

## UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM OF HADITH NARRATION: TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE READING OF HADITH

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**Abstract:** As the source of Islamic teaching, hadith must be apprehended according to the intent of the prophet. If done otherwise, the understanding of prophet's intention as the explanation of Quranic teaching can be misunderstood. The chance becomes even more likely as hadith has its own problems, especially in the context of its comprehension. These problems will create conclusions which at times influence ones' understanding. Among the problems are the complete narration of the hadith, *riwayat bi al-ma'na*, and conciseness of the hadith. Ones' understanding of a hadith whose information is complete would be different from the one that is not. Thus, the understanding of hadith problems is very crucial to comprehensively understand hadith.

**Keyword:** problems, narration of hadith, complete *narration*, *riwayat bi al-ma'na*, conciseness of hadith

### A. Introduction

Hadith, as seen in many hadith books is the narration about the utterances, action, and prophetic provision occurred centuries ago. Some were situational responses to the condition and situation of the community at the time. However, the teaching content imposed by hadith is not necessarily limited to the interest of the past. It can indeed be meaningful in the time and space in which we currently live if read comprehensively and philosophically. Thus, it can also become communicative in the contemporary world.

The narration of hadith is the most important aspect of a hadith since its narration bears the information uttered by the prophet either his utterance, action or provision. It is important to understand that narration of hadith has problems such as complete

*riwayat, riwayat bi al-ma'na*, and conciseness of hadith. These problems demand compressive reading of hadith so that the intention of the prophet can be correctly understood.

Research on a number of hadith under the same topic in hadith books showed that in term of narration hadith has its own problems. Some hadith under the same topic have different degree of narration completeness. Some also indicate that they are pronounced *bi al-ma'nâ* and some are even shortened. This article aims to explore and further study some problems regarding the narration of such hadith.

## **B. Narration Completion**

Narration completion is referred to comprehensive information carried by a hadith. Some hadith discussing the same topic seems to bear different degree of narration completion. Some hadith only carries the principal of prophet's messages, but others talk about the reasons causing the prophet to prohibit or command to do something and some others even embrace *asbab al-wurūd* or the reasons the prophet conversed the hadith.

Narration completion may sometimes take place because the Prophet delivered the same hadith in different occasions, or the ability of the companions to record the Prophet's utterances is different, or the companions only recorded and delivered the important information. These situations and behaviors eventually led to different degree of narration completion among the hadith in the books of hadith. Note the following hadiths.

*(Hadith narrated) from Hakam ibn Umair al-Tsumali, he reported that the Prophet said, 'Trim your mustache until the two edges of the lips.' Narrated by Thabarani<sup>1</sup>*

*(Hadith narrated) from Abu Hurayrah in which he said: The Messenger of Allah said, 'Trim your mustache. let your beard grows.' Narrated by Ahmad<sup>2</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Sulaiman ibn Ahmad ibn Ayyub Abu al-Qasim al-Thabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabîr*; (Maushul: Maktabah al-Ulum wa al-Hukm, 1983), Juz IV, page. 255. Hereinafter referred to as Thabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabîr*.

<sup>2</sup> Ahmad bin Hanbal Abu Abdullah al-Syaibani, *Musnad al-Imâm Ahmad ibn Hanbal*, (Al-Qahirah: Muassasah al-Qurthabah, t.t.), Juz II, page. 229. Hereinafter referred to as Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *Musnad al-Imâm Ahmad ibn Hanbal*.

*(Hadith narrated) from Ibn 'Umar, from the Prophet PBUH, he said: 'Differentiate yourself from the idolaters. Let your beard grow and trim your mustache.' It was Ibn Umar during the pilgrimage who held his beard. He cut those that were more of his grasp. Reported by Al-Bukhari<sup>3</sup>*

*(Hadith narrated) from Abu Hurairah, he said, The Messenger of Allah said: 'Trim your mustache and let the beard grow distinct yourself from those of Majusi.' Narrated by Muslim<sup>4</sup>*

*(Hadith history) from Ibn Abbas, he said, during the conquest of Mecca, the Prophet PBUH said: 'The Almighty Allah forbids wine and its price, the carcass and its price, pork and its price.' He also said, 'Trim your mustache, let your beard grow, walk not in the market except in a state of dress. Those who do not live with my Sunnah are not from my group.' (Narrated by Thabrani)<sup>5</sup>*

The five hadith above show the difference degree of narration completion. The fifth hadith talks about the Prophet's command to shorten mustache. In the first hadith, hadith narrated by Hakam ibn Numair indicates that the narration only talks about the command to shorten the mustaches to the edge of the mouth. In the second hadith, however, the hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah, there is a command to trim mustache but does not mention the mustache encircling the mouth and there is additional information, letting the beard grow.

The third hadith narrated by Ibn Umar provides information regarding the reason of why the Prophet ordered to trim mustache and let the beard grow. It aims to distinguish the Muslims from the idolaters. This information is not found in the two previous hadith. In the fourth hadith, the hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah, it says that the reason the Prophet ordered his companions to trim the

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<sup>3</sup> Muhammad ibn Isma'il Abu Abdillāh al-Bukhārī, *Shahīh al-Bukhārī*, (Beirut: Dar Ibn Katsir al-Yamamah, 1987), Juz V, hal. 2209. Hereinafter referred to as al-Bukhārī, *Shahīh al-Bukhārī*.

<sup>4</sup> Abu al-Husain Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj, *Shahīh Muslim*, (Beirut: Dar al-Jail, t.t), Juz I, page. 153. Hereinafter referred to as Muslim, *Shahīh Muslim*.

<sup>5</sup> Al-Thabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-kabīr*, Juz XI, page. 152

mustache and let the beard grow was to differentiate the Muslims with the Majusi people. As for the fifth hadith, the hadith narrated by Ibn Abbas, there is other information that the command of the Prophet to trim the mustache and to let the beard grow was pronounced by Prophet during the conquest of Mecca, which is the tenth year of Hijriyah. Based on this fifth hadith it can be understood that shortening the mustache and letting the beard grow were repronounced by the prophet after it has previously conversed.

In relation to the understanding of hadith, being aware of the reality that hadith bears different degree of completion becomes very crucial. This awareness will bring the readers of hadith in order to not to haste relying only on one hadith, especially on the hadith whose narration completion was very low. The hasty attitude in drawing conclusions based on one hadith would lead to a partial and incomprehensive conclusion and may even entrap someone to a particular extremism.

The reasons leading to the emergence of a command or prohibition, *'illat*, is an important part in determining the issues of Islamic law. This is because *'illat* determines whether a law is present. Therefore, the experts of *ushul fiqh* established the rules of *al-hukmu yadurru ma'a al-'illah* (legal comes together with *'illat*). This rule states that a law will present if *'illat* presents and vice versa.

Based on the view of *ushul fiqh*, it is apparent that reading hadith should not only be confined to the hadith that merely mentions legal provisions, but also to the hadith that reveals *'illat*. Because the degree of hadith completion is different from each other and that each hadith complements information to one another further investigation about hadith becomes inevitable. However, solemnly reading the aforementioned hadith would open possibilities to better understand the message and the intention of the Prophet.

There are several factors leading to the different degree of narration completion.

## 1. Different Memory Abilities of the Companions

It is true that every human being has different abilities to record information. Most people can easily record and reiterate every utterance or event they heard or experienced. However, some people easily forget what they heard or events they experienced.

The companions of the Prophet as human beings were also inevitable of this state that there was a companion who complained to the Prophet about this phenomenon.

*(Hadith narrated) from Abu Hurayrah he said: When Allah, the Greatest and Most Majesty gave the victory to the Prophet to conquer the city of Mecca, he stood in front of the companions. After praising and paying tribute to Allah, he said: 'Allah has protected the city of Mecca from the Elephant forces and made His messenger and the believers as the rulers. Indeed, it has never been granted to anyone before me and is granted to me for a few moments during the day and will it not be granted to anyone else after me. Its hunted animals must not be expelled, thorny trees must not be cut and found items are not permitted except for those who announced them. If there is anyone whose family members are killed, there are only two options; redeemed (diyat) or kisas (be punished the same as one's offense).' Abbas said: 'Except izkhir plants O the Messenger of Allah! Because we planted them in the cemeteries and in our homes.' The Prophet PBUH said: 'Yes, except izkhir plants.' Suddenly, a man from Yemen named Abu Syah stood and said: 'Write it down for me, O the Messenger of Allah!' The Prophet PBUH said: 'Write to Abu Syah!' Narrated by Muslim<sup>6</sup>*

*From Akaimah al-Laitsi, he said: 'We came to the Messenger of Allah and asked him, for the sake of our father, you and our mother, O the Messenger of Allah, we heard the hadith from you, but we are unable to deliver it as we have heard.' Then the Messenger of Allah said: 'As long as you do not justify the unlawful and do not proscribe the lawful and it is accurate in its meaning, it should be fine.' Narrated by*

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<sup>6</sup> Muslim, *Shahih Muslim*, Juz IV, page. 110

*Thabrani.*<sup>7</sup>

The above two hadith provide with us the information that the companions have different abilities in recording and delivering what was heard from the Prophet. In the first hadith, it shows that a companion named Abu Syah asked the Prophet to write his lectures. This indicates that he was not sure of his abilities to record and reiterate the messages he had heard from the Prophet. The second hadith also shows that some companions declared that they had limited abilities to reiterate the hadith as he heard from the Messenger of Allah. It is on this basis that the degree of narration completion of each hadith from the Prophet in the books of hadith greatly varies. Some narrations in the books of hadith record the statement of the Prophet longer than other hadith books.

Realizing these issues, the scholar of hadith such as Ibn Hajar, in some books of hadith explanation, makes statements such as "in other narrations there are some additions". This conveys that the scholar acknowledges that some narrations of hadith discussing the same topic are more complete than others. The following statement is quoted as an example.

(Hadith narrated) from Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, the Messenger of Allah said: 'Allah indeed has obliged the Hajj to us.' Al-Aqra 'ibn Habis stood and asked the Prophet, 'Is it every year O the Messenger of Allah?' He replied: 'If I say yes it will become mandatory. Hajj is performed only once if it is repeated then it is an addition (circumcision).' This hadith is narrated by the five narrators except Tirmidhi. *Lafaz* of this hadith was from Muslim and narrated by Abu Hurairah. However, in another narration, there are additions to the Prophet's words, 'Then it will become mandatory', i.e. 'If it is obliged, you will not be able to implement it and thus, you will be tormented.'<sup>8</sup>

The above quote shows that in some narrations, their completion becomes more comprehensive by carefully quoting the words of the Prophet. We can also say that the statement made by al-Shan'ani 'in other narrations there are additions' is narrations he

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<sup>7</sup> Al-Thabrani, *Mu'jam al-kabir*; Juz VII, page. 100

<sup>8</sup> Muhammad Ismail al-Amir al-Kahlani al-Shan'ani, *Subul al-Salam*, (t.tp: al-Musthafa al-Bab al-Halabi, 1960), Juz II, page. 185.

knew other that the narrations narrated by the five aforementioned Imam.

The author's study of this hadith reveals that the addition is only found in the hadith books earlier than the five books of hadith mentioned above. The books which provide the complete narration of this hadith as pointed out by al-Shan'ani are the *Musnad al-Bazzar*<sup>9</sup> and the *Musannaf Ibn Abi Abi Shaybah* (159-235 H).<sup>10</sup> Both of these books were written in the 3rd century of H whereas the five books of hadith mentioned above were written in the 4th century of H.

## 2. Difference in Narration Focus

The ability of the companions in recording the Prophet's talks varies greatly. Some were able to record the conversation of the Prophet longer while others were only able to record certain parts of the conversation of the Prophet. In some instances, it is found that some companions or narrators only recorded or delivered parts that were considered important. Consider the following hadith.

(Hadith Narrated) from Samrah ibn Jundab, he said, 'The Prophet turned his face to us after finishing prayers.'<sup>11</sup>

(Hadith Narrated) from Anas ibn Malik, he said, 'One night we waited for the Prophet until close to midnight. Then the Prophet came and prayed. After praying, the Prophet turned his face to us, I looked that his white ring was made of silver.' (Narrated by Muslim)<sup>12</sup>

(Hadith Narrated) from Humaid, he said, 'Anas was asked whether the Prophet wore a ring, and Anas replied, yes. Prophet ended Isya prayer at night until midnight. Then he turned his face to us after the prayer and said, People pray and sleep, and are always

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<sup>9</sup> Abu Bakar Ahmad ibn Amr ibn Abd al-Khaliq al-Bashr al-Bazzar *Musnad al-Bazzar*, Juz II, page. 362

<sup>10</sup> Abu Bakr Abdullah ibn Ahmad Ibn Abu Syaibah, *Mushannaf ibn Abi Syaibah*, Juz 11, page. 496

<sup>11</sup> Al-Bukhâri, *Shahîh al-Bukhâri*, Juz I, page. 290

<sup>12</sup> Muslim, *Shahîh Muslim*, Juz II, page. 116

in prayer those who wait for the prayer time. Then Anas said, 'I seemed to see his white ring' (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).<sup>13</sup>

The above hadith shows that Samrah ibn Jundub, the companion who narrated the hadith, informed the behavior of the Prophet after finishing the prayer, in which the Prophet turned his face to the congregations. Anas ibn Malik also witnessed the behavior of the Prophet so that he also narrated the same tradition but added the information he was interested in, that he saw the Prophet wearing a white ring.

Meanwhile, in the other narration reported by Humaid also from Anas ibn Malik's explanation, there is more information. In addition to the mentioned behavior that Prophet turned his face to the congregation and wore a ring, it also mentioned that the Prophet gave instructions to his companions.

Both of these narrations came from Anas but with slightly different information in terms of narration completion. It may mean that Anas or later narrators sometimes narrated what they thought was important. It is apparent that the companions or narrators reported what became their focus. As the result, there are completion differences among the narrations even though they were recited by the same person as in the example of the hadith above by Anas ibn Malik.

Some companions recorded the background events that led to Prophet delivering the messages while others simply delivered what the Prophet said without narrating *sabab wurud* of hadith. Consider the following hadith.

*(Hadith narrated) from al-Miswar ibn Mahramah, he said, the Messenger of Allah said: 'Fatima is part of me, hurting her means hurting me.' Narrated by Muslim<sup>14</sup>*

*(Hadith narrated) from Abdullah ibn al-Zubair, 'Ali mentioned the daughter of Abu Jahal. He then informed the Prophet PBUH and then he said: 'Fatima is part of me, I will suffer in agony for the suffering she feels and I would be in pain with the pain she feels.' Narrated by Tirmidzi.<sup>15</sup>*

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<sup>13</sup> Al-Bukhâri, *Shahîh al-Bukhârî*, Juz I, page. 235

<sup>14</sup> Muslim, *Shahîh Muslim*, Juz VII, page. 141

<sup>15</sup> Muhammad ibn Isa Abu Isa al-Tirmidzi, *al-Jâmi' al-Shahîh Sunan al-*

From these two hadith, it is clear that Miswar ibn Mahramah simply delivered the words of the Prophet stating that his daughter Fatima is part of him. If she hurts, then the Prophet would feel hurt too. Abdullah ibn Zubair, on the other hand, narrated the events that led to the Prophet saying the above hadith that is when Ali ibn Abi Talib mentioned the daughter of Abu Jahal. The prophet heard it and commented as mentioned above.

### 3. Hadith Narrated on Different Occasions

One of the privileges of the Prophet in delivering hadith is that he often repeated them in various places and situations. It was perhaps intended to remind his people about what he had previously affirmed. Thus, what was previously conveyed by the Prophet became refreshed in the memory of his people, or the companions who have never heard it before would know by this repetition.

This repetition may not converse in the same narration. A brief statement of the Prophet may be repeated in another narration or expressed in another conversation. Thus, differences in narration completion do not come from the narrators, both at the level of companions and later narrators, but due to the repeated occurrences of the hadith itself in different narrations. Consider some of the following hadith.

*(Hadith narrated) from Abd al-Rahman ibn Ka'b ibn Malik from his father that the Messenger of Allah PBUH when about to go to war he hid the true purpose of the war and he said: 'it is a war strategy.' Narrated by Abu Daud<sup>16</sup>*

*(Hadith narrated) from Abu Hurairah, he said, the Messenger of Allah said: 'Almighty Allah indeed said to me, 'Give money to charities and I will give charities to them, and he called the war as strategies.' Narrated by Ahmad<sup>17</sup>*

*(Hadith narrated) from Asma binti Yazid, from the Prophet*

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*Tirmidzi*, (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turats al-Arabi, t.t), Juz V, page. 698. Hereinafter referred to as al-Tirmidzi, *Sunan al-Tirmidzi*

<sup>16</sup> Abu Dâud Sulaiman ibn al-Asy'ats al-Sijistani, *Sunan Abi Dâud*, (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, t.t), Juz II, hal. 347. Hereinafter referred to as Abu Dâud, *Sunan Abi Dâud*.

<sup>17</sup> Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *Musnad al-Imâm Ahmad ibn Hanbal*, Juz II, page. 314

*PBUH, he said, 'It is not good to lie except in three circumstances, namely; the husband deceiving his wife in order to please her, deceiving in a war because the war is a strategy, and deceiving to reconcile people.' Narrated by Ahmad.*<sup>18</sup>

The two hadith show that the sentence (*al-harb*) was said together with other sentences that were completely unrelated to the war. However, these words become the explanatory statement for other sentences when the Prophet stated that it is acceptable to lie in three circumstances. Therefore, the sentence *al-harb khud'ah* can be found in some narrations of hadith with different wordings.

Another example with regard to the delivery of hadith by the Prophet in several occasions is the hadith about *nasab* of a child, where the Prophet associate *nasab* of a child with legal marriage.

*(Hadith narrated) from Aisha, she said: 'Sa'd bin Abi Waqqash and Abdu bin Zam`ah involved in a dispute over a child. Sa`ad said, 'This is my brother's son, Utbah bin Abu Waqqash, who commissioned the child to me. he is his son, observe the resemblance!' Zam`ah bin Abdu denied it and said: 'He is my brother, O the Messenger of Allah! He was born on my father's bed from his slave girl.'*

*The Messenger of Allah observed similarities of the boy. There are clear similarities with between Utbah and the child. Then he said: 'He is yours, O Abdu. Nasab of a child is from a legal marriage while adultery shall be stoned. O Sauda binti Zam`ah get away of such conduct! After the incident, the child no longer saw Sauda.'*<sup>19</sup>

(Hadith narrated) from 'Amr bin Syu'aib from his father from his grandfather he said, 'A man stood up and said, 'indeed someone is my son. I had intercourse with his mother at the time of *jahiliyah*. The Prophet said, there is no confession in Islam, gone the affairs of *jahiliyah*, children follow the owner of the bed and adulterers shall be stoned.' Narrated by Abu Daud<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *Musnad al-Imâm Ahmad ibn Hanbal*, Juz VI, page. 459

<sup>19</sup> Al-Bukhâri, *Shahîh al-Bukhârî*, Juz VI, page. 2484

<sup>20</sup> Abu Dâud, *Sunan Abi Dâud*, Juz II, page. 250.

(Hadith narrated) from Amr bin Kharijah he said: 'The Prophet once gave a speech to us in Mina when he was on his steed that chewed food while its saliva dripped between my shoulders. He said, 'Allah has determined everyone's part in heritage. Therefore, a testament for the heir is prohibited. Children belong to the owner of the bed while adulterers shall be stoned. Whoever attribute themselves to other than his father or slaves who attribute to their master other than hatred, then they get the curse of Allah, angels, and all mankind. Narrated by Ahmad.

The first hadith delivered by the Prophet when Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqash and Abdu bin Zamah involved in a dispute over a child. Then the Prophet said '*al-walad li al-firasy wa li al-'ahiri al-hajr*.' The second hadith was delivered by the Prophet when a man claimed a child as his son because he had an intercourse with the mother of the child at the time of *jahiliyah*. The Prophet conveyed the same hadith. The third hadith with the same content was delivered by the Prophet in his speech during the conquest of Mecca when he was in Mina. From the three hadith, it can be learned that his words '*al-walad li al-firasy wa li al-'ahiri al-hajr*' was delivered in a series of different narrations. In the second hadith, there is no charge in Islam regarding the affairs of *jahiliyah* while the third hadith was coupled with his explanation about inheritance and testament.

Narration completion can indeed lead to different conclusions if referring to each Hadith. Hadith which does not mention '*illat* (rational reasons), the basis of the legal prohibition, would be understood in a general sense (*'amm*), including a broad scope, circumstance, and situation. On the other hand, the hadith that states '*illat* is no longer understood in a broad scope, circumstance and situation as in the following three hadith.

*(Hadith narrated) from Abu Hurairah from the Prophet, he said: 'Cloth that extends beyond the ankle will be charged with a punishment in hellfire.'* Narrated by Al-Bukhari.<sup>21</sup>

*(Hadith narrated) from Ibn Umar he said, The Messenger of Allah said: 'Whoever extends their cloth (to below the ankle) due to arrogance, Allah will not look at them on the*

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<sup>21</sup> Al-Bukhâri, *Shahîh al-Bukhârî*, Juz V, page. 2182

*Day of Judgment.* 'Narrated by Al-Bukhari.<sup>22</sup>

(Hadith narrated) from Ibn Umar he said, The Messenger of Allah said, 'Whoever extends their cloth (to below the ankle) due to arrogance, God will not look at them on the Day of Judgment.' Abu Bakr said, 'O the Messenger of Allah, indeed one of my cloth sometimes gets down by itself unless I always keep it.' Then the Prophet said: 'You are not among the people who do it for pride. Narrated by Al-Bukhari.<sup>23</sup>

The first hadith said that someone with clothes extending beyond the ankle would be punished with hellfire. According to this hadith, it can be understood that cloth extending to the bottom of ankles, whether it happens because of habit, without any intention or deliberately with the intention to be arrogant, will be punished in hell. In the second hadith, it can be learned that Muslims will be punished with hell if they deliberately extend their cloth beyond their ankle because of arrogance. In the second hadith, the Prophet prohibits ones to extend their cloth beyond their ankle in the connection with an *'illat*, the arrogance that comes with the action. Thus, not all people who do so are condemned by the Prophet. This is reinforced by the third hadith that Abu Bakr wore cloth which sometimes extended beyond his ankle. The Prophet assertively excluded Abu Bakr as he was not among the people who do so with the intention to be arrogant.<sup>24</sup>

### C. Narration bi al-Ma'nâ

Hadith can be narrated in the form of *bi al-lafdzi* or *bi al-ma'nâ*. According to Muhammad 'Ajjaj al-Khathib, hadith narrated with *bi al-lafzhi* is hadith that maintains the original discourse of the Prophet, while the hadith narrated with *bi al-ma'nâ* is hadith whose utterances made by the companions without changing the original meaning they heard from the Prophet.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Muslim, *Shahîh Muslim*, Juz VI, page. 147

<sup>23</sup> Al-Bukhâri, *Shahîh al-Bukhârî*, Juz V, page. 2181

<sup>24</sup> Lihat Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Amir al-Kahlani al-Shan'ani, *Subul al-Salâm*, (t.tp: Maktabah Musthafa al-Babi al-Halabi, 1960), Juz IV, page. 158

<sup>25</sup> Muhammad 'Ajjaj al-Khathib, *al-Sunnah qabla Tadwîn*, (Beirut: Dar al-

Generally, the companions tried to transmit hadith with *bi al-lafzhi*, keeping the discourse of hadith they narrated in accordance with what they heard from the Prophet. They do not want to confuse any single letter with another, one sentence with another, or preceding a phrase before another. 'Umar ibn al-Khathab once said, 'Who heard a hadith and reported it as he heard, he had survived.' Ibn Umar was among the companions who demanded strict narration with *lafzi*. He often reproved companions in order to keep the wording as they heard from the Prophet. When he heard a companion who delivered the hadith about the five fundamental principles of Islam, he revoked: 'You got it wrong, put the Ramadan fasting at the end of the hadith as I heard from the Messenger instead of on third place as you said'.<sup>26</sup>

Many companions and Islamic scholars supported the need to transmit hadith with *bi al-lafzhi*. Imam Malik when asked about changing the order discourse of hadith but with the same meaning, he replied, 'In regard of hadith, I do not like it, because it can add and reduce it.' Imam Ahmad also liked the narration with *bi al-lafzhi*, adhering to the *lafaz* of hadith without changing it. The same attitudes exhibited by al-Qasim ibn Muhammad, Muhammad ibn Sirin and etc.<sup>27</sup>

The fundamental grounds for narrating hadith with *lafdzi* are based on the following hadith of the Prophet:

*(Hadith narrated) from Zaid ibn Thabit he said, 'I heard the Messenger of Allah said, 'Allah will shed light on the face of someone who heard the hadith from us, memorize them and deliver them to others as he heard. Perhaps the persons who deliver them understand more than those who hear and perhaps those who deliver them are not more knowledgeable than those who hear. Narrated by Abu Daud.'*<sup>28</sup>

*(Hadith narrated) from Al Bara` bin 'Azib, the Prophet PBUH said, 'If you go to bed (want to go to bed), you should*

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Fikri, 1990), page. 126. Hereinafter referred to as 'Ajjaj al-Khathib, *al-Sunnah qabla Tadwîn*.

26 'Ajjaj al-Khathib, *al-Sunnah qabla Tadwîn*, page. 127.

27 Rif'at Fauzi Abdul Muthalib, page. 417-418

28 Abu Dâud, *Sunan Abi Dâud*, Juz III, page. 360

*take wudhu and sleep by heading to the right and then read, 'O Allah, I put forward my face to You, I surrender my errands to You, I lean my back to You hoping (your grace) and fearing (the torment if one makes a mistake). There is no help from your threat but from You. I have faith in the book which You sent, and (the truth of) the Prophet You sent.' 'If you die, you will die in a state of fithrah (embracing Islam)' Narrated by Ahmad<sup>29</sup>*

The first hadith indicates that the Prophet wanted the Muslims to maintain the *lafaz* of hadith in narrating it and explained that there is different level of understanding among the companions and He limit the changes between one *lafaz* to another in general. The second hadith was narrated by al-Barra when he repeated this hadith in front of the Prophet. When he said the words '*amantu bikitabika al-ladzi anzalta*', he continued with the word '*wanabiyika*.' The Prophet said, '*Not wanabiyika al-ladzi arsalta*.' Prophet's comment indicated that the Prophet did not allow the differences in words when praying, the substitution of the word "Your Prophet" with the word "Your Messenger", although both words have the same meaning.

Nonetheless, many companions and hadith narrators narrated hadith based on its meaning. Some hadith were even narrated by the people who prohibit the transmission with *bi al-ma'nâ*. According to Rif'at Fauzi Abdul Muthalib, this phenomenon can be understood in two ways. First, the rejection of the hadith *bi al-ma'nâ* should be understood in the context that the addition and reduction of the hadith discourse would negatively alter its meaning. It is in this regard that there is a narration stating, 'the companions of the Prophet, when listening to a hadith from the Prophet did not add or reduce nor did like Abdullah Ibn Umar.' Second, the need to transmit hadith with *bi al-lafzhi* should be understood merely because they did not like the hadith with *bi al-ma'nâ* or they liked the narration of hadith with *lafzhi* which is not necessarily a rejection to all hadith *bi al-ma'nâ*. In this regard, the scholars of Malikiyah interpret Imam Malik's statement as his 'fondness.' In other words, it is more important and more preferable

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<sup>29</sup> Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *Musnad al-Imâm Ahmad ibn Hanbal*, Juz IV, page. 292

as Malik stated, "I prefer hadith narrated with *lafzhi*.' This confirms that he allowed adding *alif* or *waw* letters if they do not change the meaning. It is for this reason that Qadi Iyad is also viewed as the scholar who allowed for transmitting hadith based on its meaning.<sup>30</sup>

The narration of hadith based on its meaning finds its bases on the hadith of the Prophet indicating its permission.

*(Hadith narrated) from AkMiyah al-Laitsi he said, 'We came to the Messenger of Allah and asked him, 'for our father, you and our mother, O the Messenger of Allah. we heard the hadith from you but we are unable to reiterate it as we heard.' Then the Messenger of Allah said, 'As long as you don not justify the unlawful and do not proscribe the lawful and it is accurate in its meaning, it should be fine' (Narrated by Thabrani)<sup>31</sup>*

Narrating hadith based on its meaning was performed in urgent circumstances (*dharuriyah*). However, in doing so, the companions were very cautious. Therefore, we found that that companions such as Ibn Mas'ud, Abu Darda, and Anas ibn Malik after narrating hadith used the words, 'The Messenger of Allah said something like this '*qala Rasulallah saw hakadza*' and '*nahwan min hadza, qariban min hadza*.'<sup>32</sup>

The later scholars of hadith further elaborated the permissibility of *bi al-ma'nâ* hadith by making provisions and conditions that restrict certain hadith in order not to be narrated based on its meaning. However, the overall conditions mentioned by the scholars of hadith can be classified into two categories: *First*, the conditions are related to the object narrated, with regard to the content of the hadith itself. Among the conditions defined are 1) unrelated to the issue of worship, 2) not the hadith in the form of *jawâmi 'al-Kalim*,<sup>33</sup> 3) limited to the period before the

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<sup>30</sup> Rif'at Fauzi Abd al-Muthalib, page. 419

<sup>31</sup> Sulaiman ibn Ahmad ibn Aiyub Abu al-Qasim Thabrani, *Mu'jam al-Kabîr*, (Mausul: Dar al-Ulum wa al-Hukm, 1983), Juz VII, page. 100

<sup>32</sup> Ajjaj al-Khathib, *al-Sunnah qabla Tadwin*, page. 130.

<sup>33</sup> Muhammad 'Ajjaj al-Khathib, *Ushul al-Hadits, Uluumuh wa Musthalahu*, (Beirut: Dar al-Fikri, 1989), page. 252. hereinafter referred to as 'Ajjaj al-Khathib, *Ushul al-Hadits*.

codification of the Hadith.<sup>34</sup> *Second*, the conditions are related to the narrators of hadith itself, such as 1) the narrator knew its *madlûl*, 2) understood Arabic and the ins and outs of the language, and 3) understood various meanings of the content of the hadith, 4) understood words that may alter the meaning and words that may not alter the meaning.<sup>35</sup>

It is also interesting to observe restrictions of hadith *bi al-ma'nâ* from the standpoint of *fuqaha* who divided hadith utterances into *ushul fiqh* terms. Note the following statement made by al-Sarkhasyi:

*Khabar* (hadith) may come in the form of *muhkam*, *zhahir*, *musykil*, *musytarak*, *mujmal* or *mutasyabih*. As for the *muhkam*, hadith *bi al-ma'nâ* may be narrated by the people who understand Arabic and its ins and outs. *Lafaz zahir* should not be transmitted with *bi al-ma'nâ* except for people who had the knowledge of Arabic language and understood its ins and outs and *shari'ah* law. *Lafaz musykil* and *musytarak* basically should not be narrated based on their meanings since their meanings can only be understood by *takwil*. *Takwil* is part of *qiyas* which cannot be used as arguments. *Lafaz mujmal* basically did not give a clear meaning unless supported by other *dalil*. So did *lafaz mutasyabih*, because we will be hindered to search for its meaning. These are the reasons why they should not be narrated based on their meaning. *Khabar* in the form *jawami 'al-Kalim* like the words of the Prophet, 'Tax shall come with responsibilities' may be narrated based on its meaning with the conditions as mentioned in *lafaz zahir*.

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<sup>34</sup> Nur al-Din 'Itir stated that opinion differences between narration and meaning was confined only to the period before codification. After codification where traditions have been recorded, meaning-based narration is no longer justified except to merely remind the meanings of hadith in Islamic teaching forum. As for *hujjah* or recording it in books, hadith must be narrated based on its *lafaz*. See Nur al-Din 'Itr, *Manhaj al-Naqdi fi 'Ulum al-Hadits*, (Damsyiq: Dar al-Fikri, t,t), page. 228. Hereinafter referred to as Nur al-Din 'Itr, *Manhaj al-Naqdi*.

<sup>35</sup> 'Ajjaj al-Khathib, *Ushul al-Hadits*, page. 251

<sup>36</sup> Summarized from al-Sarkhasyi's statement as cited by many writers. For further details, see al-Sarkhasyi, *Ushul al-Sarkhasyi*, (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah,

Hadith *bi al-ma'nâ* appears to have become an undisputable phenomenon in narrating hadith. This was also expressed by the expert of hadith such as Ibn Sirin. He stated, 'I heard hadith from ten people, it had one meaning (the same) but its *lafaz* varied.'<sup>37</sup> Research on the books of hadith revealed that most of the hadith were narrated based on their meaning. Imam Bukhari seemed to accept and was more flexible in the transmission of hadith *bi al-ma'nâ* compared to Imam Muslim.<sup>38</sup> Thus, the Book of *Shahih al-Bukhari* contains a lot of *bi al-ma'nâ* hadith compared to the book by Muslim. Hadith about the *niat* (intention) for instance, according to Syuhudi Ismail,<sup>39</sup> was narrated with 5 different initial narrations in *Shahih al-Bukhari*.

Based the research conducted in the books of hadith, it appears that an issue conveyed by the Prophet may have many narrations and they may even reach up to more than ten narrations. This is especially noticeable in the hadith which the Prophet delivered in the crowd where the companions directly saw and heard the hadith from the Prophet. As for the case of an Arab Bedouin peeing in the mosque, there are a lot of narrations about this which clearly shows it was indeed narrated with *bi al-ma'nâ*.

*(Hadith narrated) from Anas, a countryside Arab peed in the mosque so that some companions approached (to beat). Then the Messenger of Allah said, 'Leave him. Do not stop him.' Anas said, 'when the man had finished peeing, the*

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Beirut, 1993), Juz I, page. 356

<sup>37</sup> Muhammad ibn Isa Abu Isa al-Tirmidzi, *al-'Ilal al-Shaghir*; (Beirut: Dar al-Ihya al-Turats al-Arabi, Beirut, t.t.), Juz I, page. 746

<sup>38</sup> Lihat Abu al-Fadhl Ahmad ibn Ali Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, *al-Nukat 'ala Kitab ibn Shalah*, al-Mamlakah al-Arabiyyah al-Su'udiyah (al-Mamlakah al-Arabiyyah al-Su'udiyah: 'Imadat al-Bahtsi al-Alami bi al-Jami'ah al-Islamiyyah, 1984), Juz I, page. 282. According to Ibn Hajar, there are two things that led to al-Bukhari allowing and being flexible in narrating hadith based in its meaning. First, Imam al-Bukhari spent a considerable of time in writing his book. It is based on Ibnu Hajar's citation of Imam Bukhari's statement: "Perhaps I heard a hadith in Syam, and wrote it in Egypt, or I heard a hadith in Basra and wrote it in Khurasan." Bukhari might write hadith based on his memorization whose words he adjusted. Likewise, Imam Muslim recorded hadith where he received them from his teachers.

<sup>39</sup> Syuhudi Ismail, *Kaedah Kesahihan Sanad Hadis, Telaah Kritis dan Tinjauan dengan Pendekatan Ilmu Sejarah*, (, Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1995), page. 81

*Messenger asked a bucket of water then poured over it.*<sup>40</sup>

*(Hadith narrated) from Yahya bin Sa'id that he heard Anas bin Malik mentioned that a countryside Arab went toward one corner of the mosque, then he peed on it. Then the people yelled at him. The Messenger of Allah then said, 'Let him alone.' Once completed, the Prophet asked for a bucket of water then poured the urine with water. Narrated by Muslim*<sup>41</sup>

*Anas bin Malik, Ishak's uncle, has told us, he said, 'When we were in the mosque with the Prophet, suddenly a countryside Arab came, stood and peed in the mosque. The companion said, 'hold! stop!' Anas said that the Messenger said: 'Do not stop him, let him pee until he is done.' Then the Prophet called him as he said, 'It is not appropriate to pee and defecate in this mosque. This place is only for remembering Allah, praying and reading the Quran.' Then the Prophet ordered one of the companions to take a bucket of water and flushed the urine. Narrated by Muslim*<sup>42</sup>

*(Hadith narrated) from Anas bin Malik, he said, 'When the Prophet was sitting in the mosque with his companions, suddenly a countryside Arab came and then peed in the mosque.' Then, the companions said, 'Hold! stop!' Anas said that the Messenger said, 'Do not stop him. Let him.' Then the Prophet called him said, 'This mosque is not the place for peeing and defecating since it is merely the place to read the Qur'an, remember Allah, and pray shalah.' The Prophet said to one of the companions, 'Stand up, take a bucket of water and then flush the urine.' The companion then brought him a bucket of water and the Prophet flushed the urine.' Narrated by Ahmad*<sup>43</sup>

The above hadith shows that the story of a villager peeing in the mosque was narrated in various ways. In terms of diversities of

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<sup>40</sup> Muslim, *Shahih Muslim*, Juz I, page. 163

<sup>41</sup> Muslim, *Shahih Muslim*, Juz I, page. 163

<sup>42</sup> Muslim, *Shahih Muslim*, Juz I, page. 163

<sup>43</sup> Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *Musnad al-Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal*, Juz III, page. 391

their *lafaz*, it is obvious that they are hadith *bi al-ma'nâ*. The seven hadith about the order to pour water on the villager's urine show different *lafaz* both in their arrangement and in their narrations.

There are four companions who narrated these hadith, Abu Huraira, Anas bin Malik, Yahya bin Sa'id and Mu'qil ibn Muqarrin. These number may increase if all hadith of about this story were quoted from all books of hadith. The various narration of hadith by each companion as the source of this hadith indicates that the transmission *bi al-ma'nâ* hadith has taken place and become a phenomenon among the companions. Thus, we can conclude that this phenomenon not only has been done by the later narrators but also has occurred even in the earlier days of Islam.

In terms of narration completion, the seven hadith also vary. Some not only recorded and narrated the prohibition of the Prophet to stop the man and his command to pour water over the villager's urine but also provided other information such as 1) throwing away the dust where the urine resided, 2) the Prophet's statement that Muslims are the people who give convenience not those who give burden, and 3) the Prophet's teaching to the man who peed in the mosque that the mosque is not a place to urinate but a sacred place where people worship, remember Allah and pray shalah.

The transmission *bi al-ma'nâ*, of course raises, some problems. First, there is a variety of *lafaz* and narration of hadith even though it has the same meaning. *Lafaz* and narration relied on the companions and hadith narrators, both from the companions, the generation after the companion and later generations.

Second, it is difficult to exactly know which hadith whose *lafaz* comes from the Prophet. This is because the transmitters, both the companions and other narrators, used words that were familiar with them in their time. Third, it is difficult to do the philology study to examine the validity of a hadith, as stated by M. Quraish Shihab:

In my opinion, philology studies cannot be used to determine the validity of a hadith. We agreed that the hadith, in general, is narrated with *bi al-ma'nâ*. The prophet perhaps said a word (*imam*, for example) that was not used at that time. Due to the *bi al-ma'nâ* hadith, the companions

used other words that were familiar in their time. The *tabi'in* also used words that were familiar in their time and so did the *tabi'i tabi'in*... Therefore, it is most likely that hadith narrated by Bukhari are *bi al-ma'nâ* hadith. So how could we say that hadith narrated by Bukhari were invalid merely because we assume that their lafaz was invalid (due to his use of *bi al-ma'nâ* narration with *ibarah/ lafaz* that were famous in his time though the meaning was the same as what was meant by the Prophet.) This is the real weakness of Imam Shafi'i in *zawaj wa nikah* because he used the '*illah*' sentence that was not used by the Prophet in '*istahlaltum furūjuhunna' ala barakat Allah*' eliminating *zawaj wa nikah* sentence. This is because the use of *bi al-ma'nâ* narration.<sup>44</sup>

Fourth, in the case where the readers are not forced to capture the content from word by word, capturing the overall meaning of the narration should become their main priorities in reading *bi al-ma'nâ* hadith so that they can understand the intent of the Prophet in the hadith. However, in terms of technical implementation of worship, further reading on the content of word by word is inevitable.

Fifth, there are differences in drawing the conclusions of law. In Arabic, even though words may have same meanings but it is clear that each word carries meaning which sometimes differs from each other. Therefore, the difference in the narration of *fiqh* issues often lead to different legal conclusions as cited in the two following hadith:

*(Narrated Hadith) from Abu Hurairah, from the Prophet PNUH, he said: When you hear iqamah, go praying. Be calm and dignified and do not be hasty. Whatever you find from your imam pray and follow, what you miss from the imam then complete. Narrated Al-Bukhari.*<sup>45</sup>

*(Narrated Hadith) from Abu Hurairah, from the Prophet, he said: If you go to pray, then do not to run in a hurry. Come to the mosque by walking and be calm. What you*

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<sup>44</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, "Dialog" dalam Yunahar Ilyas (Ed), *Pengembangan Pemikiran terhadap Hadis*, (Yogyakarta: Lembaga Pengkajian dan Pengembangan Islam (LPPI), 1996), hal. 77-78

<sup>45</sup> Al-Bukhâri, *Shahîh al-Bukhârî*, Juz I, page. 228

*find from your imam pray, and what you missed replace.  
Narrated by Al-Nasai.*<sup>46</sup>

The two hadith are *bi al-ma'nâ* hadith. This is evident in the different words used by both hadith. At the end of the hadith, there are two different words, the word *atimmu* (complete) *uqdh* (replace). In relation to the *istinbath* of *fiqh* law, these two words carry different meanings. If someone prayed with the imam at the fourth *rakaat*, how is the status of his *rakaat* when he is with the imam and *rakaat* when he is not with the imam, the first, second, and third. Using the hadith with the word 'complete', some scholars regard that the *rakaat* he is with the imam (the fourth *rakaat* of imam) is the first *rakaat* for *makmum*. The next *rakaat* he had to do is the second, third and fourth *rakaat*, because 'complete' means to do the next one. However, when using the hadith with the word 'change', some scholars perceive that the first *rakaat* he is with the imam is the fourth *rakaat* (the same as the imam) while the *rakaat* he missed are the first, second, and third. Replacing means to fulfill what has been missed, the ones that could not be implemented. Similar rules apply to the sitting of *tasyhud awal*. If we take the first hadith, *tasyhud awal* is done in the first *rakaat* after the imam, because it was his second *rakaat*. If we take the second hadith, the *tasyhud awal* is done in the third *rakaat* after the imam, because it is his second *rakaat*.

#### **D. Abridging Hadith**

Another phenomenon in narrating hadith is hadith that narrates certain part of the hadith but leaving other parts. In general, this model of narrating hadith was intended for specific purposes related to a specific theme so that the other parts of the hadith that are not related to the issue were not narrated.

As stated by Nur al-Din 'Itr, some scholars prohibit this kind of transmission, especially those who prohibit transmission with meaning. However, all previous and current Islamic scholars permit this and it is the valid opinion. It is permitted if abandoned part of the hadith is different from the delivered part and is not related to the delivered part. The abandoned and delivered part are two

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<sup>46</sup> Al-Nasai, *Sunan al-Nasai*, Juz II, page. 114

separate sentences and are related to two things that do not have any connection. Consider some of the following hadith:

*Abu Hurairah said that the Messenger of Allah said: 'I am just as how My servants think I am. I will be with them if they remember Me. If they place Me in themselves, I will place them in Myself. If they remember Me in a group. I will remember the in a better group. If they get close to Me an inch, I will get close to them a foot. If they get close to Me a foot, I will get close to them a yard. If they come to Me walking, I will come to them running. Narrated by Bukhari'*<sup>47</sup>

*Abu Hurairah said that the Messenger of Allah said: 'I am just as how My servants think I am.'*<sup>48</sup>

Both hadith were mentioned in different places. The first hadith was narrated by Bukhari in its complete discourse appeared earlier in the chapter of '*qauluhu yuhazzirukum wa ta'ala.*' The second hadith was briefly narrated by Bukhari later on in the chapter of '*qauluhu yuriduna ta'ala.*' Based on the chapter in which the hadith was written, it appears that Imam Bukhari abridged hadith for certain purposes.

As stated by Nur al-Din 'Itr, Imam Bukhari often abridged hadith because he often narrated hadith in several places in accordance with the purposes and laws which can be taken from them. In addition, he also narrated hadith in some places corresponding to the part of a particular hadith. However, at other times, this hadith is narrated in its complete discourse for the reader to know its original discourse.<sup>49</sup>

## E. Conclusion

Based on the above discussion there is a number of issues need to be considered when interacting with hadith. It is expected that an understanding of the problems in hadith will lead readers to read hadith comprehensively so as not to be trapped in one particular extreme point, either by holding to one particular hadith

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<sup>47</sup> Al-Bukhâri, *Shahîh al-Bukhârî*, Juz VI, page. 2694

<sup>48</sup> Al-Bukhâri, *Shahîh al-Bukhârî*, Juz VI, page. 2725

<sup>49</sup> Nur al-Din 'Itr, *Manhaj al-Naqdi.*, page. 229

or rejecting the hadith because they are no longer communicative to contemporary issues.

With a more comprehensive reading, an intact conclusion can be achieved and Prophet's intention in the hadith can be predicted.

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