

Textual Understanding of The Prophet's Hadith

(Study of the Understanding of Ahmad Hassan's Traditions)

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Abstract

This article examines the research of Ahmad 'Ubaydi Hasbillah, which identifies Ahmad Hassan as a prominent figure in textual hadith studies. In his book *Nalar Tekstual Ahli Hadis: Akar Formula Kultur Moderat Berbasis Tekstualisme*, 'Ubaydi asserts that Ahmad Hassan belonged to a group known for its strong textualist approach, displaying remarkable diligence in hadith studies. This article uses Ahmad Ubaydi Hasbillah's research as a framework to explore Ahmad Hassan's understanding of various hadiths. Specific topics discussed include the hadiths on licking dogs, reciting al-Fatiha in congregational prayers, touching the Qur'an, drawing or cheap images, and the use of sutrah in prayer. As an Indonesian scholar, Hassan was known for his courage in opposing views not grounded in the primary sources of Islamic law—namely, the Qur'an and Hadith. His understanding of these hadiths has occasionally been labeled as radical due to his firm stance. Although Hassan is primarily associated with a textual approach, he also integrated contextual analysis in certain instances.

Keywords: Hadith Understanding, Textualism, Ahmad Hassan

INTRODUCTION

Ahmad Hassan (hereafter referred to as Hassan) is one of the prominent hadith figures from Nusantara known for his textual understanding. Due to his textualism, his interpretations of the Prophet's hadiths sometimes differ from those of other hadith scholars. This textualism is documented in Ahmad 'Ubaydi Hasbillah's work in his book *Nalar Tekstual Ahli Hadis, Akar Formula Kultur Moderat berbasis Tekstualisme*. As a textualist, Hassan only refers to the Qur'an and the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Meanwhile, someone who consistently uses the Qur'an and hadith as quoted in Ahmad 'Ubaydi Hasbillah's book is referred to as a Wahhabi. In the view of most Muslims in Indonesia, Wahhabism is considered an extreme, sectarian ideology that is even seen as unsettling.

Hassan's textualism first became evident when he was asked by Wahab Hasbullah, one of the founders of Nahḍatul Ulama (NU), about *talaffuẓ binniyāh* (such as articulating *uṣalli* before beginning the prayer). Based on what Hassan had learned

in Singapore, he spontaneously concluded that *talaffuz binniyāh* was indeed recommended by the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). However, Hassan still felt the need to find its legal basis in the Qur'an and Sunnah. Yet, Hassan could not find a single authentic verse or hadith to support *talaffuz binniyāh* as a legal basis. Since then, his stance quickly changed. Hassan, who had previously supported the group claiming *talaffuz binniyāh* was Sunnah (as supported by the older scholars) and believed that the practice was an innovation, now saw that it had no legal foundation in the Qur'an and Sunnah. This view was supported by the younger group, particularly by Faqih Hasyim.

Hassan's position is firm as a staunch adherent of the teachings of the Qur'an and hadith; he is very cautious in religious matters. In his understanding, religion is paramount. He holds the principle that to achieve the correct understanding of Islam, a Muslim must adhere to the Qur'an and the hadith, abandoning *taqlid* (blind following) and *bid'ah* (innovation). This principle is clearly reflected in his works, where the discussions always rely on the Qur'an and hadith, not on the opinions of groups, even those of esteemed imams.

In his view, the sources of Islamic law are the Qur'an and the hadith. With the knowledge he possessed, he boldly rejected opinions that did not align with these sources. In several of his works, he skillfully explains the quality of a hadith, the biography of narrators, technical terms, and their meaning, especially when responding to questions posed to him. In defending Islam, Hassan did not only use written media but also engaged in verbal debates.

From the description above, it is evident that Hassan was a textualist figure. This paper aims to highlight Ahmad Hassan's textualism in understanding a hadith. It will also explore Ahmad 'Ubaydi Hasbillah's statement that Ahmad Hassan is known as a very textualist scholar who diligently studied hadith. This will be examined through Hassan's understanding of several hadiths, such as those on the licking of dogs, reciting al-Fātiḥah in congregational prayers, touching the Qur'an, drawings or images, and the sutrah during prayer.

METHOD

The methodology employed in this article is a library research approach, commonly referred to as *survey pustaka*. This method involves conducting research by exploring and reviewing various books, academic papers, and other scholarly resources that are relevant to the topic under discussion. Through this process, various sources are examined in order to gather and analyze relevant information, which is then used to construct a comprehensive analysis and to develop the key concepts that are central to the study.

In this article, the primary references are the works of Ahmad Hassan, which focus on his understanding of several hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). These works are carefully analyzed to extract his views and interpretations, providing a foundation for the subsequent discussion. The approach is to closely examine the

texts and scholarly contributions of Hassan, critically assessing how his interpretations of hadith align with or differ from other scholarly views. The review of these texts is not only limited to analyzing their content but also involves considering the methodologies and perspectives that Hassan employs in his work, particularly his textualist approach to hadith studies.

Additionally, the study includes a comparative analysis with other relevant works in the field of hadith studies, particularly those that offer alternative interpretations or methodologies. By synthesizing various viewpoints, the article aims to provide a nuanced understanding of Ahmad Hassan's approach to the hadith, thereby contributing to the broader discourse on Islamic jurisprudence and textualism in hadith interpretation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Portrait of Ahmad Hassan

Around 500-600 years ago, a group of influential people from Cairo, dissatisfied with the ruling regime, decided to emigrate from Egypt to India by sailing on wooden ships. Upon their arrival in India, they were given the title "Maricar," meaning "sailing ship." They settled in Kail Patnam (Kail meaning Cairo and Patnam meaning city or port, one of the urban centers in India), where they engaged in trade. Among their ancestors, there were not only merchants but also scholars and intellectuals. This is where Ahmad Hassan's lineage originates.

Ahmad Hassan was popularly known as Hassan Bandung during his time in Bandung, or Hassan Bangil after he moved to Bangil, East Java. He was born on December 31, 1887, in Singapore. He was born to parents of Indian descent on both sides, namely Ahmad, originally named Sinna Vappu Maricar, and his mother Muznah, of Egyptian descent from Madras, India, born in Surabaya, Indonesia. His given name was Hassan, but following the tradition of the Indian community in Singapore, his father's name was placed before his own, making his full name Ahmad Hassan, often abbreviated as A. Hassan. He married Maryam in Singapore in 1911, a Tamil-Malay descent woman from a devout family. From this marriage, Hassan and Maryam were blessed with seven children, one of whom, Abdul Qadir Hassan, followed in his father's footsteps.

In 1956, he performed the Hajj pilgrimage, but fell ill during his time in the holy land. His health declined, and he returned home to Indonesia. Later, a new infection led to the amputation of his leg. He passed away on November 10, 1958, at the age of 71.

Education of Ahmad Hassan

Hassan began his education in the village of Kapur, Singapore, where he received religious education directly from his father. His father placed great emphasis on the importance of language mastery, and Hassan quickly learned Tamil, Malay,

English, and Arabic. At the age of six, he attended a Malay school on Arab Street, where he studied until grade four. At the same time, he also attended Victoria Bridge School in Geylang, where he completed the fourth grade in English.

Despite his early education, Hassan never completed his formal primary education, let alone higher education. However, with his knowledge of languages and religion, he pursued self-directed learning in Islamic subjects such as *Farā'id*, *Fiqh*, *Mantiq*, and *Tafsīr*. His proficiency in Arabic allowed him to further develop his understanding of Islamic teachings. Thus, although Hassan did not receive formal higher education in religious studies, his capacity and quality of religious knowledge were widely acknowledged in his time.

Hassan had an extensive personal collection of books, covering various fields of knowledge. He read these books thoroughly, perhaps memorizing them. Whenever someone asked him a question, he could easily refer to the page in his books, which were marked with signs of careful reading. In addition to his large library, A. Hassan maintained personal notes containing various issues, complete with references, which were organized alphabetically. He always carried these notes as a substitute for his thick books. The principle of self-reliance in life was a result of his father's upbringing, which emphasized independence without relying on others.

At the age of 12, while working, Hassan took private lessons and worked hard to master the Arabic language, hoping to deepen his knowledge of Islam on his own initiative. He worked at his brother-in-law Sulaiman's shop while learning from Haji Ahmad in Bukit Tiung and from Muhammad Thaib, a well-known teacher on Minto Road. Haji Ahmad was not a major scholar, but for Bukit Tiung at the time, he was a respected teacher with high morals. The lessons that Hassan received were similar to those of other children at the time, such as learning how to perform prayers, ablution, fasting, and more.

Hassan also studied *naḥwu* and *ṣarf* under Muhammad Thaib. With a strong determination to learn these subjects, Hassan did not mind adhering to the strict conditions set by his teacher, including arriving early before dawn prayers and walking instead of taking transportation to his teacher's place. After about four months of studying *naḥwu* and *ṣarf*, Hassan felt that he was not making much progress, despite memorizing and completing the assignments. His enthusiasm for learning declined. Fortunately, his teacher went on pilgrimage, and Hassan switched to studying under Said Abdullah A-Musawi, focusing solely on learning Arabic for three years.

In addition, he studied religion under Abdul Lathif, a respected scholar in Malacca and Singapore, and also learned from Syekh Hassan (from Malabar) and Syekh Ibrahim (from India). This continued until around 1910, when he was 23 years old. By this time, Hassan did not yet have extensive knowledge in subjects such as *farā'id*, *fiqh*, *mantiq*, and others, but with the tools he had, he was able to further deepen his understanding of Islamic teachings.

Works of Ahmad Hassan

With his knowledge, A. Hassan became a prolific scholar and writer, contributing to various fields. His works were frequently published in magazines, and many of his writings were later compiled into books. He wrote approximately 80 book titles, which were widely distributed in Indonesia and Southeast Asia. His works span various disciplines, such as theology, language, politics, history, fiqh, morality, poetry, Quranic exegesis, hadith, and more. His religious works often focused on advice, urging people to do good and avoid wrongdoings.

A. Hassan rarely included references in his works. Although he sometimes cited the names of earlier scholars, he did not always mention the books from which he quoted. The references he consistently cited were the Qur'an and the Sunnah, with the opinions of earlier scholars included only to support his interpretation of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

As an Indonesian hadith scholar, A. Hassan did not write a specific book on hadith science, but in some of his works, he included explanations or materials related to hadith studies. For example, in his book *Tarjamah Bulugul Maram*, he translated hadiths from the book *Bulūḡul Marām min Adillatil Ahkām* by Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī. Besides translating, he also provided an introduction and commentary on several chapters of hadith science, explaining the hadiths, noting opposing narrations, and discussing their authenticity.

In his other book, *Soal-Jawab tentang berbagai Masalah Agama* (Questions and Answers on Various Religious Issues), which consists of four volumes, he addresses religious questions while providing a foundational discussion on *syara'* law, language issues, hadith science, and *uṣūl fiqh* in the preface. When responding to religious questions, he relied on the Qur'an and Sunnah, sometimes commenting on the quality of the hadiths cited.

His book *Kumpulan Risalah A. Hassan* (A. Hassan's Collected Treatises) is a compilation of some of his writings on topics such as *al-Fātiḥah*, Friday prayers, Zakat, Riba, Hajj, Ijma', Qiyas, Madzhab, Taqlid, and Ahmadiyah, where he discusses various religious issues using tools of *uṣūl fiqh* and hadith science. Although he did not have a specific book dedicated to hadith science, his expertise in the field is evident in several of his works, where he uses hadith science to address religious questions.

Ahmad Hassan's Thoughts on Hadith Science

Understanding of Hadith, Sunnah, and Aṣar

According to Hassan, the term *hadith* means words, sayings, or speech, typically used for the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). When it is referred to as *hadith of the Prophet*, it means the words of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). As for *sunnah* (the practice of the Prophet), it includes three things transmitted to us: his sayings,

actions, and the actions or words of others which he approved. This is known as *qauluhu* (his words), *fi'luhu* (his actions), and *taqrīruhu* (his approval). *Aṣar* refers to the sayings of the companions, similar to hadith but attributed to the companions rather than the Prophet.

Authentic, Good, and Weak Hadiths

The definition of *ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic) hadith, according to Hassan, is similar to other hadith scholars. As he mentions in his work *Tarjamah Bulughul Maram*, *ṣaḥīḥ* hadith is one narrated from Prophet Muhammad (SAW) by narrators who have qualities such as: not being known as liars, not being accused of lying, not making many mistakes, being diligent, not being immoral, not doubtful, not involved in innovation, having good memory, not often contradicting stronger narrators, and being recognized by at least two hadith scholars in their time.

Meanwhile, according to Nuruddin 'Itr in *Manhāj al-Naqd fī 'Ulūm al-Hadīṣ*, most hadith scholars and jurists agree that for a narrator to be accepted, they must possess the qualities of *'adil* (just) and *ḍābit* (accurate). These qualities include being Muslim, mature, of sound mind, free from immoral actions, honest, strong in memorization if the hadith is oral, or precise in writing if the hadith is written.

Ḥasan (good) hadith, according to Hassan, is similar to *ṣaḥīḥ* hadith, except that one of the narrators may have some minor errors, such as being forgetful, hesitant, contradicting other narrators, or having weak memorization. However, the errors should not be numerous, and if several hadiths related to a case exist, the hadith can still be categorized as *ṣaḥīḥ*. *Ḥasan* hadith is typically used in cases that are not too important or critical.

Ḍa'īf (weak) hadith is a narration that does not meet the conditions for *ṣaḥīḥ* or *ḥasan*, meaning it contains flaws or is not acceptable according to the criteria of hadith science. The narrators may have certain qualities such as being accused of lying, prone to errors, or untrustworthy. Such hadiths cannot be used to establish legal rulings.

Using Weak Hadith for *Faḍā'il A'māl* (Virtues of Actions)

According to Hassan, *faḍā'il* refers to the merits or rewards of good deeds. He argues that weak hadiths calling for action should not be used, because performing an action implies establishing a legal ruling, and a legal ruling cannot be based on a weak hadith, even if the ruling is non-obligatory or only a recommended action (*sunnah*).

Hassan divides hadiths that should not be used into two categories: those with weak chains of transmission and those that are fabricated. Both types cannot be used to establish legal rulings (whether *halal*, *haram*, recommended, or

discouraged). They can only serve as supporting information, not as the primary basis for action. Hassan expresses disapproval of using weak hadiths for *faḍā'il a'māl* because these are not accepted as authentic sayings of the Prophet.

He further explains that *ḍa'īf* hadith refers to narrations that cannot be accepted or are doubtful due to not meeting the conditions of *ṣaḥīḥ* or *ḥasan*. If a hadith is proven to be unacceptable, using it is a deviation, even if the hadith relates to *faḍā'il a'māl*, as it leads us to rely on something uncertain or doubtful.

Contradictory Hadiths

Regarding contradictory hadiths, Hassan adopts a method known as *ṭarīqah al-jam'ī* (the method of reconciliation), where he attempts to reconcile the two hadiths so both can be used. According to Hassan, hadiths that can be used as legal sources are those that are *ṣaḥīḥ* in transmission and do not contradict the Qur'an or stronger hadiths. If there is a contradiction, the hadith should be interpreted in a way that does not deviate from the established rules of the Arabic language. However, if it cannot be reconciled, the hadith should be set aside.

The second method, *ṭarīqah at-tarjīḥ* (the method of preference), involves weighing and selecting the stronger hadith when two contradict each other and *al-jam'ī* cannot be applied. In this context, the stronger hadith is referred to as *rājiḥ* and the weaker one as *marjūḥ*.

If neither hadith can be preferred because both are equally strong, Hassan suggests the third method, *ṭarīqah at-tawaqquf* (the method of suspension). This involves refraining from acting on or rejecting both hadiths until further evidence supports one of them. This situation is rare and usually discussed as a theoretical issue.

Textual and Contextual Interpretation of Hadith

Syuhudi Ismail, a prominent figure in Southeast Asian hadith studies, divides the interpretation of hadith into two categories: textual and contextual. According to him, textual interpretation is when the hadith is understood and applied strictly according to its literal meaning, after considering its background. Contextual interpretation, however, occurs when strong indications behind the text require the hadith to be understood and applied beyond its literal meaning. In understanding the Prophet's hadith, some texts can be understood purely literally, while others require a contextual approach. In some cases, both textual and contextual interpretations are needed simultaneously.

Textual interpretation is often linked to linguistic analysis and *uṣūl al-fiqh* (principles of Islamic jurisprudence), which are the primary tools of analysis. The school of thought of the Kufah emphasizes Arabic grammar, while the Basrah

school focuses more on universal logic, as taught by Greek philosophy, particularly Aristotelian logic. The latter holds that hadiths, being the foundation of Islam, should have universal logic that transcends local or particular characteristics.

In summary, textual interpretation focuses on understanding the literal meanings of the words in the hadith, while contextual interpretation seeks to uncover deeper meanings, considering sociological, psychological, historical, or other scientific perspectives. Both approaches are essential in hadith studies, with the former linked closely to linguistic and jurisprudential methods, while the latter takes a more comprehensive view of the situation surrounding the hadith.

Ahmad Hassan's Understanding of Hadith

Hadith About the Licking of Dogs

Rasulullah SAW said:

وَحَدَّثَنَا زُهَيْرُ بْنُ حَرْبٍ حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ بْنُ إِبرَاهِيمَ عَنْ هِشَامِ بْنِ حَسَّانَ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ سَبْرِ بْنِ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ طَهُورٌ إِنَاءٌ أَحَدِكُمْ إِذَا وَلَعَ فِيهِ الْكَلْبُ أَنْ يَغْسِلَهُ سَبْعَ مَرَّاتٍ أَوْ لَاهُنَ بِالشَّرَابِ

“Zuhair bin Ḥarb narrated to us, Isma‘īl bin Ibrāhīm narrated to us from Hisyām bin Ḥassān from Muḥammad bin Sīrīn from Abī Hurayrah. He said: The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: ‘The vessel of any one of you, when a dog licks it, should be washed seven times, the first of them with earth (dust)’.”

The word *walaga* in the above hadith is commonly understood as “licking.” This term is generally used to describe the licking of a dog on cloth, the body, or other objects, in which case, washing them is also obligatory. However, according to Hassan, the word *walaga* actually means “drinking with the tongue” in Arabic, not licking with the tongue. This could refer to drinking water, blood, or anything else using the tongue, as animals like dogs, cats, tigers, wolves, and others drink this way. The term *walaga* is only used in reference to drinking or licking something liquid, and not for dry objects.

In short, *walaga* refers to drinking or licking something liquid. Therefore, there is no obligation to wash dry objects that are licked by a dog since the Arabic term for licking dry objects is *lahaṣa*, not *walaga*. Hassan’s understanding suggests that if the hadith is applied to licking cloth or the body, we would be applying a rule not found in the religion.

The word *walagha* in the Lisān al-‘Arab dictionary is defined as “drinking to satisfaction with their tongues.” This interpretation aligns with Hassan’s view and is also mentioned in some books of hadith commentary. However, the majority of scholars assert that anything licked by a dog or touched by its saliva is impure (*najis*).

According to Hassan’s understanding, the vessel containing water can become impure if a dog licks it, because the impurity can spread from the water. However, objects that do not contain liquid are not considered impure in this way, as the

impurity from the dog's saliva does not spread. If a vessel containing water is licked by a dog, the Prophet (SAW) instructed that the water should be discarded and the vessel washed seven times. But how can we say that a dry object licked by a dog does not require washing, when the saliva is already on it?

Hassan's interpretation appears to prioritize the literal meaning of the hadith, leading him to adopt a more textual understanding of the hadith.

Hadith About Reciting Al-Fātiḥah in Congregational Prayer

Surah al-Fātiḥah is considered the essence and spirit of the Qur'an, as it encapsulates various forms of praise and attributes of Allah, His sovereignty, the Day of Resurrection and Judgment, worship, and purpose. It is considered the central prayer in Islam and a means of seeking protection from the paths of the disbelievers and the misled, guiding one toward the path of knowledge and righteousness.

Reciting al-Fātiḥah during prayer is one of the essential acts of prayer, but its recitation during congregational prayer has been the subject of differing opinions due to variations in the interpretation of the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) regarding its recitation. In this regard, Hassan argued based on both the Qur'an and the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW):

Qur'anic Verse: "And when the Qur'an is recited, listen to it and pay attention that you may receive mercy." (QS. Al-A'raf (27): 204)

The Prophet (SAW) also said:

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ حَدَّثَنِي أَبِي حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ - قَالَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ أَحْمَدَ وَسَمِعْتُهُ أَنَا مِنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ بْنِ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ - قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو خَالِدٍ الْأَحْمَرُ عَنْ ابْنِ عَجْلَانَ عَنْ زَيْدِ بْنِ أَسْلَمَ عَنْ أَبِي صَالِحٍ عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- « إِنَّمَا جُعِلَ الْإِمَامُ لِيُؤْتَمَّ بِهِ فَإِذَا كَبَّرَ فَكَبِّرُوا وَإِذَا قَرَأَ فَأَنْصِتُوا

'Abdullāh narrated to us from his father, from 'Abdullāh bin Muḥammad, and 'Abdullāh bin Aḥmad said, "I heard from 'Abdullāh bin Muḥammad bin Abī Shaybah, who narrated from Abū Khālīd al-Aḥmar from Ibn 'Ajlān from Zayd bin Aslam from Abī Ṣāliḥ from Abī Hurayrah who said: The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: "The imam is appointed to be followed. When he makes the Takbīr, you should also say the Takbīr, and when he recites, you should remain silent."

Another narration states:

حَدَّثَنِي يَحْيَى عَنْ مَالِكٍ عَنْ نَافِعٍ أَنَّ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ عُمَرَ كَانَ إِذَا سُئِلَ هَلْ يَقْرَأُ أَحَدٌ خَلْفَ الْإِمَامِ قَالَ إِذَا صَلَّى أَحَدُكُمْ خَلْفَ الْإِمَامِ فَحَسْبُهُ قِرَاءَةُ الْإِمَامِ وَإِذَا صَلَّى وَحْدَهُ فَلْيَقْرَأْ.

Yahyā narrated to me from Mālik from Nāfi' that 'Abdullāh bin 'Umar was asked, "Should anyone recite behind the imam?" He replied, "When anyone of you prays behind the imam, the imam's recitation is sufficient for him, and when he prays alone, he should recite."

Another narration states:

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ يَحْيَى وَبَحْيَى بْنُ أَبِي أُيُوبَ وَفُتَيْبَةُ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ وَابْنُ حُجْرٍ قَالَ يَحْيَى بْنُ يَحْيَى أَخْبَرَنَا وَقَالَ الْآخَرُونَ حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ وَهُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ عَنْ يَزِيدَ بْنِ خُصَيْفَةَ عَنْ ابْنِ قُسَيْطٍ عَنْ عَطَاءِ بْنِ يَسَارٍ أَنَّهُ أَخْبَرَهُ أَنَّهُ سَأَلَ زَيْدَ بْنَ ثَابِتٍ عَنْ الْقِرَاءَةِ مَعَ الْإِمَامِ فَقَالَ لَا قِرَاءَةَ مَعَ الْإِمَامِ فِي شَيْءٍ

Yahyā bin Yaḥyā and Yaḥyā bin Ayyūb and Qutaibah bin Sa'id and Ibn Ḥujr narrated to us: Yahyā bin Yaḥyā said: "He informed us, while the others said: 'Isma'il (Ibn Ja'far) narrated to us from Yazid bin Khuṣayfah from Ibn Qusayṭ from 'Aṭā' bin Yasār, who told him that he asked Zayd bin Thābit about reciting along with the imam, and Zayd said: "There is no recitation with the imam in anything."

From all the hadiths related to reciting al-Fātiḥah behind the imam in congregational prayer, Hassan stands by the above proofs. His understanding from these verses and hadiths is that it is not obligatory for the follower (makmum) to recite al-Fātiḥah behind the imam if they hear the imam's recitation (in the case of *jahr* prayer), and it is obligatory for them to recite it if they do not hear it (in the case of *sir* prayer). However, they should not remain silent, because silence is not prescribed except for listening.

Hassan's assessment of the quality of the above hadiths is stronger (ṣaḥih) and is also based on the Qur'ānic evidence, compared to other hadiths that claim the follower must recite al-Fātiḥah behind the imam in both *jahr* and *sir* prayers (as held by Imam Shafi'i), or the claim that the follower should never recite al-Fātiḥah behind the imam (as held by Imam Hanafi). Hassan rejects the view that the follower should not recite al-Fātiḥah in either *jahr* or *sir* prayers, arguing that such a stance is based on weak narrations.

From the above explanation, it can be seen that Imam Shafi'i, known for his textual approach to hadith, differs from Hassan in interpreting the hadith. Although Hassan and Imam Shafi'i may approach the evidence differently, Hassan's understanding requires adherence to the textual meaning of the hadith. Thus, it is clear that Hassan adopts a textual approach to interpreting the hadith.

Hadith About Touching the Qur'an

Rasulullah SAW said:

حَدَّثَنِي يَحْيَى عَنْ مَالِكٍ عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ أَبِي بَكْرٍ بْنِ حَزْمٍ أَنَّ فِي الْكِتَابِ الَّذِي كَتَبَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لِعَمْرٍو بْنِ حَزْمٍ أَنْ لَا يَمَسَّ الْقُرْآنَ إِلَّا طَاهِرٌ

Yahyā narrated to me from Mālik from 'Abdullāh bin Abū Bakr bin Ḥazm that in the letter that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) wrote to 'Amr bin Ḥazm, it stated: "No one may touch the Qur'an except the one who is pure."

According to Hassan, the phrase *lā yamassu* in the hadith means "will not touch" and can also be understood as "should not touch." The word *yamassu* by itself means "to touch." This can refer to touching with an open hand, with a hand covered by cloth, or with the body. Hassan further interprets the act of touching

the Qur'an as being synonymous with "believing in the Qur'an." If interpreted this way, the hadith means: "No one will believe in the Qur'an except those who are pure." Hassan understands purity to refer to the purity of the heart.

Thus, according to Hassan, the hadith means: "No one will believe in the Qur'an except those who are pure of heart." This interpretation contrasts sharply with that of other scholars, who translate the hadith as "No one should touch the Qur'an except the one who is ritually pure."

As the author has researched, there is a scholar named Muhammad Hamidy, who shares a similar interpretation with Hassan. In his translation of the book *Rawā'i' al-Bayān*, he writes in a footnote that the word *ṭāhir* (pure) in this hadith refers to the heart, meaning the Qur'an is the guide for those whose hearts are pure.

Based on the above understanding, if *lā yamassu* is interpreted as "No one will believe in the Qur'an except those who are pure of heart," it would mean that those who are in a state of minor or major ritual impurity would be allowed to touch the Qur'an. However, the question arises: where is the sanctity or respect for Allah's word in this interpretation?

In this case, Hassan employs a figurative interpretation (*ta'wīl*), diverting the apparent meaning of the words to a different, contextual meaning. Therefore, Hassan's approach to understanding this hadith is contextual.

Understanding Hadith Regarding *Ṣūrah* or Images

The word *ṣūrah* comes from the root *صَوَّرَ – يُصَوِّرُ – صُورَةً*, which means to draw or paint. The term *aṣ-ṣūrah* refers to shape or form, while *mā yuṣawwiru* means image or drawing. *Taṣwīr* refers to shape, picture, sculpture, and other representations of humans or other things. A *muṣawwir* is a person who creates *ṣūrah* or images.

According to scholars, as cited, a statue is an image that has a shadow (made from materials like metal, brass, stone, etc.), while an image that does not have a shadow (a painting) can be found on paper, wood (carved), walls, mats, pillows, and so on. Therefore, every statue is an image, but not every image is a statue.

A Hadith of the Messenger of Allah SAW about *ṣūrah* is as follows:

"Zuhair bin Ḥarb narrated to us, Yaḥyā bin Sa'id narrated to us, Hisyām narrated to us from his father, who reported from 'A'ishah that Umm Habibah and Umm Salamah mentioned a church they had seen in Ethiopia, which contained images. The Messenger of Allah SAW said: 'Indeed, when there was a righteous man among them who passed away, they built a mosque over his grave and depicted images of him. They are the worst of creatures in the sight of Allah on the Day of Judgment.'"

Among the many Hadiths of Rasūlullāh about prohibiting the creation and display of images, Hassan only used the Hadiths that state that images and statues feared

to be worshipped are the ones that are haram, while others are not. Other Hadiths that speak of prohibition on all kinds of images were refuted by Hassan with specific reasons. Hassan disagrees with the understanding made by scholars based on the evidence they use. For example, the Hadith about the prohibition of all forms of *ṣūrah* is countered by Hassan with another Hadith in which the Prophet allowed drawing on cloth, pillows, and also permitted toys (dolls) for play.

The prohibition of *ṣūrah* in the above Hadith actually has a legal background (*‘illat al-hukm*). The scholars and righteous people from the past were considered heads of religion, and most idols that were worshiped were originally the images of righteous or learned people from different communities. This prohibition was also due to the fact that the followers of Rasūlullāh at that time had recently abandoned idol worship. Had Rasūlullāh not strictly prohibited this, it could have led to a revival of idol worship practices.

In this case, Hassan understands the above Hadith by considering the context or the circumstances surrounding the Hadith's revelation (*asbāb al-wurūd*), so that the prohibited *ṣūrah* refers only to statues or images made for the purpose of worship. In this discussion, Hassan uses a textual approach, although he studies the background of the Hadith, his understanding still demands alignment with the intended meaning of the text of the Hadith.

Understanding the Hadith Regarding Sutra in Ṣalah

A *sutra* is something that can cover or, in other words, a barrier placed in front of someone who is praying. During Ṣalat, a person strives to focus on Allah, and if something passes in front of them, it could potentially disturb their concentration in prayer. Therefore, it is a great sin for someone to walk in front of someone who is praying, and the Prophet SAW equated this act to that of a devil, as it disrupts the person's prayer.

According to Hassan, a *sutra* is a marker such as a staff, spear, or any line or object placed in front of a person praying. The discussion on *sutra* includes the crossing of women, donkeys, and black dogs in front of someone praying. In this matter, Rasūlullāh SAW said:

"Affān narrated to us, Syu'bah narrated to us, Humaid bin Hilāl narrated to us, who heard from ‘Abdullāh bin Ṣāmit from Abu Dharr who said, 'Rasūlullāh SAW said: "A man's prayer is interrupted if there is no marker before him, like the back of a camel, and if a woman, a donkey, or a black dog passes in front of him." I then asked, "Why the black dog and not the red one?" Abu Dharr replied, "My nephew, I asked Rasūlullāh SAW as you asked me, and he replied: 'The black dog is a devil.'"

In this Hadith, the fiqh scholars and Hassan differ in their interpretation. The fiqh scholars interpret the interruption of prayer as a reduction in focus, causing the prayer to lose its tranquility, while Hassan believes that the prayer becomes invalid if a woman, donkey, or black dog crosses in front, as he sees these things

as potentially invalidating the prayer. In this context, Hassan translates *yaqṭa'u ṣalāta* as in the *al-Munawwir* dictionary meaning 'abṭalahā (to invalidate).

From Hassan's understanding of this Hadith, he emphasizes the literal meaning of the words, showing a very textual approach, as his interpretation heavily relies on the text of the Hadith. Therefore, he strictly prohibits the crossing of a woman, donkey, and black dog during prayer. The author of this text believes the interruption of prayer could be interpreted as a lack of focus, as mentioned by the scholars, since nowadays it is common for women to pass in front of someone praying without a *sutrah* being placed in front of them, and the prayer does not become invalid just because of this.

CONCLUSION

As revealed above, Syuhudi Ismail divides the understanding of Hadith into two parts: textual and contextual. From Hassan's understanding of the Hadith above, Hassan uses both theoretical foundations in understanding the Hadith. Hassan does not purely use textual understanding alone because, on several occasions, he also uses *ta'wīl*, which means leaving the apparent meaning and giving another interpretation.

Ahmad 'Ubaydi Hasbillah's statement in his work *Nalar Tekstual Ahli Hadis; Akar Formula Kultur Moderat Berbasis Tekstualisme*, which claims that Hassan is known for being very textual and deeply studying Hadith, can be concluded as somewhat inaccurate. This is because Hassan's understanding of Hadith is not solely based on textual meaning, but also incorporates contextual understanding. Understanding Hadith with a textualist approach can sometimes result in rigid interpretations since it is limited to the text or apparent meaning of the Hadith. Therefore, in some cases, Hadiths of Rasūlullāh should also be understood through a contextual approach to arrive at a more accurate and dynamic understanding in line with the development of the times.

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