CRITICISM OF MUSTAFA AZAMI'S CRITICAL THOUGHTS IN THE STUDY OF HADITH

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Abstract: The existence and authenticity of hadith have become two of the most essential objects in the discourse of hadith among Muslims, especially after coming into contact with criticism from Orientalists. This article describes explicitly and criticizes Azami's hadith thought in the hadith debate among Orientalists. This research is an analytical descriptive research based on content analysis. The results reveal that Azami can position himself as a critic of the Western thesis by presenting historical data as a basis for his thoughts. The rhythm of the scientific debate modeled on by Western thinkers can be dived into and followed convincingly so that their responses and criticisms reach the Orientalists. Orientalists believe that Azami's criticism has not been able to divert the orientation of the general thesis that hadiths are not historically authentic. Azami's defense still needs convincing, and the arguments are still circular. This model of thinking has yet to satisfy the scientific desires of the Orientalists, so it has a small implications.

Keywords: Hadith Thought, Mustafa Azami, Orientalist

Introduction

THE REACTION OF MUSLIMS to the thought of orientalist hadith is quite diverse.[1] This diversity of responses boils down to the methodological side, which tends to be unsympathetic to hadith, in which case it is known that, in general, their studies are more skeptical.[2] Based on this matter, most of the results of orientalist studies are of little interest to Muslim thinkers. If someone reviews and studies, it is to criticize and reject the results of their scientific

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[1] Syamsuddin Arif, *Orientalis & Diabolisme Pemikiran* (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2008), 78.

[2] M. Arfan Mu'ammar and Abdul Wahid Hasan, *Studi Islam Kontemporer: Perspektif Insider/Outsider* (Yogyakarta: IRCiSoD, 2017), 5–8.

studies.[3] The primary reason for this opposition is the skepticism developed by the orientalists, contrary to the existing thinking among Muslim thinkers. Although undeniable, Western thoughts often become a stimulus for the birth of new thoughts as a reaction to the findings of Western studies.[4]

Hadith studies among orientalists experienced rapid development after finding their form in the nineteenth century A.D. Conflicts of interest from outside the scientific environment impact the orientation and direction of studies that are political and other pragmatic interests.[5] In the next development phase, skepticism gets the most significant portion, coloring the orientation of Orientalist thinking about hadith. This fact has prompted Muslim thinkers to criticize various styles and approaches to orientalist hadith thought. The themes of hadith studies presented by orientalists often conclude that hadiths are not authentic and ahistorical.[6] The inauthenticity of the hadiths points to the historical reality revealed by orientalist research with abundant information about falsifying results in the early formation of Islamic societies. In addition, the model of spreading hadith, which only relies on oral power, also makes it difficult to accept that hadith is still genuinely authentic.[7]

In contrast to Muslim thinkers who follow the development of the transmission and dissemination of hadith originating from

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[3] Nailil Huda and Ade Pahrudin, "Orientasi Kajian Hadis Kontemporer Indonesia (Studi Artikel E-Jurnal Dalam Portal Moraref 2015-2017)," *Refleksi* 17, no. 2 (December 27, 2018): 181–182, https://doi.org/10.15408/ref.v17i2.10204.

[4] Aan Supian, "Studi Hadis di Kalangan Orientalisme," *Nuansa : Jurnal Studi Islam Dan Kemasyarakatan* 9, no. 1 (June 10, 2016): 25–26, https://doi.org/10.29300/nuansa.v9i1.370.

[5] Idri, *Hadis dan Orientalis: Perspektif Ulama Hadis dan Orientalis Tentang Hadis Nabi* (Depok: Kencana, 2008), 3–15. In more recent trend, the study on hadith include its expression in the digital platform. See, for example, Ermawati Usman et al., "A Netnography Analysis of Thematic Hadith Memes Distribution on Social Media," *Al-Albab* 12, no. 2 (December 31, 2023): 171–88, https://doi.org/10.24260/alalbab.v12i2.2778.

[6] Huda and Pahrudin, "Orientasi Kajian Hadis Kontemporer Indonesia (Studi Artikel E-Jurnal Dalam Portal Moraref 2015-2017)," 181.

[7] Muhammad Alfatih Suryadilaga, "Kajian Hadis Di Era Global," *Esensia: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 15, no. 2 (September 22, 2014): 208, https://doi.org/10.14421/esensia.v15i2.773.

hadith expert scholars, this is not the same as the findings of orientalist research. Various information about the narration of hadith that prevails among Muslims with their methods still acknowledges and believes that it is still authentic both in transmission and the originality of its contents.[8] Hadith falsification incidents in the early civilizations of Muslims did not undermine the originality of hadiths. The scholars have responded to this with various terms and conditions of transmission and standardization of assessing the authenticity of hadith. Various sciences have been packaged to guard and maintain the authenticity of hadith.[9]

Various opinions of thinkers emerged in response to different views in the field of hadith, both from orientalists and Muslim scholars.[10] The existence of these views contributes to the idea that hadith studies are still exciting and debatable.[11] Various problems are still possible to study, for example, the aspects of transmission, originality, and authenticity, as well as their existence in the Islamic legal system. On the one hand, the study of hadith has a level of difficulty and a variety of differences that are often difficult to lead to a single point of conclusion.[12] Efforts to strengthen the existence of hadith as an explanation of the content of the Qur'an cannot be avoided, along with the sending of the Prophet Muhammad as the bearer of the message of Islam. Sunnah

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[8] Huda and Pahrudin, "Orientasi Kajian Hadis Kontemporer Indonesia (Studi Artikel E-Jurnal Dalam Portal Moraref 2015-2017)," 170–172.

[9] Inama Anusantari, "Perspektif Orientalis dalam Mengkaji Hadits dan Bantahan Kaum Muslim: Perspektif Ignaz Goldziher, Joseph Franz Schacht dan Mustafa Azami," *Riwayah: Jurnal Studi Hadits* 6, no. 1 (2020): 120–22, https://doi.org/10.21043/riwayah.v6i1.6749.

[10] Irzak Yuliardy Nugroho, "Orientalisme Dan Hadits : Kritik Terhadap Sanad Menurut Pemikiran Joseph Schacht," *Asy-Syari'ah : Jurnal Hukum Islam* 6, no. 2 (July 3, 2020): 155–70, https://doi.org/10.55210/assyariah.v6i2.278; See also Edward W. Said, *Orientalism, Social Theory Re-Wired* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 13, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315775357-43.

[11] Abdul Karim, "Pemikiran Orientalis Terhadap kajian Tafsir Hadis," *Addin* 7, no. 2 (2013): 322–324, https://doi.org/10.21043/addin.v7i2.581.

[12] Moch. Nurcholis, "Melihat Wajah Islam dari Orientalis: Telaah Nalar Orientalis tentang Hukum Islam," *Al-Majaalis : Jurnal Dirasat Islamiyah* 8, no. 2 (May 20, 2021): 421, https://doi.org/10.37397/almajaalis.v8i2.163.

or Hadith is nothing but the embodiment of the contents of the Holy Scriptures, which are tied to the social context at that time.[13]

One of the Muslim thinkers who contributed ideas and dialogue with orientalist schools of thought was Muhammad Mustafa Azami.[14] Azami's partiality towards the historical transmission of hadith strengthens the assumption of most Muslims that historically, hadith is genuinely authentic. The struggles of Azami's thoughts cannot be separated from the scientific communication he experienced during his scientific journeys to the West to complete his doctoral program.[15] Azami's research on early Islamic manuscripts is an authentic instrument for uncovering the state of hadith narration since the beginning of Islam. Based on this factual data, Azami criticized Western thinking, which tends to be skeptical and convincing.[16] The implications of Azami's criticism are assumed to have a broad impact among hadith thinkers, especially orientalists. Various comments, criticisms, and responses that appeared in written form also gave color to the study of hadith in the contemporary era.

Several exciting studies review and analyze Azami's thoughts with various approaches to position the existence of this paper. Solikhin explained that Azami's position was indeed not as prominent as the names of other modern Muslim thinkers.[17] Azami's specificity in studying and attacking Western hadith thinking is a unique contribution to Azami. Nawas said Azami's role in refuting the claims of Western thought, which concluded

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[13] Istianah Istianah and Sri Wahyuningsih, "The Hadith Digitization in Millennial Era: A Study at Center for Hadith Studies, Indonesia," *Qijis (Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies)* 7, no. 1 (June 3, 2019): 25–44, https://doi.org/10.21043/qijis.v7i1.4900.

[14] Mustafa Erdil, *On the Path of the Prophet: Fethullah Gulen's Understanding of Sunnah* (Clifton, New Jersey, USA: Tughra Books, 2023), 18.

[15] Muhammad Mustafa Azami, *Studies in Hadith Methodology and Literature* (Kuala Lumpur: The Other Press, 2002), 172.

[16] Anusantari, "Perspektif Orientalis dalam Mengkaji Hadits dan Bantahan Kaum Muslim: Perspektif Ignaz Goldziher, Joseph Franz Schacht dan Mustafa Azami," 119–120.

[17] Muhammad Sholikhin, *Hadis Asli Hadis Palsu: Studi Kasus Syekh MM Al-A'zami, PhD dalam Mengungkap Otentisitas Hadis* (Yogyakarta: Garudhawaca, 2012), 19-25.

that hadiths were not scientifically authentic and historical.[18] Saputra tookAzami in a group of modern Muslim thinkers who are responsive to the development of hadith studies in contact with the Western world and modern society with advanced technological services without losing the authenticity of hadith spirituality.[19] Syarifah mentioned main contribution to hadith thinking focused on two main points: writing hadith and criticizing hadith, responding to Schacht's thesis and criticizing it.[20] Along with this, Mubin *et. al.*,[21] concluded that Azami's thinking has high objectivity. Azami bases his argument on historical facts to undermine orientalist claims about the inauthentic hadith.

The focus of this study is to criticize Azami's hadith thinking, which can give color to the ranks of hadith reviewers, especially those who criticize the domination of Western skepticism. In addition, it will analyze its implications for hadith thinking after the presence of Azami's criticism of the orientalist thesis with the historical data offered. The style of hadith thinking that emerged after Azami became the starting point for reviewing the extent of the response to Azami's thoughts in the hadith thinking scene.

This study uses a descriptive-analytic method with an emphasis on the aspect of content analysis. In this section, the researcher seeks to present a picture of the reality of Azami's thought construct and understand its contents so that this research pays enough attention to processes, events, and their intensity. Next, it is to determine the main points of hadith thinking from

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[18] Sitti Syakirah Abu Nawas, "'Dirasat fi al-Hadits al-Nabawiy wa Tarikh Tadwinih': Analisis Terhadap Pemikiran Hadis Muhammad Mushthafa al-Azamy," *Tahdis: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Al-Hadis* 8, no. 2 (2017): 223–239, https://doi.org/10.24252/tahdis.v8i2.7229.

[19] Hasep Saputra, "Genealogi Perkembangan Studi Hadis dI Indonesia," *Al Quds : Jurnal Studi Alquran dan Hadis* 1, no. 1 (June 27, 2017): 41–66, https://doi.org/10.29240/alquds.v1i1.164.

[20] Umayyah Syarifah, "Kontribusi Muhammad Musthafa Azami dalam Pemikiran Hadis (Counter Atas Kritik Orentalis)," *Ulul Albab Jurnal Studi Islam* 15, no. 2 (2014): 222–241, https://doi.org/10.18860/ua.v15i2.2728.

[21] Muh Fatkul Mubin, Jannatul Husna, and Nurkholis Nurkholis, "Objektifitas Pemikiran Azami Tentang Sejarah Penulisan Hadis," *Analisis: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 21, no. 1 (June 30, 2021): 141–164, https://doi.org/10.24042/ajsk.v21i1.8152.

figures and the reactions of other thinkers to be analyzed. In the final stage, the researcher identifies various ideas of thought presented in his writings in various works, both from the character and others who reveal the specifics of his thoughts and critics.[22] The next stage will reveal the critical notes of the character's thoughts by examining the weaknesses and maintaining objectivity.

Azami's Position in Hadith Studies

The debate of hadith thinkers among the orientalists and Muslims is robust. Orientalists are mostly skeptical about the authenticity of hadith; various theories have been developed to support and prove this view.[23] Meanwhile, Muslim thinkers responded by presenting historical facts of authentic hadith transmission. The exciting thing about these two groups is that they both claim their thesis has historical truth.[24] For Muslim thinkers, hadith is a source of law and theological doctrine, so they try to maintain the existence of hadith.[25] Azami is one of the strict Muslim thinkers who criticizes Orientalist thinking about the authenticity of hadith.[26] This criticism is directed at the results of the views of Western scholars and, at the same time, the methods used.

Azami based his study on old literature in the form of manuscripts. However, this source of Azami's study was later considered inconsistent and only appeared in the third century of the Hijria.[27]Azami made edits to these manuscripts and then made

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[22] Klaus Krippendorff, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology* (London ; New York: Sage Publications Ltd, 2004), 34–37.

[23] Abdurrahman Wahid, ed., *M.M. Azami, Pembela Eksistensi Hadis*, Cet. 1 (Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus, 2002), 27–34.

[24] Ali Masrur, *Teori Common Link G.H.A. Juynboll: Melacak Akar Kesejarahan Hadits Nabi* (Yogyakarta: LKIS, 2007), 31.

[25] Kamaruddin Amin, *Menguji Kembali Keakuratan Metode Kritik Hadis* (Hikmah, 2009), 1.

[26] Akhmad Minhaji and Ali Masrur, *Kontroversi Pembentukan Hukum Islam: Kontribusi Joseph Schacht* (Yogyakarta: UII Press, 2001), 37; See also M.M. Azami, *Manhaj An-Naqd 'Inda al-Muhaddisin Nasy'Atuhu Wa Tarikhuhu*, Ke-3 (Riyad: Makhtabah al-Kautsar, 1990), 127–142.

[27] Amin, *Menguji Kembali Keakuratan Metode Kritik Hadis*, 134.

them as valuable reference material.[28]Azami used this discovery to refute the Orientalist theory, which concluded that hadith could not be trusted historically.[29] Hadith transmission is in writing and produces manuscripts, which become a reference for later generations' study and compilation of hadith.[30] Azami mentioned that the Prophet had many secretaries, up to sixty-five people. Azami includes a list of the names of companions, tabi'in, and hadith scholars from 150 H who took part in writing hadith.[31] This assertion is actually to deny the opinion that in the early days of Islam, there were no Muslims who were good at reading and writing.[32]

Azami positioned himself as a rival to Western views on hadith.[33] Azami has contributed to the extended discussion between Orientalists and Muslims. The views he produced have become a reference for many Muslims in hadith studies. However, they continue to receive criticism from the West from a methodological and scientific point of view. One was by Juynboll, who assessed that Azami had used sources whose historicity could not be accounted for, so all his premises and conclusions were rejected.[34]

However, in Western literature, Azami's thoughts do not get a good place. Azami was often judged to have misunderstood Schacht's views and theories. This error included when Azami claimed that Schacht had used material sources arbitrarily, especially quotes related to the ash-Syāfi'ī case in dealing with his

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[28] M.M. Azami, *Studies In Early Hadith Literature With A Critical Edition of Some Early Tekts* (Beirut: Lebanon: Al-Maktab al-Islami, 1968), 248.

[29] Ahmed Hasan, *The Early Development of Islamic Jurisprudence*, Ke-1 (India: Adam Publisher & Distributros, 1994), v–vi.

[30] Syamsul Wathani, "Melawan Teori Otentisitas Hadits: (Counter Discourse Nabia Abbot Terhadap Teori Ignaz Goldziher)," *Rausyan Fikr: Jurnal Ilmu Studi Ushuluddin Dan Filsafat* 15, no. 2 (2019): 255, https://doi.org/10.24239/rsy.v15i2.485.

[31] Azami, *Studies In Early Hadith Literature With A Critical Edition of Some Early Tekts*, 34 and 182.

[32] M.M. Azami, *Kuttāb An-Nabī Saw*, Ke-3 (Beirut: Al-Maktab al-Islami, 1981).

[33] Abdullah Saeed, *The Qur'an: An Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 49.

[34]G.H.A. Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition, Studies in Chronology, Provenance and Authorship of Early Hadith* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 4.

debating opponents. Even though Azami had misunderstood it, it was baseless and inaccurate. Azami's defense of hadith from attacks by Western thinkers sometimes makes him seem blind and apologist.[35] So, Azam's rejection of Schacht's theory and views is sometimes disputed. In addition, Azami often needed to understand Schacht's opinions and arguments.[36] Naturally, Azami's criticism in Western studies is also considered appropriate, which is not fundamental and far from objective.

Focus of Azami's Hadith Thought Study

Azami's criticism focused on the accuracy of hadith narration, historicity, and codification of hadith.[37] Azami proves the authenticity of the hadith narration by presenting various evidence and reasons.[38] The weakness of the arguments of those who reject hadith is that they are not scientifically objective; some are oriented towards orientalists.[39] Azami's rebuttal is based on solid arguments, contributed to hadith research, and counterbalanced the swift flow of Orientalist thought toward hadith studies. Motzki thinks that this defense is sometimes more careful and apologizing.[40] According to Kamaruddin Amin, Azami's logic of thought and foundation cannot satisfy Western counterparts. The proof of the existence of hadith writing that Azami offered as an argument that hadith had been written since the early days of Islam was assumed not to be a product of the First and Second Hijriyah centuries. The criticism is not only on the source as the basis for Azami's criticism, but also the arguments used by Azami in criticizing Western thought are

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[35]Minhaji and Masrur, *Kontroversi pembentukan hukum Islam*, 54–55.

[36]Amin, *Menguji Kembali Keakuratan Metode Kritik Hadis*, 142.

[37]Syarifah, "Kontribusi Muhammad Musthafa Azami Dalam Pemikiran Hadis (Counter Atas Kritik Orentalis)," 225–230.

[38]Azami, *Studies In Early Hadith Literature With A Critical Edition of Some Early Tekts*, 248.

[39]Abdul Majid Khon, *Pemikiran Modern Dalam Sunah: Pendekatan Ilmu Hadis*, Ke-1 (Jakarta: Kencana Prenada Media Group, 2011), 86–92.

[40]Harald Motzki, *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence. Meccan Fiqh Before the Classical Schools*, Transliter: Marion H. Katz (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 40–42; See also G.H.A. Juynboll, *Kontroversi Hadis Di Mesir (1890-1960)*, Terj. Ilyas Hasan (Bandung: Mizan, 1999).

considered circular and endless.[41] Furthermore, Azami is considered to have no originality in his thoughts; the ideas he came up with were only based on Nabia Abbott and Fuat Sezgin. Such criticism may be justified since Azami is often considered a defender and acknowledges the truth of hadith (*sanguine*).

Apart from the pros and cons of Azami's thinking, if we examine what was produced by Schacht, for example, it can also be said to be something that existed in Goldziher's thinking. Reality cannot be denied when as-Sibā'i directly dialogues with Schacht about Goldziher's shortcomings and inaccuracies in presenting his thoughts.[42] Schacht did not seem to comment on the teacher's mistake when criticized by as-Sibā'i. In some ways, it was found that Schacht frankly stated that he was a continuation of Goldziher's line of thought.[43] Although there are differences and developments in the study of hadith by Schacht, Schacht is not Goldziher. This kind of approach can be used to examine Azami's thoughts; even though the results of his thoughts are in common with several previous figures, it can not automatically say that Azami did not contribute to hadith thinking.

Azami often gets emotional and too apologetic in criticizing Western thought. This assessment is, of course, through the eyes of people outside the group (outsiders) who support Azami. In addition, the method used by Azami is considered to be only taken from Western dissidents who have so far existed, such as Abbott and Sezgin. All three are often considered unscientific, revolve around the logic of their rebuttals, and glean information from less credible sources. Besides, it must be admitted that Azami's research still does not touch all Western thought, as his great interest will criticize all elements of hadith thought in the

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[41]Kamaruddin Amin, *Rethingking: Hadith Critical Methods* (Jakarta: Pustaka Mapan Jakarta, 2008), 144 and 152.

[42]Mustafa As-Siba'i, *As-Sunnah Wa Makānatuhā Fī at-Tasyri' al-Islāmi* (Beirut: Al-Maktab al-Islami, 1998), 15.

[43]Daniel W. Brown, "Western Hadith Studies," in *The Wiley Blackwell Concise Companion to the Hadith* (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2020), 39–56; See also Robert Hoyland, "Writing the Biography of the Prophet Muhammad: Problems and Solutions," *History Compass* 5, no. 2 (2007): 581–602, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1478-0542.2007.00395.x.

West. Some of his weak points are the assumptions that need to be more fundamental and Azami's need for more understanding of the methods and goals of Western thought. Even so, it would not be an exaggeration if someone gave a reward for what Azami had achieved so far. Everything illustrates the focus of Azami's efforts to criticize Western claims about hadith studies.

Azami's Main Thoughts About Hadith

The general objective of Azami's study of the Prophet's hadith is to strengthen the position of hadith scientifically. Some of the main study points central to Azami's discussion are rejecting doubts about hadith in narration, writing, and evidence.[44] The method used by Azami to refute the views of those who deny hadith is by providing critical comments and notes. The arguments built by the sunnah deniers are considered baseless and are only based on wrong assumptions. Azami concludes that the emergence of the thoughts of those who denounce the sunnah is due to evil intentions, apart from the negative impact of the influence of Western ideas.[45]

Azami refuted doubts about the absence of hadith writing in the early days by presenting some authentic data in the form of manuscripts he found in the Zahiriyah library, Syria, which are still original writings (*makhtūtāt*).[46]The manuscripts were assessed as the history of Suhail ibn Abū Salih (70-138 H), narrated by his father Abū Salih (d. 101 H). The father got the history directly from AbūHurairah (d. 59 H). Azami explained that it was true that the manuscripts were written around 598 H, and this was stated on the title page. However, the original manuscript is a copy of the original manuscript accompanied by direct testimony (*as-samā'*) written in 455 H. However, the manuscript is continued with its sanad to, the Prophet's friend, Abū Hurairah. The blasphemous hadiths in the Suhail manuscript can be relied upon because they

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[44]M.M. Azami, *Dirasat Fi Al-Hadis an-Nabawi Wa Tarikh Tadwinih* (Beirut: Al-Maktab al-Islami, 1985), 42.

[45]Azami, 42.

[46]Azami, 483.

are also found in the *Muslim Sahih* book, Musnad Ahmad, and others.[47]

Based on the efforts made by Azami, there is a bright spot from the doubts the West has been buzzing about. Authentic evidence of the existence of the manuscript of Suhail ibn Abū Salih has proven that the process of transmitting hadiths happened. The narration of hadith by Muslims is carried out with great care and prioritizes the narration's professionalism. Not a few criticize each other for maintaining the existence of the Prophet's hadith. Frequently, the child gives a lousy assessment of his father, and vice versa, for maintaining the truth of the hadith.[48] Through the comparison method carried out by Azami by examining existing manuscripts, he has been able to break Western critics who doubt the authenticity of the hadith of the Prophet, both in terms of the origins of the hadith and its transmission.

Scholars researching the narrators' personalities established provisions that distinguished between truly accepted narrators and those who could not be trusted. These provisions include:[49] a) People who lied in the name of the Prophet, then their history must be abandoned; b) People who in speaking like to lie even though it was not done to the Prophet himself, his hadith must still be rejected; c) The zindiq, the wicked, and forgetful people who do not understand what is conveyed, as well as those who do not have the character of determination, honesty, and understanding.

Azami's tendency towards hadith studies aims to criticize Western views that doubt and deny the authenticity of hadith. Azami sometimes gets caught up in long discussions that only naturally contain debates with Western views if he is considered excessive in commenting on Orientalists.[50] Orientalist figures study Islam, especially the hadith of the Prophet, based on

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[47] Azami, 483.

[48] M.M. Azami, *Studies in Hadith Methodology and Literature* (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1977), 47.

[49] Muḥammad Jamāl ad-Dīn al-Qāsimi, *Qawā'id at-Tahdīs Min Funūn Muṣṭalah al-Hadīs* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, tt.), 165; See also Musthafa Al-Siba'i, *Sunnah dan Peranannya dalam Penetapan Hukum Islam: Sebuah Pembelaan Kaum Sunni*, Terj. Nurcholish Madjid (Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus, 1991), 58.

[50] Amin, *Menguji Kembali Keakuratan Metode Kritik Hadis*, 140.

historical and social interests. At the same time, their tendencies are different from what Muslims do in general. Orientalists are cultural observers, so they are separated from their belief in religious doctrines that Muslims have believed.[51]

Apart from these various criticisms, Azami has advantages over several Western critics, such as as-Sibā'i and 'Ajjaj al-Khatīb. These two figures are considered to have criticized Goldziher, who doubted the authenticity of the hadith. Azami even demolished his theory and completely disproved his argument.[52] Azami's research on the literature used by the orientalists also discovers their mistakes. According to Azami, one of the most critical pieces of information is the Orientalist's statement about the term codification (*tadwīn)* of hadith. According to them, ibnSyihābaz-Zuhri was the first to write hadith.[53] Meanwhile, the word's true meaning is not writing hadiths but codifying (collecting) hadiths.[54] Ibn Shihāb az-Zuhri lived during the second Hijriyah and collected hadiths on the instructions of Caliph Umar ibn Abdul Aziz. Mistakes in understanding this word, according to Azami tadwīn, will cause bias everywhere. This happened among the orientalists who thought that the hadith had not been written down in the early days of Islam and had only existed since Az-Zuhri received the mandate.

Azami's criticism of another Orientalist error is counting the number of hadiths. Azami answered Western Scholars' doubts about the vast number of hadiths. Azami corrects this error if they see that many hadiths contain different subjects. With such a large number, they questioned whether the existence of the Prophet was talking. Or were there a lot of fake hadiths circulating from the start? He explained that this misunderstanding was caused by their ignorance in calculating the number of hadiths.[55] According to Azami, the hadiths of the Prophet saw were not only the deeds and sayings of the Prophet himself but also the deeds of his companions that were carried out alone or in the presence of the

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[51]Amin, 1.

[52]Ali Mustafa Yakub, *Kritik Hadis* (Jakarta: Pustaka Hidayah, 2000), 26–27.

[53]Wahid, *M.M. Azami, Pembela Eksistensi Hadis*, 40–41.

[54]Yakub, *Kritik Hadis*, 29–30.

[55]Yakub, 29.

Prophet and then confirmed and received his approval, so that is a hadith. So, the number of hadiths is enormous.[56] Especially when listening to the expressions of previous scholars, such as Ahmad ibn Hanbal, who said the number of authentic hadiths reached seven hundred thousand hadiths. In comparison, Abū Zur'ah could memorize around six hundred thousand hadiths. Of course, the number is enormous, and accepting it would not be easy.[57]

Guillaume, as quoted by Azami, revealed that al-Bukhāri has selected hadiths that he considers authentic, not less than six hundred thousand hadiths. Of course, this selection discarded the hadiths considered fake, so the resulting number was only around three thousand. This means that so many fake hadiths have existed, proving there has been much forgery.[58] Azami explained that according to hadith scholars, if one hadith subject has twenty transmission lines (*sanad*), the number of hadiths will be twenty. Azami quoted the opinion of ibn Mahdi (d. 198 H) that he had thirteen of these hadiths. Azami explained that only one hadith talks about wiping the soles of the feet, but because Ibn Mahdi has thirteen paths, he counts the hadiths as thirteen.[59]

Other terms often misunderstood by most orientalists, such as forms of narration (*sigah al-taḥdīs*), also receive attention from Azami. The terms referred to include "*akhbaranā*" and "*ḥaddathanā*". Based on the language approach and historical evidence, the hadith narrations that use these terms imply a mere oral transmission model and a written form of transmission.[60] Among the Scholars mired in misunderstanding the term are Margoliouth and Mingana. Both concluded that the teaching of hadith was based only on the oral method alone. At the same time, Mingana came to the same conclusion and believed that the hadiths in the book *Saḥīh al-Bukhāri* were only written at

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[56]Suryadi Suryadi, "Rekonstruksi Kritik Sanad Dan Matan Dalam Studi Hadis," *Esensia: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 16, no. 2 (October 1, 2015): 184–185, https://doi.org/10.14421/esensia.v16i2.996.

[57]Azami, *Dirasat Fi Al-Hadis an-Nabawi Wa Tarikh Tadwinih*, 595.

[58]Azami, *Studies In Early Hadith Literature With A Critical Edition of Some Early Tekts*, 303.

[59]Azami, 302.

[60]Wahid, *M.M. Azami, Pembela Eksistensi Hadis*, 41.

the end of the fourth century Hijriyah.[61] Malik ibnAnas' students narrated the hadith by quoting from the *Muwatta'* Malik, but writing down the hadith did not indicate that it was quoted from the book, not orally. The use of the terms *ḥaddathanā* and *akhbaranā, 'an*, and others to spread the hadith is as follow:[62] a) copying hadith from a book and distributing it according to the method of narration of hadith which is well-known and recognized by hadith scholars; b) the writing of hadith through the dictation of a book; c) the reading by the teacher of a book; d) reading by a student in front of the teacher from a book, e) teaching by a teacher orally while the student takes notes; f) the teacher's teaching is through the oral method, and students receive it verbally as well without recording.

Western Criticism of Azami's Hadith Thought

Azami's view on the study of hadith above drew various comments. Of course, there are positive and negative comments and responses. Western thought, apart from being the object of Azami's attention and criticism, is also an inspiration in hadith studies. Azami's thinking, according to some circles, especially Western thought and those who tend to it, is more reactive to what is developing in the West.[63] Azami's attack on Western thought stems from weaknesses and errors in the Western theory of hadith. Finally, the opinion of the Islamic community awakened by itself to reject the hadith.[64] This anxiety made Azami appear to criticize the West.

Revisionists responded that Azami's thoughts did not have a severe impact. The central issues in Azami's research did not provoke a significant reaction. Daniel W. Brown sees that the study conducted by Azami has not changed the direction of the study and the tendency towards hadith. Brown identifies important thinking models when the thinking attracts many responses from various groups. In addition, these issues often

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[61] Azami, *Dirasat Fi Al-Hadis an-Nabawi Wa Tarikh Tadwinih*, 585.

[62] Azami, 594.

[63] Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition, Studies in Chronology, Provenance and Authorship of Early Hadith*, 4; See also Amin, *Rethinking*, 143–44.

[64] Wahid, *M.M. Azami, Pembela Eksistensi Hadis*, 66–68.

arise in discussions and debates.[65] Brown puts forward the classical Islamic paradigm, the sunnah, the authoritative example the Prophet gave. There are three special categories for this sunnah of the Prophet they are (a) the sunnah is only based on the Prophet; (b) narrators transmit the authentic sunnah down to the personality of the Prophet; and (c) it has a revelatory value.[66] Brown's thoughts above have become Azami's deep discussion in his criticism of Schacht. Azami has discussed Schacht's views on Brown's themes and discussions at length. Brown is more inclined to bring back the problems Schacht presented long before the emergence of Azami's criticism. Azami's denial has left no mark or place in Brown's thinking.

It is the same with Michael Cook, who questioned Azami's denial about dismissing the notion that there was a possibility that narrators fabricated similar hadiths.[67] This, according to Azami, is difficult for Western scholars to accept. According to Azami, a common phenomenon in narrating the hadiths of the Prophet in the recent past, especially in the second century of the Hijriyah, was the increasing spread of narrators throughout Islamic countries. Their residences are far from each other; this condition does not allow them to contain an agreement in spreading the hadith, according to the original text in the community. Azami still claims that the authenticity of this kind of hadith is beyond doubt, even though the editorial is not precisely the same, especially if the narrators have received recommendations for their credibility.[68] Cook examines Azami's denial with the arguments he presented related to the massive forgery of hadith; it is undeniable that there are people who spread the hadith sanad on a significant scale. A friend, Cook continued, could convey words attributed to the Prophet at will. However, what if this is done by five friends in other parts of the Islamic world? Will it be judged as something

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[65] Daniel W. Brown, *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1–5.

[66] Brown, 6–7.

[67] Michael Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma: A Source-Critical Study* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 115.

[68] Azami, *Studies In Early Hadith Literature With A Critical Edition of Some Early Tekts*, 230.

appropriate and independent of one another? The possibility is only one answer: if there is the spread of *isnād*. Cook emphasized that he believes in the spread of *isnād* on a large scale recently, but Azami's argument has not touched his attitude. If Azami's argument is believed, it is clear that Azami's position is undeniable.[69]

Along with Cook, Norman Calder is more inclined toward *the standard link* theory and the historical information it conveys. Calder is more likely to understand that the intended term is used for oral transmission.[70] Calder explained that when understood carefully, the terms in the transmission of hadith show that they are used in oral transmission.[71] So, written notes/books are made by the student, not the teacher. They sometimes formed *halaqahs* to impart information, copying by hand among themselves. This activity becomes a place for mutual control when the teacher changes and announces the book's contents to the students. According to Calder, sometimes students can convey their learning results to others using their sentences, which differ from the source (from the teacher). This activity already existed in the Third Century Hijri, where the oral tradition had started to turn towards writing to mediate the records.[72] Cook and Calder have not put a particular emphasis on strengthening skepticism of hadith. Both of them try to practice the skeptical views of Goldziher and Schacht with the offer of the "*destroyed*" method by applying *isnād* theory.[73] In other words, these last two figures try to follow additional information about the distribution, chronology, and sources of hadith to break the deadlock of the hadith maker/faker.

According to Arberry, Azami's offer was a discourse on evaluating the authenticity of classical hadith books, which inspired the emergence of canonical books (*as-Sittah pole*). Azami

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[69] Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma*, 115.

[70] Norman Calder, *Studies in Early Muslim Jurisprudence* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 161–63.

[71] Calder, 173–74.

[72] Calder, 179–80.

[73] Herbert Berg, *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam: The Authenticity of Muslim Literature from the Formative Period*, Ke-1 (Curzon: Curzon Press, 2000), 48.

has found and studied the contents of these books based on correct scientific standards, and the results can be recognized as precious scientific work.[74] Westerners who do the same thing with Arberry are less. Some of them even criticized Azami, saying that this effort was not a new thing. Among Western scholars who took this middle position were Herbert Berg and Juynboll. According to Berg, Azami's similarity with Abbott and Sezgin lies in their persistence in convincing Western scholars of the authenticity of hadith literature.[75]Berg sees that there is a separate position for Azami in involving himself in the debate with the traditions of hadith thought in the West.[76]

In Berg's opinion, Azami, through his two principal works, *Studies in Early Hadith* and *Schacht's*, has corrected the inaccuracies of Western scholars regarding hadith literature and everything related to it. Schacht's theory truly felt Azami's criticism and was judged as unfounded.[77] Berg praised Azami for being able to maintain the authenticity of the sanad system.[78] Berg saw that hadiths had been written down since the Prophet's lifetime. This activity continued until the time of the six canonical books (*sittah pole*).[79] As Berg continues his comments, Azami has criticized Schacht's *isnād* theory. The theory referred to is, of course, a *backward projection*, which, according to him, cannot be accepted since it is not based on historical facts.

According to Juynboll, Azami's efforts are similar to what Abbott and Sezgin have done.[80]

The question of the origin of manuscripts or *papyrus* has often challenged Juynboll, thus questioning its authenticity. However, it is straightforward for people who write like that and then claim

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[74] Azami, *Studies In Early Hadith Literature With A Critical Edition of Some Early Tekts*, vii.

[75] Berg, *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam*, 18.

[76] Berg, 158.

[77] Berg, 23.

[78] Berg, 23.

[79] Azami, *Studies In Early Hadith Literature With A Critical Edition of Some Early Tekts*, 23–24.

[80] Berg, *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam*, 1–4; See also Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *Kaifa Nata'amal Ma'as-Sunnah an-Nabawiyah* (Kairo: Dar al-Syuruq, 2005), 111.

that everything was made in the name of a particular person. He added a series of sanad to the existing hadith material to complete it.[81] However, Juynboll admits that Azami's work contains the most significant criticism of Goldziher's views articulated in his work.[82] Juynboll intensely studies and analyzes issues regarding the originality and authenticity of hadith material. Juynboll took the core of Schacht's thinking and expanded on it.[83] However, on the other hand, Juynboll also tries to be among people who believe in the historicity and authenticity of hadith literature.[84] The considerable contribution made by Juyboll can be seen in the study of hadith, the sanad side, the *shared link*, and the method of analyzing sanad. In his research, he has developed variations of sanad studies. According to Motzki, it is a suitable method for analyzing sanad and has yet to be developed in the West.[85] An image that is impossible to go wrong in the realm of hadith studies, Goldziher and Schacht's skepticism, as the initial motivation, will certainly develop it.

Azami criticizes scholars from Muslim and orientalist circles who doubt the existence of the Prophet's sunnah. Azami's dialectic has been passed through many scientific arguments, including those of Muslim thinkers, both directly and from the perspective of Azami's line of thought. The following will critically reveal Muhammad Syahrur's controversial thoughts about the sunnah and his criticism of Azami's perspective.

Construction of Muhammad Syahrur's Thought Foundation

The figure of Muhammad Syahrur is a modern thinker with a vision of criticizing classical thought in the Islamic world, although many intersect with conservative thinkers.[86] This critical

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[81] Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition, Studies in Chronology, Provenance and Authorship of Early Hadith*, 4.

[82] Juynboll, 2–3.

[83] Berg, *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam*, 26.

[84] Berg, 26.

[85] Masrur, *Teori common link G.H.A. Juynboll*, 80.

[86] Ardiansyah Ardiansyah, "Konsep Sunnah dalam Perspektif Muhammad Syahrur Suatu Pembacaan Baru dalam Kritik Hadis," *Miqot* 33, no. 1 (2009): 3, https://doi.org/10.30821/miqot.v33i1.160.

thinking style is present after examining the social life of a textualist society with its backwardness.[87] Because they cling to tradition and ignore modernity.[88] This critical thinking pattern Syahrur got when studying in Europe and intersecting with philosophy with speculative philosophy.[89] One side of Syahrur's thinking foundation is quite substantial, based on positivistic philosophy elaborated with Whitehead's speculative philosophy madhab, the structuralism school of German philosophers derived from mathematical-engineering reasoning giving birth to a contradictory thinking style.[90] This reading (interpretation) collaborated with the linguistic hermeneutics of anonymity, based on three main keywords, namely kainunah, which means being or the condition of being, sairurah which means walking or the condition of the process; and shariah, which means the condition of becoming.[91] With this, Syahrur's reading of the themes of the study of the Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad and other Islamic studies is paradoxical to the epistemology of traditionalist Islamic figures, including the muhaddisin.[92]

For Syahrur, reading religious texts is correct when it is based on philosophical thinking because this is not limited to the ideological and genealogical background of the method but its contextuality and television. So the fundamental problem that inspires Sharur to re-read lies on two sides: the existence of

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[87] Nur Shofa Ulfiyati, "Pemikiran Muhammad Syahrur (Pembacaan Syahrur Terhadap Teks-Teks Keagamaan)," *Et-Tijarie: Jurnal Hukum Dan Bisnis Syariah* 5, no. 1 (December 4, 2018): 61, https://doi.org/10.21107/ete.v5i1.4597.

[88] Muhammad Yusuf, "Bacaan Kontemporer : Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an Muhammad Syahrur," *Jurnal Diskursus Islam* 2, no. 1 (April 22, 2014): 58, https://doi.org/10.24252/jdi.v2i1.6509.

[89] Nur Mahmudah, "Al-Quran sebagai Sumber Tafsir dalam Pemikiran Muhammad Shahrur," *Hermeneutik* 8, no. 2 (2014): 263.

[90] Fikria Najitama, "Jilbab Dalam Konstruksi Pembacaan Kontemporer Muhammad Syahrûr," *Musâwa Jurnal Studi Gender Dan Islam* 13, no. 1 (January 3, 2014): 13, https://doi.org/10.14421/musawa.2014.131.9-18.

[91] Muhammad Syahrur, *Dirasat Islamiyyah Mu'ashirah Nahw Ushul Jadidah Li al-Fiqh al-Islami*, Terj. Sahiron Samsuddin, dengan judul Metodologi Fiqh Islam Kontemporer. (Yogyakarta: eLSAQ Press, 2008), 55.

[92] Qaem Aulassyahied, "Studi Kritis Konsep Sunnah Muhammad Syahrur," *Kalimah: Jurnal Studi Agama Dan Pemikiran Islam* 13, no. 1 (March 31, 2015): 12, https://doi.org/10.21111/klm.v13i1.282.

religious doctrines and texts and the conditions of contemporary Islamic society. Based on these two things, Muslims are polarized into two camps: the camp that adheres to the textualist group and assumes that the results of the study of religious texts in the early days of Islam are still relevant today and even forever, and the camp that seeks to make updates in the contextualization of the present and is against the inheritance of classical Islamic treasures without any re-reading.[93]

Sunnah According to Muhammad Syahrur

Syahrur argues that sunnah is linguistically defined as something easy, flowing smoothly. This meaning leads to the Arab tradition of *ma'unmasnun* (water easily flows smoothly).[94] Sunnah is easy and smooth to do and continues to grow. In terms of sunnah, it is understood as a product of the Prophet's ijtihad in applying the law according to God's guidance from the content of the Bible with local-temporal considerations;[95] Sunnah does not apply at all times and is not absolute; sunnah is a product of the Prophet's understanding of God's provisions and laws, which are practical in his day. Furthermore, Syahrur describes the practice of the life of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH as the first application of Islamic concepts and teachings in the reality of life. The pattern and model of the application of Islamic teachings indeed cannot be separated from the social context of the community, and this is still being determined.[96]

Based on the above thinking, according to Syahrur, the Islamic community can give birth to a new sunnah according to the current situation, which departs from reading religious texts (verses of the Qur'an). The absoluteness of Islamic teachings from

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[93] Ulfiyati, "Pemikiran Muhammad Syahrur (Pembacaan Syahrur Terhadap Teks-Teks Keagamaan)," 63–64.

[94] Muhammad Syahrur, *Al-Kitab Wa al-Qur'an Qira'ah Mu'ashirah* (Damaskus: al-Mathbuat, 2000), 550.

[95] Muhammad Syahrur, *Nahwa Uṣūl Jadīdah Li Al-Fiqh al-Islāmy; Fiq al-Mar'ah al Washiyyah* (n.d: al-Irs, al-Qawamah, at-Ta'addudiyah, al-Libas, 2000), 64.

[96] Vita Fitria, "Komparasi Metodologis Konsep Sunnah Menurut Fazlur Rahman Dan Muhammad Syahrur (Perspektif Hukum Islam)," *Asy-Syir'ah: Jurnal Ilmu Syari'ah Dan Hukum* 45, no. 2 (July 1, 2011): 15, https://doi.org/10.14421/ajish.v45i2.18.

the Bible cannot be avoided. However, the universality of the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH is bound by the context of the life of Arab society in the seventh-century Hijriyah. Shahrur's view affirms his view that the Sunnah of the Prophet is not part of revelation but his ijtihad. Based on this, the Sunnah cannot be used as a source of Islamic law. However, the practical application of the Prophet Muhammad was taken from God's provisions, which cannot be separated from the historical conditions of society at that time.[97] According to Syahrur, the view that the Sunnah is a source of law because it is part of revelation is a product of the scholars' understanding. These scholars produce an understanding that the Sunnah is based on revelation and applies all the time, like the revelation of the Qur'an. Some of the realities of the life of the Prophet Muhammad himself were criticized in the Qur'an for not being by revelation; this indicates that the behavior of the Prophet Muhammad was not a revelation. Because if it is a revelation, it is impossible to be criticized by revelation again.[98] The existence of the Prophet in carrying out apostolic duties has the task of conveying and giving examples of God's limits and laws in the Qur'an. This example of the Prophet's behavior is the first product of understanding, which flows easily among Muslims and ultimately becomes a role model in practicing Islamic teachings. Shahrur divides the sunnah into sunnah ar-risalah and sunnah an-nubuwwah. Sunnah ar-risalah has dimensions of law, worship, and morals. This sunnah ar-risalah is part of the Prophet's explanation of the content and law of the Qur'an. Therefore, this sunnah ar-risalah is in line with the teachings of the Qur'an. In this position, the Prophet is an exemplary figure that must be followed. Obedience to this Messenger, according to Syahrur, cannot be ignored because it is contained in the Qur'an even though the Prophet has died (*ath-tha'ah al-muttasilah*).

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[97] Azhari Andi, Luqman Hakim, and Mutawakkil Hibatullah, "Reinterpretasi Sunnah (Studi Pemikiran Muhammad Syahrur Terhadap Sunnah)," *Jurnal Living Hadis* 1, no. 1 (May 6, 2016): 130, https://doi.org/10.14421/livinghadis.2016.1069.

[98] Muhammad Syahrur, *Al-Sunnah al-Rasuliyyah Wa al-Sunnah al-Nabawwiyah Ru'yah Jadidah* (Beirut: Dar as-Syaqi, 2012), 87.

The existence of the Prophet in carrying out apostolic duties has the task of conveying and giving examples of God's limits and laws in the Qur'an. This example of the Prophet's behavior is the first product of understanding, which flows easily among Muslims and ultimately becomes a role model in practicing Islamic teachings.[99] Syahrur divides the sunnah into sunnah *ar-risalah* and sunnah *an-nubuwwah*. Sunnah *ar-risalah* has dimensions of law, worship, and morals. This sunnah *ar-risalah* is part of the Prophet's explanation of the content and law of the Qur'an. Therefore, this sunnah *ar-risalah* is in line with the teachings of the Qur'an. In this position, the Prophet is an exemplary figure that must be followed. Obedience to the Prophet, according to Syahrur, cannot be ignored because it is contained in the Qur'an even though the Prophet has died (*ath-tha'ah al-muttasilah*).[100]

While obedience to the Prophet regarding the practice of the Prophet's life is the result of ijtihad and is not related to the verses of hudud, it is not absolute and only applies during the lifetime of the Prophet. This obedience does not become a burden on Muslims because it cannot be separated from mistakes and is bound by the scope of life at that time, including those related to moral values, traditions of life, the existence of the duties and position of the Prophet as head of State, the Prophet's answer to various questions which indeed cannot be separated from the social context (*ath-thah al-munfasilah*).[101] Meanwhile, sunnah *an-nubuwwa* for Syahrur is the sunnah exemplified by the Prophet, which does not have the dimension of obedience but the dimension of trust. This sunnah an-*nubuwwa* includes information from the Prophet related to the news of the unseen world, such as *israiliyyat* stories and flattery of Muhammad's prophethood. even though this news is written in the Qur'an, it is limited to mere exaltation.[102]

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[99] Syahrur, *Nahwa Uṣūl Jadīdah Li Al-Fiqh al-Islāmy; Fiq al-Mar'ah al Washiyyah*, 157.

[100] Muhammad Syahrur, *Al-Kitab Wa Qur'an: Qira'ah Mu'ashirah* (Damaskus: Al-ahalli li al-Tiba'ah wa al- Nasyrwa al- Tauzi', 1990), 550.

[101] Syahrur, *Nahwa Uṣūl Jadīdah Li Al-Fiqh al-Islāmy; Fiq al-Mar'ah al Washiyyah*, 156.

[102] Syahrur, 63.

M. Mustafa Azami's Critique of Shahrur's Sunnah Thought

Based on Sharur's view of the Sunnah of the Prophet, Shahrur thinks that the Sunnah is the Prophet's response to reality at that time. This is the basis of the view; every reality will produce new views, understandings, and traditions. This tradition will flow and develop in society into a sunnah that cannot be separated from the context of life and place. Thus, the sunnah of the Prophet responds to the conditions surrounding it based on the understanding of the Qur'an, which is only sometimes applicable. The main problem with this idea is that the validity of the Prophet's sunnah only applies during his lifetime.[103] If so, it will deny the Prophet's duty as a conveyer and explainer of the content of the Qur'an. Besides, the Qur'an guarantees obedience to follow the Prophet as a manifestation of God's commands listed in the Qur'an. Obedience to the teachings of the Prophet is not limited to the Prophet's lifetime alone but after his death. According to Azami's perspective, Syahrur's line of thought is essentially in line with modern thinkers who emerged in the thirteenth-century Hijriyah due to the influence of Western thought that penetrated Muslims. Azami mentions several names such as Muhammad Abduh, Mahmud abuRayyah, Taufiq Sidqi, Rashid Ridha, Garragh Ali, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Ahmad Khan, Abdullah al-Jakr, Ahmad ad-Din, and Ghulam ahmadParwez have the same spirit towards the sunnah of the Prophet.[104] Their understanding emerged in line with the downturn of Muslims in their time and the doldrums and colonization of the West by cornering the sunnah as the leading cause. Mahmud Abu Rayyah said that the backwardness of Muslims was because they did not focus on the Qur'an alone. At the same time, the arguments they used were not much different from the sunnah deniers of the second-century hijriyah, Azami emphasized.[105]

Azami's perspective, that Shahrur's argument in offering a new reading of the Qur'an in order to create a new sunnah that is not the sunnah of the Prophet as the primary reference, is not

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[103] Azami, *Dirasat Fi Al-Ḥadiṡ an-Nabawi Wa Tarikh Tadwinih*, 40.

[104] Azami, 25–29.

[105] Azami, 26.

much different from the exposure of Rasyid Ridha, who questioned the existence of the sunnah of the Prophet where there was no direct command to write other than the Qur'an alone. The context of Shahrur's reading may be aimed at lifting the condition of Muslims to achieve glory as taught by the Qur'an. The main problem is not the source of the teachings but the pattern of thought that needs to be changed. The reading of the Qur'an, including the sunnah, is not imprisoned in literal meaning but moves to the essence of the teachings by contextualizing it according to current circumstances. According to Shahrur, the Prophet did not intend to make his understanding eternal for all time; this is based on the historical reality of the absence of the Prophet's orders to the companions to perpetuate his teachings in written form and codify the hadith. Herein lies the similarity of Shahrur's argument with other modernist figures in cornering the sunnah of the Prophet.[106]

Azami's perspective is that Shahrur's view of the validity of the sunnah is not in line with the validity of the Qur'an. The Sunnah as an explanation (reading) of the Prophet to the text cannot be separated from the context of Islamic society at that time. However, it does not necessarily apply to the present. The applicability of the sunnah of the Prophet can be used as long as there is suitability; the fundamental thing about all of this is that the sunnah of the Prophet does not contain eternal elements; obedience to the Prophet is limited to what the Prophet practiced during his lifetime. Azami emphasizes that the arguments of the sunnah deniers are not much different; the fundamental mistake of Muslims, according to them, is not understanding Islam and its spirit.[107] Azami explains the rebuttal related to obedience to the Prophet during his lifetime and continues by quoting several Qur'an verses, which contain the argument that obedience to the Prophet is explained in these verses without any time limit. The validity of the sunnah remains valid, unchanged, and unchanged; this does not mean there is no change even though the conditions and factors causing the problem are different. Mujtahids still make

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[106] Azami, 26–27.
[107] Azami, 32–34.

legal adjustments in ijtihad, but that does not mean escaping the existing law.[108]

Critical Notes on Azami's Hadith Thoughts

Azami focused on refuting Western scholars' thoughts about the Prophet's hadith. The main issues put forward by Western thinkers are the origins of hadith, the origin and development of Canada, the transmission of hadith, and its authenticity. Some of the things above have received more attention from Azami. At the same time, the study of the criteria and requirements for determining the authenticity of hadith is not much different from most hadith scholars. It seems that Azami does not wish to avoid or violate the general views of hadith experts, so the provisions in criticizing hadith are also too oriented towards them. As a result of this trend, the object of study conducted by Azami has become stagnant and less developed. Azami focuses only on the study of hadith transmission and the authenticity of hadith sanad. Various things related to the subject study that need to be developed in more depth have been missed.

The study conducted by Azami still needs to be completed. There are still many fields of investigation that he has not touched; Azami himself still uses the assumptions of many Western scholars in studying hadith, while the actual testing has not been carried out. Azami's mindset was limited only to refute and counterattack their thoughts. No original studies have been independently developed through in-depth analysis, especially regarding themes that observers of hadith science have not widely studied.[109]Azami seems dissatisfied yet with arguing against the Orientalists through his dissertation. Other works, such as *On Schacht*..., *Studies in Hadith Methodology*, and *ManhajNaqd*, cannot escape from the shadow of criticizing the thinking of Western Scholars. This keeps him from escaping the shadow of Western thought, even though Azami aims to refute it. From the development side of scientific studies, it becomes less productive.

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[108] Azami, 34–35.

[109]Azami, *Studies In Early Hadith Literature With A Critical Edition of Some Early Tekts*, xvii-xx (Introduction).

Contemporary themes that continue to develop by other writers need to get attention—for example, developing critical thinking and methods for understanding the contents of the hadith of the Prophet based on various approaches.[110]

Like in his book "*Kuttāb an-Nabi saw*", Azami was only preoccupied with trying to prove that since the time of the Prophet there have been people capable of doing writing activities. In the book, there are no other studies to help prove the truth of his refutation of the thesis of Goldziher and Schacht and others who claim that no one could write in the early days of Islam. In this book, Azami does not discuss anything other than mentioning the names of friends and tabi'in who are good at writing, both as clerks for the Prophet to write the Koran and other needs.[111]

Even though he uses a sharp analysis of some of the thoughts of Western scholars, Azami appears to be still trapped in circular scientific assumptions. Other Western scholars who had the opportunity to examine Azami's study results criticized Azami for needing to understand the terms and direction of study that Ignaz Goldziher and Schacht offered. In addition, Azami's thoughts have received little response from Western scholars, so observers of hadith studies in the West have not widely studied his thoughts. The existence of Azami's thought is still aligned with most other Muslim thinkers who tend to be more emotional in responding to the development of hadith thought in the West. Even compared to his predecessors, FuatSegzin and Nabi Abbott, Azami still cannot match them in the eyes of Western Scholars. Azami is considered indifferent and still follows the methodology of both. In the eyes of Western scholars, there is nothing new from what Azami presented, but rather unfounded rebuttals and criticisms, and Azami's arguments needed to be better structured.[112] These are some reviews related to criticism of Azami's hadith thinking.

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[110]Muhammad al-Gazali, *As-Sunnah an-Nabawiyyah Baina Ahl al-Fiqh Wa Ahl al-Ḥadīs* (Kairo: Dar al-Syuruq, 1996); See also al-Qaradawi, *Kaifa Nata'amal Ma'as-Sunnah an-Nabawiyah*.

[111]Azami, *Kuttāb An-Nabī Saw*.

[112]Berg, *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam*, 26; See also Gregor Schoeler, *The Oral and The Written in Early Islam*, Terj. Uwe Vagelpohl (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 23.

Conclusion

Debate over the existence of thought is a necessity. More and more discussion, debate, and criticism show how urgent the thought is. The existence of Azami's thoughts in the arena of scientific events between the West and Muslims cannot be ruled out; this is proven by the various studies and sharp criticisms that Western scholars have made to reflect the results of his thoughts. The main points of Azami's hadith thought have paradoxically produced scientific criticism from Western circles and Muslim thinkers, enlivening scientific discussion in hadith studies by opening the rhythm of the debate and aligning significant thinkers such as Goldzher, Schacht, Juynboll, and others. Even though it is seen as not having torn the skepticism theory, it can signal its weakness. Azami's critique of Western hadith studies still seems apological and circular in formulating arguments.

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