itself. then, it is also seen how other disciplines view the narration itself, and in the end, it is compared with the narration that has been included in the rules and studies of *'ulūm al-hadīs*.
5. 45-76, explaining about Sanad and Matan. Such as seeing the sanad chain as part of the epistemology of determining knowledge. Then, the fact that information, not only in Arabic but in other civilizations, uses memorization and writing to transfer and maintain knowledge becomes a very valid legitimation of the existence and authority of the *sanad*. Then, how exactly the *muttaṣil as-sanad* is a special part of Islamic civilization. this section also explains the development process of writing and compiling hadith books starting from the time of the Prophet, the Companions, the *Tābi'īn* until the end of the second century and the third century which has appeared *Ṣaḥīḥaīn* and *Sunan al-Arba'ah*. Then, in the fourth century, with the emergence of the hadith book *Ṣaḥīḥaīn* and *Sunan al-Arba'ah*. Then, the fourth century, with the emergence of the book of hadith *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Khuzaimah*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Abī 'Uwānah*, *Muṣannaf aṭ-Ṭaḥawī*, etc. Then came the books of hadith that collected traditions under one theme such as *tartīb* or *tahzīb*.
6. 77-93 discuss the theory of Sanad and Matan criticism. This includes the origins of matan criticism. Then, some key concepts in terms of narrators, such as fairness, what are the requirements for fairness, what is the difference between *'adl al-riwāyah* and *'adl as-syahādah*, and so on. Likewise with *ḍābiṭ*. This chapter also explains the *manhaj* of the scholars who compiled the books of hadith, starting from following the chapters of fiqh to those with their own systematics.
7. 94-115 deals with *turuq at-taḥammul wa al-ādā'*, which Abu Syuhbah divides into eight sections. It includes discussing *sanad 'āli* and *nāzil* and how a sanad becomes an *'āli as-sanad*.

8. 116-709 deals with a wide range of topics and issues related to some specific themes such as those related to writing and its manners, those related to the manners of hadith scholars, and many more.

Characteristics of the Book Discussion Method

There are at least two characteristics of Abu Syuhbah's discussion in this book. First, he presents the definitions of hadith terms at the beginning in a concise manner, avoiding debate and minimizing examples of the application of these terms. As in the following explanation of the sunnah:



Based on the above text, Abu Syuhbah only describes some definitions in a concise and easy-to-understand manner, along with some opinions from the hadith scholars and jurists, without referencing any of them. This is different from some other master books of *'ulūm al-ḥadīṣ*. For example, ibn Shalah's *Muqaddimah* explains directly with the definition of *ṣaḥīḥ*, *ḥasan*, and *ḍa'īf* traditions. Similarly, in the book *'Ulūm al-Ḥadīṣ wa Muṣṭalaḥuh* by Ibrahim aṣ-Ṣāliḥ where when he discusses the definition of hadith, he quotes many opinions and corroborates the opinion that distinguishes hadith

from sunnah This, though simple, at least gives us an idea that Abu Syuhbah in this book wants to avoid things that can be confusing in the study of hadith.

The second characteristic of the author advantage Abu Syuhbah is that for every discussion, he always gives two conclusions that come from his personal opinion, where the conclusion or response is a contextualization of the study of hadith in the present era. For example, when he explains the meaning of 'alqāb from the degree of hadith experts, he then writes two rules,

والحجة... إنما هو باعتبار أزمانهم وعصورهم الأولى. أما في عصورنا هذه فينبغي التسامح في ذلك. وإلا فلنألا نجد من ينطبق عليه وصف المحدث فضلاً عن غيره من الألقاب ومن قبل لاحظ بعض الأئمة عزة من يطلق على هذه الألقاب فما بالك بعصرنا هذا⁽¹⁾ وغاية المحدث في عصرنا «ان وجد». أن يحيط بعلم الحديث رواية. والقدرة على البحث والتفتيش عن الرجال وجرحهم وتعديلهم من بطون الكتب. وقراءة الكتب الستة والموطأ والسند والمستدرک وسنن الدارقطني والبيهقي ونحوها. وكثرة المداومة على قراءة هذه الكتب. والبحث والتفتيش حتى تتكون عنده ملكة بالعلم بما فيها. بحيث يتمكن من استخراج أي حديث منها إذا أراد. والعلم بمعظم الأحاديث فقها وغريباً.

والواقع إلا طرق لحديث واحد. فيتخير أي إمام منها أصحها وأوثقها في نظره. ويدع ما عدا ذلك. وقد يكون فيما ذكره ما ليس صحيحاً عند غيره.

وقد يكون فيما يتركه ما هو صحيح في الواقع. وأيضاً يدخل في هذه الألوف آثار الصحابة والتابعين وغيرهم. وهذه الآثار تعتبر من الأحاديث عند كثير من المحدثين وما أكثر ما روي من الآثار. فكن على ذكر من ذلك حتى لا يلتبس عليك الأمر، وحتى تدفع تشكيكات المشككين في السنن والأحاديث.

The contextualization of the description of *hujjah al-hadīṣ*, *Hāfīz* and other *laqab* in which the definition, which includes being able to memorize thousands of hadith is an understanding that is no longer applicable in this day and age. So he replaced it with several criteria: (1) a person who knows the ins and outs of hadith well, (2) a person who knows the science of hadith in *dirāyah* and can use the methods of hadith science in determining and applying hadith and (3) a person who has consistency in analyzing hadith. The second principle is a correction of those who misunderstood the memorization of hadith scholars by the thousands. Some doubters of the traditions

argued that it was impossible to memorize thousands of traditions because many of the traditions in their books were not as many as they had memorized. This was later corrected by Abu Syuhbah that what is meant by memorizing thousands of traditions is memorizing the lines of transmission which could be in one tradition having many sanad lines. The second possibility is that he memorized khabar and *asar*. Of course, such responses are very important today.

Analysis of Systematic Discussion

The large number of branches of hadith science makes it important to systematize the discussion of it in terms of its *dirāyah*. Until now, there has been no agreement on the number of branches of hadith science. Ibn Salah divides it into 65 branches of knowledge. Al-Hakim determines 52 branches. While al-Hazimiyy argues that the branches of hadith science can reach a hundred, As-Suyuti says it is countless.

Given the many branches of hadith science, in the preparation of the book of *'ulūm al-ḥadīṣ*, the systematic discussion and exposure of meaning becomes an urgent matter. among the several forms of systematics used by the compilers of this book, among others.²⁵

1. Dividing into several themes of discussion without classifying or delimiting the themes with a similar focus of study. Ar-Rāmuhurmuzī uses this systematics in his work *al-Muḥaddiṣ al-Fāṣil baina ar-Rāwī wa al-Wā'ī*.
2. Dividing it into *juz* based on sequential numbers from first to last. Each *juz* consists of several themes of discussion. However, the theme in one *juz* is sometimes discussed in another *juz*. Khatib al-Bagdādī uses this systematic in *al-Kifāyah fī 'Ilm ar-Riwāyah*.
3. Dividing the branches of *'ulūm al-ḥadīṣ* into several themes of discussion sequentially or by sequential number from the first to the last, without classifying by chapter or specific object. Al-Hakim uses this system in *Ma'rifah 'Ulūm al-Ḥadīṣ*, Ibn Shalah in *Muqaddimah ibn aṣ-Ṣalāḥ*, and some other popular books of hadith literature such as *Tadrīb ar-Rāwī* by as-Suyūṭī.

²⁵ Rohmi Fatmawati, *Ma'rifah Ulum Al-Hadis: Studi Atas Karya Abu Abdullah Al-Hakim Al-Naysaburi* (Yogyakarta, 2004).

4. Dividing into chapters, each chapter consists of several sub-chapters, each including several themes with a common unity. This kind of systematization is used by hadith scholars who have emerged today, such as Muhammad Ajjaj al-Khatib in *Uṣūl al-Ḥadīṣ*.

Judging from the classification of the type of division above, according to the author himself, Abu Syuhbah's *al-Wasīṭ fī 'ulūm wa muṣṭalaḥ al-ḥadīṣ* falls into the same classification as Nuruddin Itr's book. Although technically different from previous works, by presenting *ta'rīfāt* as an introduction to the book, this book systematically presents the discussion based on the object of study. What is interesting, perhaps, is that in *al-Wasīṭ* more than half of the discussion consists of studies or polemics in hadith science that are included in the division of problems.

Analysis of the Book's Content

On the plus side, for the author, Abu Syuhbah's technical systematization by placing *ta'rīfāt* in Hadith Studies in the introductory section with simple and easy-to-understand definitions is an innovative constructive step for contemporary works on Hadith Studies. The presentation of examples that are easy to understand for the author is also an advantage of Abu Syuhbah. As far as I can see, Abu Syuhbah does not give many examples of the definitions of hadith terms. Rather he tries to give one example that covers all the terms that have been defined previously.

According to the author, Abu Syuhbah, this book, also has one advantage, namely in several places; Abu Syuhbah provides *fā'idah* or important responses before continuing the discussion afterward. This certainly provides insight and guidance to understand the hadith literature that is being discussed properly. For example, after explaining the definitions of the hadith expert's *laqab*, he writes two rules:

First, the definition of *muḥaddiṣ* and others is essentially seen in the context in which the term began to emerge and develop. If this is not the case, then it is difficult for someone to hold a title in *'ulum al-hadīṣ* anymore. For this reason, if contextualized, it can be said to be a *muḥaddiṣ* in the present, when the person has mastered the ins and outs of the science of hadith historically and able to investigate the narrators both in terms of *ta'dīl* and *tajrīh* directly based on the master books related to this science. He was also able to read and understand *kutub at-tis'ah*, *al-Muwaṭṭa'*, *Musnad* and

Mustadrak, Sunan ad-Dārquṭnī and al-Baihaqī and others. He had a high level of continuity in his study of these books which enabled him to find and explain the desired traditions.

Secondly, there is also the notion that the thousands of hadith that characterized the muḥaddiṣ of the past were difficult to accept because they could not find any hadith ma'rūf that reached the level of what they had memorized in their books. What is meant by memorizing the hadith is not that all hadith are different, as it is understood on the face of it, but rather that one hadith has multiple transmission lines. There is one hadith that has been narrated with ten sanad. So, what happens is that the scholars memorize the entire narration and then select the ṣaḥīḥ ones to write down in their books. Sometimes, there were also ṣaḥīṣ hadith that were not written down from their memorization. This also includes the aṣar of the Ṣaḥābah and Tābi'īn. Such reports are considered part of the hadith, according to many muḥaddiṣ.

If examined further, the simplification in explaining some terms has two consequences. Firstly, it is good that by simplifying the definitions without including debates, it will be beneficial for lay readers to understand the meaning of each 'ulūm al-ḥadīṣ term. However, for those engaged in the study of 'ulum al-ḥadīṣ itself, this is certainly not enough, considering that these discussions can enrich the insight and knowledge in the treasury of hadith scholarship itself.

On the one hand, the goal of al-Wasīṭ, as described in the muqaddimah of this book, is to make Muslims in general understand this science for the author himself, which is very difficult to achieve. Within a certain scope, the science of hadith also has its own complexities that can only be understood by people willing to spend a lot of time investigating. Take, for example, the concept of 'illah in 'Ilm al-Ḥadīṣ. For scholars, studying the 'illah requires going through careful discussions, and the obscurity of the causes of the 'illah even obscure to most hadith scholars, except for those scholars who are given a very deep, broad, and detailed understanding.

It is for this reason that some hadith scholars claim that knowing the vague defects in the hadith is a matter of inspiration, intuition, and even conjecture or prediction (kahānah). This is based on many statements from the muḥaddiṣūn themselves. One of them is the narration of al-Ḥākim in his book al-Ma'rifah, and al-Khutaibi in al-Jāmi' that Abu Zar'ah was asked by someone: "What is your proof for

censuring a hadith?". Abu Zar'ah replied: "My proof is when you ask me about the 'illah of a hadith and I mention its 'illah, then you ask Muḥammad bin Muslim bin Rawwāh about its 'illah without telling him my opinion about its 'illah, and he mentions its 'illah, then you ask Abu Hātim about the same hadith in the same way and he also mentions its 'illah'. If there is a difference in the 'illah that we give for this Hadīth, then know that each of us mentions the 'illah based on our own understanding (fa'lam anna kulla minnā takallamnā 'alā murādihi), and if you find our agreement on the 'illah, then know that this is the proof of the knowledge of the 'illah of this Hadīth." The young man then did as he was told. The young man then did as Abu Zar'ah instructed, and he found the answers to be in agreement. He said: "Indeed I recognize that the knowledge of the 'illah of the hadith is an inspiration" (Bahu 2005:60).

For this reason, in my opinion, the layman's consumption of 'ulūm al-ḥadīṣ is more focused on knowing the hadith historically and how to understand and practice the hadith correctly. As for the status of the hadith in terms of its dirāyah, it can be explained in popular traditions or ḍa'īf traditions that are already known to the public. As for 'ulūm al-ḥadīṣ in detail and universally, it can be taught to those who are engaged in this science, or indeed, in one case, there is a question that requires us to answer the question by explaining some hadith terms. Regardless, what Abu Syuhbah has done with al-Wasīṭ is a treasure trove of scholarship on 'ulūm al-ḥadīṣ and a valuable source of further scholarly inquiry.

Conclusion

Kitab al-Wasīṭ has advantages in its technical systematics, especially in placing the ta'rīfāt in the hadith study in the introductory section of the hadith with simple and easy-to-understand definitions. Abu Syuhbah also provides examples that are easy to understand and provides important rules or responses in several sections so that readers can understand the hadith literature well. Abu Syuhbah gives the definition of muḥaddiṣ and its essence by looking at the historical context, but he also tolerates the term in today's context. In some places, Abu Syuhbah provides rules related to the understanding of the Deen of Hadith, such as the criteria for being a muḥaddiṣ today.

Although there is a simplification in explaining some terms, this provides an advantage for lay readers to understand the meaning of each 'ulūm al-ḥadīṣ term.

However, for those involved in the study of ‘ulūm al-ḥadīṣ, the simplification is considered inadequate because it reduces discussion and debate that can enrich scientific insights.

The main objective of the book *Al-Wasīṭ* is for Muslims in general to understand the science of hadith, but the author believes this objective is difficult to achieve within a certain scope, especially considering the complexity of hadith science, such as the concept of ‘illah. Hadith science has its own complexities that require time and dedication to fully understand. Ultimately, the layman's consumption of ‘ulūm al-ḥadīṣ should be more focused on understanding the hadith historically and its application in daily life. Meanwhile, the detailed and universal knowledge of hadith can be taught to those specifically interested and engaged in the study. The book "*Al-Wasīṭ*" by Abu Syuhbah is considered a valuable contribution to the scholarship of ‘ulūm al-ḥadīṣ and can be a source of further scholarly investigation.

The assumption that the study of ‘ulūm al-ḥadīṣ cannot develop significantly for the author is a big mistake. The science of hadith also has many branches of science that need to be studied in addition to its status as a science that tries to explain hadith as one of the main sources of Islamic teachings. The study of the book of ‘ulūm al-ḥadīṣ is a clear example of how ‘ulūm al-ḥadīṣ can develop. Especially in Indonesia itself, there are still many books of ‘ulūm al-ḥadīṣ by archipelago scholars that have not been widely touched and studied.

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