ISLAMIC EPISTEMOLOGY IN THE THOUGHT OF ḤASAN ḤANAFĪ AND FAZLUR RAHMAN ON THE GENEALOGY OF *ḤADĪTH*

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Abstract: *This article examines the genealogical dimensions of ḥadīth within Islamic epistemology, with a focus on the comparative perspectives of Ḥasan Ḥanafī and Fazlur Rahman. The study recognizes that ḥadīth functions as a textual corpus and a dynamic epistemic source shaped by historical, ideological, and sociocultural forces. The primary objective is to explore how both thinkers conceptualize the genealogy and interpretation of ḥadīth as integral to the development of Islamic epistemology. Employing a qualitative library research method, this study applies genealogical analysis and comparative hermeneutics, grounded in the sociology of knowledge and testimonial epistemology theoretical frameworks. The findings reveal that Ḥanafī frames ḥadīth as a socio-political construct embedded within power relations and ideological structures, requiring critical deconstruction for emancipatory purposes. Conversely, Rahman situates ḥadīth within a moral-historical paradigm, emphasizing the role of ijtihād and the living Sunnah in extracting ethical values applicable to contemporary contexts. Both scholars reject the notion of a static, dogmatic ḥadīth tradition and instead propose interpretative methodologies that are historically conscious and socially responsive. The study concludes that integrating genealogical critique and epistemological reconstruction opens new avenues for revitalizing Islamic thought. It expands the discourse on ḥadīth beyond traditional jurisprudential confines, offering a dynamic framework for engaging with prophetic traditions in modern intellectual contexts.*

Keywords: *Epistemology, Fazlur Rahman, Genealogy of Ḥadīth, Ḥasan Ḥanafī, Islamic Thought.*

Abstrak: Artikel ini menyelidiki dimensi genealogis *ḥadīth* dalam epistemologi Islam, dengan fokus pada perspektif komparatif Ḥasan Ḥanafī dan Fazlur Rahman. Kajian ini berangkat dari pengakuan bahwa *ḥadīth* tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai korpus teks, tetapi juga sebagai sumber epistemik dinamis yang dibentuk oleh kekuatan historis, ideologis,

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dan sosiokultural. Tujuan utamanya adalah mengeksplorasi bagaimana kedua pemikir tersebut memaknai genealogi dan interpretasi *ḥadīth* sebagai bagian integral dari perkembangan epistemologi Islam. Menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif berbasis kepustakaan, studi ini menerapkan analisis genealogis dan hermeneutika komparatif yang berlandaskan pada kerangka teoretis sosiologi pengetahuan dan epistemologi testimonial. Temuan penelitian mengungkap bahwa Ḥanafī memandang *ḥadīth* sebagai konstruksi sosio-politik yang tertanam dalam relasi kuasa dan struktur ideologis, sehingga memerlukan dekonstruksi kritis untuk tujuan emansipatoris. Sebaliknya, Rahman menempatkan *ḥadīth* dalam paradigma moral-historis, menekankan peran ijtihad dan Sunnah yang hidup (living Sunnah) dalam mengekstrak nilai-nilai etis yang relevan dengan konteks kekinian. Kedua tokoh menolak gagasan tradisi *ḥadīth* yang statis dan dogmatis, dan sebaliknya mengusulkan metodologi interpretatif yang sadar sejarah dan responsif secara sosial. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa integrasi antara kritik genealogis dan rekonstruksi epistemologis membuka jalan baru untuk menghidupkan kembali pemikiran Islam. Kontribusinya terletak pada perluasan wacana *ḥadīth* di luar batas-batas yurisprudensi tradisional, sekaligus menawarkan kerangka dinamis untuk mengkaji tradisi kenabian dalam konteks intelektual modern.

Kata-kata Kunci: *Epistemologi, Fazlur Rahman, Genealogi Ḥadīth, Ḥasan Ḥanafī, Pemikiran Islam.*

Introduction

Epistemology, one of the branches of philosophy, focuses on studying knowledge, its nature, limitations, and justification. Analyzing how knowledge is acquired and how claims of that knowledge are validated is crucial, as it defines essential components that guarantee it is knowledge that can be accepted. Such validation defines the boundary of what is known, unknown, and knowable, as such epistemology. Logy contours the work of any system of knowledge, including religion (Smith 2014).

Some dimensions through which religious knowledge can be validated are the origin of the knowledge, the criteria of truth, justification, and belief evaluation, definition of the epistemic borders, and understanding (Moser 2005). In Islam, divine revelation is the primary source of such knowledge. An important revelation is *ḥadīth*, which results from a lengthy compilation and authentication process of transmission and codification that has received stringent scrutiny spanning centuries, and it can now be regarded as a validated source of Islamic knowledge.

The importance of *ḥadīth* in Islamic knowledge stems from its function as a primary source of Islamic law, morality, and intellectual discussion. It is understood through textual interpretation and examined in historical, social, and philosophical contexts. To understand the epistemological framework of *ḥadīth*, a multifaceted analysis is essential. Fazlur Rahman, for example, highlights the significance of perceiving Sunnah as a dynamic tradition historically situated within the life of the Prophet and the early muslim community (Rahman 2016). In contrast, Ḥasan Ḥanafī places *ḥadīth* within ideological and liberatory contexts, emphasizing the socio-political motives inherent in its dissemination and understanding.

The difference in perspective between Fazlur Rahman and Ḥasan Ḥanafī illustrates two vibrant methods of developing Islamic epistemology. Rahman promotes Islamic reform by interpreting traditions in contextual and ethical ideologies and reconstructing Islamic ideas. A genealogical method can be utilized to track the views of both scholars on *ḥadīth*, facilitating an extensive and pertinent charting of the evolution of epistemic components throughout historical eras, regardless of whether they are reformist or radical.

The genealogical elements are apparent in Islam's establishment of methods for transmission and verification. Following the Qur'an as a Qur'an source, *ḥadīth* has established a Qur'an system via *sanad* (chain of transmission) and *matn* (substance) (Iqbal, Husna, and Nurkholis 2021). In the development of scientific philosophy, this process aligns with testimonial epistemology, which considers knowledge gained through reliable testimony (Lackey 2006a). This type of epistemology considers the legitimacy of the source, considering the consistency and dependability of the transmission (*isnād*) and the accuracy of the conveyed information (*matn*). This verification entails several supporting elements to establish whether the information is approved or dismissed.

Ḥasan Ḥanafī examines *ḥadīth* transmission from the perspective of the sociology of knowledge. He challenges conventional methods that overlook the significance of religious understanding for social emancipation. He believes that a strict interpretation of *ḥadīth* as isolated knowledge has led to its estrangement from the requirements of modern society. Fazlur Rahman, conversely, dismisses the idea of *ḥadīth* being a fixed text. He views it as a foundation for developing ethical standards that must adapt to the contemporary living requirements approaches: initially, to examine *ḥadīth* in its historical setting; subsequently, to identify its inherent moral values, found in use in modern life.

Previous studies on epistemology and genealogy concerning the thought of Ḥasan Ḥanafī and Fazlur Rahman have been conducted by several scholars. One such study is Nadiran Hendri's article, *"Pemikiran Kalām Hassan Hanafi: Rekonstruksi Epistemologi Keilmuan Kalām dan Tantangan Modernitas,"* published in *Intizar*. This research focuses on Ḥanafī's notion of *kalām* epistemology in response to the challenges of modernity. It concludes that Ḥanafī's logical foundation is not solely rooted in Western paradigms but also muslim society and intellectual tradition. This epistemological base is then applied to reconstruct a renewed framework for *kalām*, which includes redefining and renaming its core concepts. Ḥanafī's suction is part of his larger intellectual project, *al-yasār al-islāmī* (Islamic left), encompassing the revitalization of the Islamic intellectual tradition (*turāth*) and occidentalism. However, this approach has raised concerns that redefining theological terms from their spiritual-religious meanings into purely material-secular ones might

reduce religion to a functional, social agenda stripped of its spiritual and transcendent dimensions (Nadiran 2015).

Adawiyah (2016), *"The Implications of Qur'anic Studies of Fazlur Rahman and Hasan Hanafi on the Determination of Islamic Law," Syariat: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an.* This article explicates the models of Qur'anic studies proposed by Fazlur Rahman and Ḥasan Ḥanafī and their relevance to formulating Islamic law. The Qur'an holds a crucial position in Islamic legal reasoning, as the primary foundation to ensure that legal rulings are not arbitrarily issued. The thoughts of both Rahman and Ḥanafī exemplify this foundational role. Fazlur Rahman, a prominent muslim intellectual, critically recognized this issue. Employing a dialectical and critical hermeneutic approach, he sought to revive the intellectual heritage of Islam through his double movement method of Qur'anic interpretation, which consequently led to a rationalization of Islamic law. Ḥasan Ḥanafī, on the other hand, advocated for a hermeneutics of liberation, grounding his approach in the discourse of *turāth* (Islamic heritage) and *tajdīd* (renewal). His perspective impacts the formalization of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (the higher objectives of Islamic law) in alignment with current socio-cultural and political realities (Adawiyah 2020).

Norfauzan (2021), *"Genealogy" of Fazlur Rahman's Sociological Approach in Understanding Hadith, KACA (Karunia Cahaya Allah): Jurnal Dialogis Ilmu Ushuluddin.* This article examines Rahman's Rahman to *ḥadīth*, specifically the historical-sociological method. Utilizing a descriptive-analytical methodology, the study traces the genealogy of this approach through Rahman's interpretation of *ḥadīth*s concerning warfare, social legislation, and evidentiary law. Rahman identifies a dynamic interpretive process wherein the understanding of *ḥadīth* during the early Islamic period, such as in the case of Caliph 'Umar's seasoning, was shaped by socio-historical contexts. He argues that Sunnah and *ḥadīth* were understood and applied differently over time, reflecting a creative evolution in interpretation. This led Rahman to propose the historical-sociological method as a valid framework for *ḥadīth* analysis (Norfauzan 2021).

Nadiran (2015), in his study on Ḥasan Ḥanafī's reinterpretation of *kalām* epistemology, argues that Ḥanafī's reinterpretation of theological concepts into more material and worldly terms results in a view of religion as a socially functional agenda. However, this study does not delve specifically into how Ḥanafī's Islamic ideas operate within the realm of *ḥadīth* studies. Adawiyah's work focuses on Qur'anic hermeneutics developed by Rahman and Ḥanafī, particularly in Islamic law, highlighting Rahman's "movement" and Ḥanafī's hermeneutics. Although relevant to epistemological inquiries, this study is primarily within Islamic legal exegesis. Meanwhile, Norfauzan (2021) provides a detailed account of the sociological approach to *ḥadīth* interpretation but does not compare

Rahman's approach to those of other thinkers.

This study aims to bridge the gap left by previous research by not treating Fazlur Rahman and Ḥasan Ḥanafī's in isolation. Instead, it brings their perspectives into dialogue through a genealogical examination of *ḥadīth* as a foundational source in Islamic epistemology. From earlier studies that center on *kalām*, Qur'anic studies, or historical-sociological methodologies, this research situates *ḥadīth* at the core of epistemological inquiry in Islam. This study aims to provide a fresh viewpoint on the significance of *ḥadīth* in influencing modern Islamic epistemology by contrasting Ḥasan Ḥanafī's liberationist approach with Fazlur Rahman's framework.

Islamic epistemology, a field of philosophy, explores how knowledge in Islam is obtained, confirmed, and evolved within scientific and sociocultural environments. In Islamic philosophy, knowledge originates from empirical experience, reason, and divine Revelation, and the spiritual aspects of Revelation of knowing (Maliki 2021, 29-46). A notably important aspect of Islamic epistemology is the significance of *ḥadīth*. The *ḥadīth* transmission is vital in forming Islamic epistemology, encompassing intricate scholarly networks and stringent verification processes.

In Islamic custom, *isnād* (chain of narrators) serves as the key tool to validate *ḥadīth*s, as formulated by the discipline of *al-jarḥ wa al-taʿdīl*. This field assesses the reliability of narrators according to their ethical standards and intellectual ability, thus guaranteeing that only *ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic) *ḥadīth*s are recognized as valid legal references (Ahmad, Tonang, and Rasdiyanah 2021, 64–77). Islamic epistemology via *ḥadīth* includes social and historical aspects, setting it apart from Western epistemology, which often emphasizes rationalism and empiricism.

This study aims to enhance our comprehension of the role of *ḥadīth* as a knowledge source in contemporary Islamic thought by conducting a genealogical analysis of *ḥadīth* through the myths of Ḥasan Ḥanafī and Fazlur Rahman. This approach aims to encourage critical involvement with the methods of *ḥadīth* scholarship and examine how these can be modified to address current intellectual challenges.

The core problem addressed in this research stems from the divergent epistemological approaches to *ḥadīth* studies developed by Ḥasan Ḥanafī and Fazlur Rahman. Both propose differing methodologies for understanding *ḥadīth* as a source of Islamic epistemology. Accordingly, the study formulates the following key research questions: (1) What is the genealogy of *ḥadīth* thought in *ḥadīth* epistemology according to Ḥasan Ḥanafī and Fazlur Rahman? (2) How do their respective approaches compare in treating *ḥadīth* as a source of Islamic epistemology?

This study aims to analyze and compare the historical foundations of Ḥasan Ḥanafī and Fazlur Rahman. It seeks to provide a deeper

understanding of how *ḥadīth* can function as an epistemological source in Islamic studies and how each thinker contributes to the discourse of Islamic intellectual reform. Theoretically, the findings are expected to enrich the field of the philosophy of knowledge within Islamic studies, particularly in conceptualizing the epistemology of *ḥadīth*. Practical *ḥadīth* research may serve as a reference for scholars, researchers, and students interested in a contextual approach to *ḥadīth*, offering insights for developing methodologies that are more aligned with contemporary realities.

This study employs a qualitative approach through library research to analyze and compare the epistemological foundations of *ḥadīth* in the works of Ḥasan Ḥanafī and Fazlur Rahman. Primary sources include the original works of both thinkers that directly engage with Islamic epistemology and *ḥadīth* methodologies, such as *Islamic Methodology in History* and *Islam* by Fazlur Rahman, as well as *Min al-ʿAqīdah ilā al-Thawrah* and *The Islamic Left* by Ḥasan Ḥanafī. Additionally, secondary sources such as books, academic journals, and relevant articles support the analysis and contextualize their thoughts within broader Islamic epistemological discourse. Data were collected through a systematic literature review, including identification, interpretation, and critical examination of concepts related to *ḥadīth* epistemology within philosophical and methodological frameworks. The data were then analyzed comparatively to discern similarities and differences in their conceptualizations, offering a comprehensive and original contribution to contemporary Islamic thought.

Islamic Epistemology in the Thought of Fazlur Rahman and Ḥasan Ḥanafī

In general discussions on epistemology, there are fundamental differences between Islamic epistemology, Western epistemology, and the epistemology of the sophists. In Islam, the source of knowledge is believed to originate from Allah (God). Thus, knowledge is not merely an accumulation of information but is inherently linked to the divine, serving as a means to comprehend the essence of life and truth (Iftikhar, Rabia, and Sadia 2024, 52–38). Islamic epistemology, as a branch of philosophy, explores the foundational principles of Islamic knowledge by integrating Revelation, experience, and intuition from primary sources.

Therefore, knowledge is not solely derived from empirical experience but also through divine Revelation's spiritual reality. Classical muslim scholars generally acknowledge that knowledge is acquired through the senses, sound reasoning, and truthful testimony. However, sensory perception has limitations—for instance, a blind person may be unable to comprehend the color of an object without relying on others (Mujahidin 2017, 41–64). Hence, valid testimony becomes essential for knowledge

acquisition in such cases.

Beyond the senses, reason is considered a crucial epistemic faculty, enhancing sensory input and enabling the discernment of truths that transcend empirical observation. Reason distinguishes what is necessary, impossible, and possible within human thought. In Islam, reason does not function in isolation; it operates in unity with the soul, heart, and spirit. These together form an integrated system with distinct functions, particularly in pursuing ultimate truths.

One of the key sources of knowledge in the Islamic epistle, *al-khabar al-ṣādiq*—truthful testimony—comprises *mutawātir* reports (widely transmitted reports) and reports from the prophet supported by miracles (*khabar al-rasūl al-mu'ayyad bil-mu'jizah*) terminology, which aligns with "truthful" reports or episodic authorities (Muslih 2021, 1–27). A *mutawātir* report is information transmitted by many narrators across generations, rendering it inconceivable that they could have conspired to fabricate it.

One significant aspect of Islamic epistemology involves evaluating the epistemic status of *ḥadīth* as a source of knowledge. Fazlur Rahman reinterprets Sunnah as a dynamic moral principle rather than a static collection of normative traditions. For Rahman, Sunnah comprises moral values that evolve contextually and respond to the needs of time (Rahman 1984). He exemplifies this with the traditions of the people of Medina, as cited in *al-Muwaṭṭa'*, which reflect the living Sunnah of the community. Epistemically, these traditions are grounded in generational testimony and are thus accepted as legitimate sources of knowledge.

Rahman emphasizes that Sunnah has undergone various interpretations over time, necessitating consensus (*ijmā'*) to evaluate and interpret its meaning. He criticizes literal interpretations of the Sunnah, contending that they mask the moral essence and significance of the Qur'an (Rahman 1962a). The Qur'an notes that early muslim philosophers such as al-Farābī and Ibn Sīnā utilized the Sunnah as a basis for their philosophical and theological ideas. According to Rahman, *ijtihād* (independent reasoning) is crucial for rejuvenating the significance of Islamic teachings by interpreting the broad principles of the Qur'an and the Qur'an in a contextual manner rather than just a literal one (Damsyik 2017, 223–40). He refers to this method as rationalization and contextualization, converting *ḥadīth* and Sunnah into resources for ethical and practical direction instead of inflexible legal codes.

Rahman focuses on textualism—a tradition that restricts *ḥadīth* comprehension to its textual and literal aspects (Idris 2016, 1–22). He advocates for an ethical-historical perspective to prevent *ḥadīth* from being confined to outdated legal frameworks. This enables the assessment of intergenerational knowledge transfer by considering historical progression and changing community agreements (Rahman

1963). Rahman emphasizes that following the Prophet's Sunnah started to include his sayings and actions, as well as the interpretative and practical traditions of later generations. He claims Sunnah is a dynamic process that includes *ijtihād* and *ijmā'* in establishing Islamic legal norms. Nonetheless, the purification efforts regarding *ḥadīth* in the third century Hijri strained this connection, leading to legal inflexibility.

Rahman supports the fusion of universal Islamic values with social realities, stressing that Islamic knowledge must be grounded in transcendent principles and historical contexts. Within this framework, *ḥadīth* serves as a source of inspiration, as opposed to being merely a formal legal source (Rahman 1962b). Rahman differentiates between *ḥadīth* and Sunnah and Islamic law, considering the latter a result of collective agreement instead of a universally accepted understanding. Therefore, he advocates for reevaluating Islamic intellectual traditions via *ijtihād*, employing historical insights, ethical considerations, and logical reasoning. In this manner, epistemic consensus generates adaptable, socially attuned interpretations instead of strict legal definitions.

The logical contextualization of knowledge is more elaborated in Ḥasan Ḥanafī's work, which places religious knowledge within its historical, ideological, and political framework (Ḥanafī 2003). He contends that political and social forces have greatly shaped the development of Islamic schools of thought. Prevailing religious narratives frequently sideline alternative ways of knowing, especially within religion (Ḥanafī 2015). This method—the sociology of Islamic knowledge—explores how societal frameworks and power relations influence religious stories, including their impact on documenting *ḥadīth* throughout the ages.

Ḥanafī challenges conventional methods in his influential book *Min al-'Aqīdah ilā al-Thawrah* ("From Dogma to Revolution"), which suggests a shift from dogma to practice. He contends that Islamic epistemology, rooted in *'aqīdah* (creed), should embody societal needs and historical contexts, not just the opinions of scholars or elites that are beyond reproach (Ḥanafī 1988). He observes that these forces have influenced and limited the growth of Islamic sciences via institutions like madrasahs, universities, and networks of '*ulamā*.' According to Ḥanafī, the Islamic world's results are not solely from Western colonialism but also from the internalization of theological frameworks that maintain the existing political and economic conditions. He references Ash'arism as a traditional movement that, in his opinion, hindered societal change by collaborating with authorities and tolerating oppression.

In this context, Ḥanafī suggests a "trilogy of epistemology" that includes (1) reinterpreting tradition, which focuses on revisiting *turāth* (heritage) to find values applicable to modern demands; (2) assessing Western ideas, utilizing critical methods to challenge the epistemic superiority of colonial frameworks that typically overlook Islamic achievements;

and (3) creating a fresh reality by linking theory with practice to form a society grounded in universal Islamic principles. In this framework, Ḥanafī opposes the division between reason and Revelation, and reveals the separation of Revelation. (Kazuo 2011). Rather, he advocates for a holistic approach incorporating various forms of knowledge within Islamic ethical structures.

Ḥanafī stresses the importance of a critical re-evaluation of Islamic traditions. Although certain classical elements might be maintained, they must be reevaluated to guarantee that religious knowledge and beliefs fulfil emancipatory and liberating roles (Rasyidi 2017, 205–16). He contends that emancipation and liberation can be achieved by conducting genealogical investigations that follow the origins, changes, and political actions in transferring knowledge (Ḥanafī 2020). Using this method, knowledge evolves into a means for social upheaval—transformative and in harmony with the people's cries, the Iranian Islamic Revolution is a prime example of this combination of belief, activism, and societal demands. According to Ḥanafī, authentic Islamic knowledge ought to free the oppressed instead of maintaining existing power structures.

A key theme in the epistemologies of both Rahman and Ḥanafī is the belief that knowledge comes from divine revelation. Revelation reason (*'aql*), sensory perception (*al-ḥawās*), intuition, and the heart. As the primary source, Revelation, understanding truths that are revealed through empirical methods. Testimony (*al-khabar al-ṣādiq*), which includes *mutawātir* accounts and divinely endorsed Prophetic narrations, functions as a foundation for epistemic validation, similar to "truth reports" concerning "epistemic authorities" in Western philosophy. Knowledge is also gained through *ijtihād*, which involves the intellectual effort to contextualize teachings and *ijmā'*, a communal epistemic validation through collective consensus.

Therefore, knowledge arises from observation, reasoning, agreement, and historical analysis. Fazlur Rahman emphasizes the importance of contextualizing and rationalizing *ḥadīth* and Sunnah via an ethical-historical method that distinguishes between standard legal norms and moral values open to reinterpretation (Salleh et al. 2020, 127–41). He critiques textualist methods that concentrate on literal interpretations, overlooking socio-historical evolution. Tradition and social realities serve as active influences in forming a vibrant, developing comprehension for both philosophers.

Islamic epistemology ultimately combines empirical experience, rational thought, and testimonial wisdom—the comprehensive rationale for epistemic precision in knowledge about Sunnah underscores the importance of *al-khabar al-ṣādiq*. Justified beliefs and trust are essential in knowledge development, particularly in shared understandings across generations. Throughout the centuries, this process has experienced

changes in knowledge frameworks. Rahman and Ḥanafī both asupport the idea of reevaluating and reimagining Islamic epistemology, highlighting the importance of methodological analysis to thoroughly examine and evaluate the trustworthiness of conventional sources, especially ḥadīth, in forming Islamic knowledge.

A Comparative Study of the Methodologies of Ḥasan Ḥanafī and Fazlur Rahman in *Ḥadīth* Studies

Ḥasan Ḥanafī emphasizes ideological critique and a historical-hermeneutic approach to uncover the practical meaning of ḥadīth in the real social praxis. In contrast, Fazlur Rahman employs the living Sunnah method to bridge the historical context of ḥadīth with its application in modern life (Muttaqin 2017, 56–65). Both scholars offer adoption methodologies that complement each other to understand and revitalize Islamic epistemological sources. Such approaches are necessary to understand Islam's continuity comprehensively and pensively, from epistemic to cementations.

Through his concept of the sociology of knowledge, Ḥasan Ḥanafī rejects the notion that knowledge is neutral and value-free. For Ḥanafī, knowledge—including ḥadīth—is always a product of evolving social, political, and cultural conditions (Halil 2018, 54–74). His approach views ḥadīth not merely as a corpus of texts transmitted through formally verified chains of narration (*sanad*) but as a social phenomenon embedded in dynamics of power and ideology.

Ḥanafī's hermeneutics serves as a method of critical analysis that seeks to free humanity from different kinds of injustice and oppression, encompassing issues associated with ethnicity, gender, and religion (Munir 2000, 251–56). Theologians utilize this approach to analyze religious scriptures from a liberation perspective. This interpretation embraces a forward-looking approach within Ḥanafī, aiming to tackle the modern issues Islamic communities confront. He views the muslim community's confrontational change, guiding muslims away from inflexible and dogmatic beliefs toward a more dynamic and socially pertinent interpretation of religion.

Ḥanafī argues that the ḥadīth transmission process illustrates the interaction between individual narrators and the societal frameworks they inhabited and functioned within (Chotimah and Masudi 2015). Thus, authenticity verification must not depend exclusively on *sanad* evaluation; it necessitates a thorough examination of the historical context, societal background, and political motivations that could have influenced the development and interpretation of particular traditions.

Ḥanafī urges scholars to re-examine the *turāth* (Islamic intellectual heritage) thoughtfully and to foster an environment for dynamic *ijtihād*. This method dismantles conventional epistemological dilemmas, which

usually reinforce dogma without examining its historical significance (Aisyah 2011). As a result, it promotes the creation of a new paradigm in which *ḥadīth* is viewed as a textual and transformative source of ethical and practical direction. For Ḥanafī, *ḥadīth* must be viewed as a component of a relational web that represents class conflicts, power dynamics, and social truths, therefore necessitating critical analysis and progressive principles reforming injustice and intellectual stagnation within traditional Islamic practices.

Conversely, Rahman's theory of conventional methodologies focuses on the ethical and moral aspects embedded in the Sunnah. He highlights the actions and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as the main source for Islamic understanding (Harianto 2016, 276–98). Rahman believes *ḥadīth* should not be used simply as a textual repository to be taken literally; instead, it should be understood as a manifestation of the ethical and normative principles supporting Islamic practice (Syauqi 2022, 189–215). He contends that the compilation of *ḥadīth* during the *ḥadīth* and third centuries of the Hijri calendar was significantly swayed by political and sectarian interests, restricting the range of interpretation and resulting in inflexibility (Rahman 2020). This requires a re-evaluation of *ḥadīth* to rejuvenate *ḥadīth* as a vibrant Sunnah—a flexible guide able to tackle modern moral, social, and legal challenges.

Methodologically, Rahman opposes the strict division between *sanad* and *matn* (text), promoting a comprehensive analysis via a hermeneutic method that emphasizes historical and cultural context (Suryani 2019, 245–55). This approach necessitates that interpreter evaluate the genuineness of the transmission chain and the essential meaning and ethical significance of the *ḥadīth* material. Rahman suggests that this approach enables adaptable interpretations and promotes a more inclusive and responsive *ijtihād* response to contemporary social dynamics (Zakiyah, Saputra, and Alhafiza 2020, 19–36). He argues that the ending of *ijtihād* in Islamic intellectual history has resulted in stagnation, emphasizing the pressing necessity to reopen pathways for critical thinking that reinterpret the Sunnah as a dynamic normative guide.

The comparative examination of Ḥasan Ḥanafī and Fazlur Rahman's work in *ḥadīth* studies uncovers two paradigms that both exhibit a shared dismissal of conventional methodological inflexibility despite originating from different intellectual traditions. Both academics support the need for increasingly contextual, critical, and transformative strategies (Nurkhalis 2016, 173–232). Through his sociology of knowledge, Ḥanafī encourages scholars to view *ḥadīth* as part of the humanitarian network influenced by socio-political contexts (Rasid, Djafar, and Rasyid 2021, 39–48). It requires deconstructing the epistemological frameworks that traditionally uphold authority without questioning their origins or

significance. From this perspective, genuine comprehension necessitates linking every account to its foundational power dynamics, ideological reasons, and social conflicts. His analytical and normative method is intended to facilitate inclusive Islamic reform and promote a more justice-focused interpretation of texts.

Conversely, Fazlur Rahman emphasizes that *ḥadīth*, representing the Prophet's Prophet, should be regarded as a dynamic and responsive normative guide. He critiques the literal interpretation of *ḥadīth* and advocates a reinterpretation that intertwines both *sanad* and *matn* within their historical and cultural settings. For Rahman, *ijtihād* is crucial for reinterpreting the ethical and moral values found in the Sunnah, making certain that *ḥadīth* stays pertinent to the daily lives of modern muslims (Amal 1993; Farida 2013, 223–48). His method is based on the idea that religious scriptures should not be separated from social realities but should actively interact with the changing circumstances of life to promote a version of Islam rooted in texts and practically forward-thinking.

Although they have different intellectual paths, Ḥanafī and Rahman align in their core criticism of the current state of *ḥadīth* studies. They dismiss rigid and unchanging interpretations that concentrate solely on formal elements like *sanad*, overlooking the real-life contexts in which *ḥadīth* developed *ḥadīth* rates. Both support viewing *ḥadīth* as a source of knowledge that documents history and provides moral and social insights pertinent to modern issues. Ḥanafī's approach lays the groundwork for understanding *ḥadīth* in terms of *ḥadīth* as justice. In contrast, Rahman's is better suited for grasping *ḥadīth* within the *ḥadīth* context of Islamic reform that adheres to core principles.

The approaches devised by these two scholars present a novel framework that combines textual, hermeneutical, and sociological evaluations in *ḥadīth* research. This model is a foundation for redefining Islamic epistemology, encompassing texts and rigorously assessed through thorough examination. This involves examining the credibility of every *ḥadīth* transmission through established chains of narrators and placing each text within its social and historical background of origin.

The Genealogy of *Ḥadīth* in Islamic Epistemology: Perspectives of Ḥasan Ḥanafī and Fazlur Rahman

In epistemology, Genealogy pertains to examining the roots and evolution of knowledge—how knowledge is created, preserved, and altered over time. It examines how what is deemed valid today is formed, linking it to earlier knowledge systems and the socio-cultural and political contexts that shape its development (Seidel 2005, 113–17). This method is based on rational or scientific viewpoints and includes historical and sociological aspects. Grasping these contexts is essential for recognizing the influence of dominant power dynamics, norms, and values in a

particular society.

Genealogical analysis is frequently used to dismantle or evaluate existing knowledge frameworks. This method seeks to reveal the fundamental beliefs that underpin specific knowledge claims and to evaluate their validity. In *ḥadīth* research, genealogy follows the origins and evolution of *ḥadīth* transmission via the chain of narrators (*isnād*). It aims to comprehend how the field of *ḥadīth*, regarding *ḥadīth* transmission (*riwāyah*) and interpretation (*dirāyah*), emerged and developed in particular areas (Dahuri, Kholis, and Puri 2023, 148–59). A primary emphasis of this research is the *isnād*, which acts as a standard for the validity and genuineness of a *ḥadīth*. The genealogical tracing of *isnād* investigates the ongoing scholarly transmission across generations, leading to the Prophet Muhammad, thus providing an understanding of the persistent passage of religious knowledge.

Moreover, the genealogical research of *ḥadīth* connected the notion of "living *ḥadīth*" or the examination of "living Sunnah." Promoted by Fazlur Rahman, this concept examines how different muslim communities within various cultures and social contexts understand *ḥadīth* (Wiwaha et al. 2024, 96–105). In a different context, the genealogical investigation is likewise used to challenge the concept of *ʿadālat al-ṣaḥābah*—the assumption of total dependability and protection of the Prophet from inventing *ḥadīth*—thereby engaging critical discussions regarding the authority of *ḥadīth* in Islamic tradition (Rakhmat 2015, 11–42). This corresponds with Ḥasan Ḥanafī's knowledge, which is influenced by power dynamics and existing authorities.

The lineage of *ḥadīth* in Islamic knowledge is a complex process that goes beyond simple methods of transmission. It thoughtfully examines the sources, credibility, and socio-cultural context of knowledge. Historically, *ḥadīth* has been transmitted via the *isnād*, a sequence of narrators connecting every account to the Prophet. This procedure entails thoroughly examining narrators via the field of *al-jarḥ wa al-taʿdīl*, which assesses their character, honesty, and intellectual capability (Tangngngareng, Puyu, and Rayyn 2021, 142–63). The *isnād* system operates as a validation process, combining empirical examination, by comparing various accounts, with social endorsement, as credibility relies on academic standing and collective acknowledgement.

The intricacy of the *isnād* system arose because of the increase in untrustworthy accounts. Consequently, essential validation emerged to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable information. The goal was to protect the impartiality of information. According to Ḥasan Ḥanafī, the genealogy of *ḥadīth* should be *ḥadīth* through the lens of the sociology of knowledge, emphasizing that knowledge is influenced by the social, political, and cultural contexts in which it develops.

Within Ḥanafī's framework, the genealogical process is integral to a

larger effort to deconstruct established intellectual frameworks that have cemented rigid dogmas and obstructed innovation (Nurhidayanti 2020, 104–26). He dismisses the idea that Islamic sciences, such as *ḥadīth*, ought to be examined without scrutiny, neglecting the examination of their historical and socio-political backgrounds. According to Ḥanafī, knowledge acts as a means to fight against injustice and poverty, thus making epistemological renewal via *ijtihād* a crucial move towards reclaiming the transformative role of knowledge in muslim communities (Hanif 2013, 100–120). By freeing knowledge from limiting powers that stifle creativity, the history of *ḥadīth* can be retold not just as a historical account but as a tactical asset for building a fairer and more advanced society.

Although *ḥadīth* started with *ḥadīth* traditions and memorization, it eventually evolved into a written collection to maintain its authenticity and guarantee its continuity through generations. In Islamic epistemology, this approach serves as a technique for gathering historical information and embodies testimonial epistemology, incorporating both reductionist and non-reductionist components. In reductionist views, a *ḥadīth*'s hinge on empirical evidence—consistency among various accounts. In contrast, the non-reductionist perspective highlights the community, allowing widely acknowledged reports to gain credibility without needing extensive empirical backing (Lackey 2006b, 127–225).

Ḥanafī highlights that every type of knowledge, such as *ḥadīth* sciences, arises from the interplay between Islamic tradition and modern circumstances. To him, the mechanical nature of *ḥadīth* transmission hides the dynamics of power, ideology, and class conflict that influence how knowledge is created and understood (Kazuo 2011). He critiques the rigid inclinations in certain groups of the Muʿtazilah and Ashʿarī traditions, which accept textual authority without questioning its historical significance, leading to inflexibility and paralysis in Islamic thought. Ḥanafī claims that al-Ghazālī of rational sciences reinforced the connection between Sufism and Ashʿarism, a trend of thinking that remains impactful today (Ḥanafī 2003).

The lineage of *ḥadīth* needs to be analyzed critically through *ijtihād*—a re-interpretive approach that links Prophetic teachings with current socio-economic contexts. Reexamining the Islamic intellectual heritage (*turāth*), particularly from the second-century Hijri, is essential to reveal lasting values and to dismiss the passive acceptance of knowledge that solely functions as a means to validate current power frameworks (Munir 2000, 251–59). According to Ḥanafī, rejuvenating Islamic discursive traditions via critical dialogue between text and context is essential to reinstating the epistemological role of *ḥadīth* as an active source of knowledge. From his perspective, Islamic discourse ought to function as a means of epistemological liberation (*iqāmat al-ʿilm*) focused on reshaping

the vision and mission of Islamic civilization.

The normative conduct of the Prophet Muhammad should be understood not as a static moral code but as a dynamic set of principles responsive to social transformations. Rahman critiques the codification of *ḥadīth* during the *ḥadīth* and third Hijri centuries, which often reflected the political and sectarian interests of the time, thereby narrowing interpretive possibilities. He argues that revitalizing *ijtihād* is key to reopening interpretive space for Sunnah and *ḥadīth*, enabling their ethical teachings to be applied meaningfully in the modern world (Rahman 2002). Thus, Rahman advocates for a *ḥadīth* methodology that goes beyond *isnād* analysis to incorporate hermeneutical and phenomenological approaches aimed at uncovering the substantive meaning of *ḥadīth*. This approach fosters a deeper, contextual understanding in which the Sunnah, as a normative guide, remains adaptable to evolving social and humanitarian needs.

According to Rahman, *ḥadīth* should not be viewed solely as a collection of literal texts. The reduction of *ḥadīth* to the mere role as a fundamental source of Islamic knowledge, containing universal ethical values. Rahman emphasizes the ethical and moral essence of the Sunnah. While the initial transmission of *ḥadīth* was oral, *ḥadīth*'s subsequent systematization via *isnād* served as a validation tool (Rahman 1962b). However, this transformation should not overshadow the prophetic traditions' contextual essence. Therefore, a more flexible and contextual method of *ijtihād* is necessary—one that not only examines the chain of narrators (*isnād*) but also critically analyzes the content (*matn*) of the *ḥadīth*. This reimagining of the Sunnah as a "living tradition" enables it to stay pertinent in tackling contemporary socio-economic and political issues.

The genealogical aspect of *ḥadīth* in Islamic knowledge showcases an intricate network of connections between tradition, validation techniques, and social engagements. The transmission of *ḥadīth* shows that *ḥadīth* in Islam comes not only from divine revelation but also from critical analysis and cooperation. In the *isnād* system, documentation in writing and memorization work together to preserve the authenticity and continuity of *ḥadīth* accounts. This corresponds with Western epistemological views that appreciate testimony as a knowledge source—though in a distinct Islamic context, where the reliability of accounts is determined by empirical coherence and the robustness of social connections and academic credibility. Thus, the lineage of *ḥadīth* combines *ḥadīth* and social aspects, with trust and verification collaborating to create genuine knowledge.

In collaboration, the ideas of Ḥasan Ḥanafī and Fazlur Rahman demonstrate that the lineage of *ḥadīth* within Islamic epistemology needs to be perpetually renewed to tackle modern issues. Ḥanafī highlights

the significance of historical and sociological contexts, advocating for deconstructing outdated intellectual frameworks. Rahman, on the other hand, redefines the Sunnah as a flexible and adaptable ethical guideline, highlighting *ijtihād* as the way to revive the vibrancy and significance of *ḥadīth* among muslims. Both dismiss the idea that Islamic sciences, especially *ḥadīth*. *Ḥadīth*, rather, they claim that knowledge is dynamic and formed by the continual interplay between tradition and modern circumstances.

Conclusion

This research clarifies the genealogical aspects of *ḥadīth* within Islamic epistemology by examining the comparative views of Ḥasan Ḥanafī and Fazlur Rahman. It shows that *ḥadīth* is situated within active interpretive frameworks influenced by historical, sociopolitical, and intellectual contexts rather than the traditional textual tradition. Ḥanafī views *ḥadīth* as a socio-historical construct shaped by power dynamics and ideology, promoting its critical reexamination within liberation and emancipation theology. Conversely, Rahman stresses the ethical-historical framing of the Sunnah, promoting its re-examination via *ijtihād* to derive its moral tenets for use in modern society. Both philosophers assert that *ḥadīth* must be a dynamic epistemological resource grounded in divine revelation, so Revelation develops through revelation, testimonial corroboration, and social practice.

This study offers a fresh comparative examination of two prominent muslim thinkers whose ideas are frequently explored separately. The research expands the scope of epistemological exploration in Islamic philosophy by positioning *ḥadīth* as the focus of Islamic epistemology instead of confining it to legal or theological discussions alone. It presents a novel viewpoint on genealogy as a methodological framework, examining the historical transmission of *ḥadīth* and its epistemic role in shaping Islamic knowledge. The combination of testimonial epistemology, sociological critique, and hermeneutics provides an interdisciplinary approach for re-examining foundational Islamic texts in ways that are historically informed and intellectually advancing.

Though this study provides a thorough theoretical synthesis, it is constrained by its dependence on textual analysis alone. It lacks empirical data or field-based ethnographic research to illustrate how modern muslim communities interact with *ḥadīth* genealogic practice. Moreover, it concentrates solely on two philosophers, which, although permitting depth, might exclude other equally important perspectives in the wider context of modern Islamic thought. Upcoming research might expand this genealogical framework to examine how *ḥadīth* is enacted within particular muslim communities across various geographical and cultural settings, thus merging textual theory with practical religious experience.

Comparative analysis with other Islamic intellectual traditions, like Nasr Abu Zayd, Muhammad Iqbal, Talal Asad, or modern female muslim scholars, could further enhance the discourse. Furthermore, interdisciplinary methods that incorporate cognitive science, anthropology, or digital humanities might provide fresh perspectives on the epistemological role of *ḥadīth* in contemporary society.

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