

THE AUTHORITATIVENESS OF SUNNAH IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAMIC WORLDVIEW RESEARCH

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Abstract

This article is written to review and analyze the authoritativeness of al-Sunnah in the development of Islamic research worldview. Al-Sunnah is the second guidance and source of Islamic epistemology next to Al-Qur'an. Hence, the main source of reference for the research on ID is al-Sunnah. The matter is, why do some of the Western philosophers refuse to acknowledge the authoritativeness of Al-Sunnah? What are the reasons behind their stand? Could worldview on Islamic Development built without implementing Al-Sunnah as source of references? To answer all these questions, this article will be focused on three main things. First, reviewing perceptions of Western philosophers who refused to acknowledge Al-Sunnah as source of reference; second, analyzing their perceptions based on Islamic worldview; and third, concluding the importance of Al-Sunnah in this Islamic Development research worldview. This qualitative research which used the content analyzing method concludes that Western philosophers reject the usage of Al-Sunnah in many aspects including research on Islamic Development because they believe that al-Sunnah is unauthorized. In fact, based on Islamic worldview, Al-Sunnah must be made as *istidlāl* (reasonings) and the secondary reference in Islam next Qur'an. Any research especially in the Islamic Development research worldview is incomplete without sources from Al-Sunnah.

Keywords: Authoritativeness of al-Sunnah, Al-Sunnah, Research Worldview, Islamic Development.

INTRODUCTION

Al-Sunnah is the second source of guidance after Qur'an in Islam. Al-Sunnah is preserved by Allah from the time of Prophet hood until the hereafter. The people who are the *adil* (trust), *thiqah* (pure) and *ithbat* (truthful and strong memory) responsible for preserved al-Sunnah from the threats. Their aim is to spread the al-Sunnah while preserving the originality of its content (Ahmad Omar Hashim, 1984). The question is, why some western thinkers are rejecting al-Sunnah? What are their reasonings? Are Islamic development research worldview can be built as an argument and referral sources without al-Sunnah? The article are made to answer these questions and analyzing the importance of the al-Sunnah as the fundamental in the Islamic development worldview.

The article is divided into four major parts. First, discussing about the criticism that's been made by the orientalist against al-Sunnah and its authoritativeness; second, highlighting the Qur'anic verse which illustrate Al-Sunnah as the fundamental source in Islam; third, to reject the criticism of al-Sunnah which is made by the orientalist and the last but not the least, the article will discuss the authoritativeness of al-Sunnah to build the true worldview on Islamic development.

ORIENTALIST CRITICISM AGAINST THE AL-SUNNAH

A French thinker named Joseph Schacht claimed that al-Sunnah cannot be considered as a legal source of knowledge in jurisprudent of Islam. This is due the fact that starting from the time of al-Shāfi`iy , the al-Sunnah had become the second source in the knowledge in jurisprudent of Islam. And this practice had been followed by the members of Islamic jurisprudence afterwards. Thus, the role of the al-Sunnah just started two centuries after the birth of Islam (al-Muṭ'iy, 1992:163). By using this argument, Joseph Schacht was trying to create doubt among the scholar of Islam regarding the al-Sunnah as the source and fundamental of Islamic. Joseph Schacht also described the al-Sunnah to be purely fictionist.

Joseph Schacht even made a reckless accusations against al-Syafi'iy (Islamic scholar), claiming that al-Shāfi'iy are not being truthful regarding the teaching that he is trying to convey. This accusation has caused misunderstanding in the amongst the minds of Muslims regarding the depth of knowledge and trustworthiness of al-Shāfi'iy that has been conveyed (al-Muṭ'iy 1992:163). Joseph Schacht has succeeded in creating such a doubt about Shafi`iy creating the al-Sunnah by himself. To strengthen his accusation, he claimed that the al-Sunnah started to be one of the source in the Islam only in the time of Shafi`iy. To sum up, both arguments were made to question the al-Sunnah as the second source in in knowledge and Islamic jurisprudent after the Qur'an.

Al-Khalifah (1997:57) has concluded that the doubt raised by Joseph Schacht was the argument that the al-Sunnah is only an excerpt of the customs and practices of Arab society a long time ago. In addition, most of the resulting information in it is derived from the knowledge of Judaism, Christianity and faith of other religions. Thus, if the alleged al-Sunnah is said came from the

Prophet Muhammad's own, then it does not have any advantage in that era because it really only derived from the character of Arabs at that time.

Before this also, there this one orientalist, Ignaz Goldziher who made the same criticism against the al-Sunnah saying that the hadith at that time was fake. According to Ignaz Goldziher (1971: 18-19), the hadith at that time was originated from knowledgeable people after the era of Muhammad (PBUH). Hence with this, Ignaz Goldziher is trying to prove that the hadith was created by the scholars at that time the same way Muhammad (PBUH) created it.

To strengthen his argument against the chains of narrator and *Matn* about the originality of the al-Sunnah, Goldziher (1971) make a statement saying that the hadith were born out of the tradition and custom of Arabs at that time. After the advent of Islam, then all things related to the behavior of the Arabs, their customs and traditions attributed to the Prophet Muhammad, and then making it as the source of the hadith but the truth was the hadith were made, solely due to the situation of the Arabs at that time. It is hard to ensure the authenticity of a hadith when it has been passed down from one generation to the other. To support his argument he further explained that because of this long hierarchy of passing down the hadith, there will be a mixture of truthfulness and myths (Goldziher, 1971). This doubt was raised by Goldziher at that time due to the fact of the method of preserving the originality of the hadith and most Muslims at that time were illiterate.

All doubts and negative views of the orientalist were more focused on denying the al-Sunnah as a whole. Their aim is to prove that the al-Sunnah was made by man after the era of Muhammad and it is not a real revelation. When such allegations were raised, this means that their purpose is precisely to deny the al-Sunnah as a source of knowledge and Islamic epistemology. They rejected the al-Sunnah to be one of the fundamental in creating worldview for Muslim hence becoming the guideline of a Muslim on how to live their life.

AL-SUNNAH AS AN ISLAMIC SOURCE

Al-Sunnah has become the source of wisdom and Islamic law since the advent of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Although the problems related to al-Sunnah have been discussed, yet the discussion only revolved around the authority of hadith only and not the rejection of the al-Sunnah in general.

In history, there was only a small group of Muslims who rejected these things and they were known as people who denied al-Sunnah. Among the factors that lead to the emergence of the notion that denied al-Sunnah was their misunderstanding in a variety of matters related to the knowledge of hadith. This factor can be seen not only in those who denied the al-Sunnah in the past, but this group of people also exists in this challenging era of globalization (al-Muṭ'iy, 1992:164). According to the Qur'an, the saying of Prophet Muhammad is reliable source of Islam. There are many

evidences that support the truth of this matter and one of them is based on the verse from Allah the Almighty:

“And whatsoever the Messenger gives you (commands you with), take it, and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it)”¹

Some scholars said that this verse is general to all the commands and taboos by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) while Ibn Kathir (1999) deciphered this verse as; executing all commands by Rasulallah (PBUH) and abandoning all the taboos and abominations prohibited by him. Referring to this verse, it can be seen that the earnest Prophet instructed only good things while forbidding all atrocious matters. Based on this fact, the hadith is recognized as the second source of Islam in giving guidance.

One day, 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud brought up one of the hadiths by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the content of this hadith stated that Allah SWT cursed women who wear fake mole, remove hair on their face, hone their teeth and so on. Then, a woman named Umm Ya'qub protested Ibn Mas'ud's action which had punished something that was not stated in the Qur'an. Umar Ibn Masud said that what he presented was actually enshrined in the Qur'an as the above verse (al-Bukhāriy, 1987).

Allah SWT said again:

"Obey Allah and His Messenger: and if they turn back, Allah loveth not the disbelievers"²

This verse contains an order to obey Allah and the Prophet. The form of obedience to Allah SWT is submitted in accordance to the provisions and guidance of the Qur'an, while obedience to His Messenger is in accordance with the provisions and guidance to the al-Sunnah. Thus, based on the provisions of this verse, matters that are set forth in Qur'an and also in the hadith of Prophet need to be obeyed.

Allah SWT said:

“He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah”³

According to the above verse, obedience to the Prophet Muhammad is a manifestation of devotion to Allah the Almighty. This means adherence to orders that are determined by the Prophet in his hadith is also a manifestation of one's devotion to God (Allah).

¹ Al-Qur'an, al-H ashḥr 59: 7.

² Al-Qur'an, āl-'Imrān. 3:32.

³ Al-Qur'an, al-Nisā'. 4:80.

“Certainly you have in the Messenger of Allah an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in Allah and the latter day and remembers Allah much.”⁴

Taking cue from this verse, Prophet Muhammad's behaviors and way of life are set to be an example for the believers. All matters that are related to the life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) especially for those who are unable to meet him directly are embodied in the hadith of the Prophet.

According to al-Muṭ'iy (1992), al-Sunnah played a tremendous role especially when dealing with the Qur'an. The Qur'an cannot be fully utilized without the assistance from versification of al-Sunnah. Al-Sunnah acts by strengthening the proposition that has been argued in Qur'an for example the prohibition in related to disobedience to the parents. It is already mentioned in the Qur'an in Surat al-Isrā' and is supported with an authentic hadith of the Prophet Muhammad.

Al-Muṭ'iy (1992) further said that the al-Sunnah also served as explanation to the abstract of Qur'an's verse for instance in explaining the problems related to *Salah* (prayer) and almsgiving. In addition, al-Sunnah also acts alone as a source of religious knowledge and Islamic law such as the law banning in eating the donkeys, which is not mentioned in the Qur'an.

REJECTING THE NEGATIVE PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS AL-SUNNAH

Based on the arguments and evidences from the Qur'an which have been mentioned, negative opinions from the Western philosophers are rejected automatically. Joseph Schacht once claimed that al-Sunnah had been used as an argument and the source of knowledge and Islamic law only after two centuries since the death of Prophet Muhammad (al-A'zamī, 2004). This viewpoint is highly inaccurate because according to al-A'zamī (2004), al-Sunnah had been used as a source and an argument since the time of Prophet Muhammad, his companions and *tabi'in*. It is nonsensical for Joseph Schacht to give such argument when the verse of the Qur'an itself has indicated the existence of al-Sunnah, and its role as a source together with the revelation of the verse.

Meanwhile, if Joseph Schacht said that al-Sunnah was used as an argument and resources during the time of Shāfi'iy, this claim was also imprecise and did not based on true facts. This is because; in prior to Shāfi'iy, there were exist another two famous members of jurisprudences, which were Malik and Abu Hanifa. Both of them used Al-Sunnah as a source of knowledge and reference in legislation especially Malik. Malik was a famous member of the hadith and had produced a masterpiece called al-Muwatta '(Mut'iy, 1992).

Al-A'zamī (2004) concluded that the confusion that Joseph Schacht tried to raise could be detected by examining his inaccurate theory by using accurate resource. Joseph Schacht also failed in

⁴ Al-Qur'an, al-Ahzab. 33:21.

understanding lot of facts as well as the conditions and states of matter for the research done. Besides that, he also misunderstood with the terms used by Islamic scholars.

Based on the verses of Qur'an and other arguments, Joseph Schachts' and Goldziher's claims are directly proven to be wrong. If al-Sunnah was derived from the traditional culture and customs of the Arabs, then why the Revelation (the Qur'an) stated that al-Sunnah came from Prophet Muhammad himself. Furthermore, their criticisms about the chain of narrators (sanad) were also weak because all the hadith were transferred from one generation to the next generation through narrations and writing. Hence, if the criticism stems from the sheer narrations, what about written narrations? (al-Biqā'iy, 2001).

If the saying of Prophet Muhammad is merely a description of his life history, then for sure the scholars' concern towards the chain of narrators would not be the same as it is now. This can be seen clearly through the writing of the books of History of Prophets, where the narration is not a major issue. The position of Hadith as one of the sources for Islam was agreed by all scholars from all around the world since the past until present (Syuhudi Ismail, 1989).

This situation causes an obvious clash between the facts whereas facts stated by Joseph Schacht and Goldziher were not based on solid evidence, but only based on the basis theoretical analysis purely. Thus, both claims are obviously being rejected due to the clash with the facts that are much stronger and more valid. This argument is acknowledged by al-A'zamiy (2004) as he stated that Goldziher used only specific and limited individual research for his evidence for instance the political strife between Muawiyah and Ali had caused forgery in hadith's narration, indicating some of the hadith might had been totally fabricated. This situation is literarily unacceptable because although such matter is an isolated case, yet it was entirely adjudged.

Thus, all the negative perceptions from the Western thinkers associated with argument of al-Sunnah are very weak and unacceptable. Al-Sunnah is a reliable and trusted source of knowledge and legislation in Islam. Besides that, al-Sunnah is also the secondary source after the Qur'an that needs to be used in understanding Qur'an perfectly. It is because al-Sunnah plays a crucial and significant role in describing, explaining, detailing and adding contents for the primary source which is Qur'an.

AUTHORITATIVENESS OF SUNNAH IN CREATING THE ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT WORLDVIEW

As stated earlier, the Qur'an and the al-Sunnah become two main sources of knowledge and epistemology of Islam. Hence we shouldn't ignore the importance of al-Sunnah in Islamic worldview as a second source. In the process of developing a proper pure Islamic worldview, al-Sunnah is used as a reference to avoid any misleading information regarding Islam and its epistemology itself.

Many researches on Islamic worldview have been done and among the earliest finding are by Sayyid Qutb (1965 & 1988). Based on the researches done by Sayyid Qutb (1965), more research on Islamic worldview has been done. There are several researches done which emphasizing the concept of Islamic worldview. In the research done by Haron Din (1992), he further defines and relates the concept of worldview in true Islamic point of view. Worldview that already stated, based on the Qur'an and the al-Sunnah as the main pillar of Islamic worldview.

Muhammad Shukri Salleh (2003), Mohd Shukri Hanapi (2010 & 2011) and Fadzila Azni Ahmad (2010) have concluded that Islamic worldview centered on the Qur'an as the primary source and the al-Sunnah as the second source in addition to consensus and *Qiyas* . Through the research done, already created a core theory of the Islamic development. Muhammad Shukri Salleh (2003) states in his research, that both the Qur'an and the Sunnah form the six main principles of Islamic development. But Muhammad Shukri Salleh's research has become the pioneer that has formed many other researches after that such as the research by Fadzila Azni Ahmad (2010) and Mohd Shukri Hanapi (2010 & 2011) .

Based on the Qur'an, the al- Sunnah, consensus and *Qiyas* , the Islamic worldview has been formed completely which rely on its core concept; God as the creator; humans as slaves and creatures; nature as well as creatures. Hence, the core concept already built, create the core principles in Islamic development as, human as a developer; Environmental soul, world and the hereafter is the time scale of the development, Individual obligation (*fard ain*) is a development framework; Worship as a development methodology; Natural resources as an material of development and bless of Allah (*Marḍāt Allāh*) as the ultimate goal for development (Muhammad Shukri Salleh, 2003 & Mohd Shukri Hanapi , 2011).

In addition, in reviewing and analyzing the position, goals and implications of the Islamic development in index patterning, Tauhidic paradigm have been devoted to the Islamic philosophy which describes the oneness of God and the existence God as the creator. It is concluded that the Tauhidic paradigm is a fundamental part of Islamic worldview. For a development, the index cannot be said as Islamic development index if not characterized by worldview that anchored by Tauhidic paradigm is not solely on the Qur'an, the Sunnah, but also plays an important role (Mohd Shukri Hanapi, 2012).

Hence it can be conclude that the Islamic worldview is the backbone and fundamental in all aspects of Islam. Islamic worldview need to be incorporated into the main root that relates to religion matters especially in terms of development, while philosophy and worldview ignorance must be removed to produce any development based on Islam completely. Therefore, the source and the argument for developing the theory and Islamic worldview should use primary sources recognized by the entire scholars which is the Qur'an, the al-Sunnah, consensus and *Qiyas*, while al-Sunnah is a major second source after Qur'an. By only then we could take Islamic worldview as the ultimate source in Islam.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussions above, it is concluded that al-Sunnah is the source and argument for Islamic knowledge and laws (*syari'ah*). It is the second source after Qur'an and its roles should not be questioned as accused by some of the Western philosophers. worldview which is built by the West did not use al-Sunnah as the source of reference, in fact they questioned its truth causing worldview which they built could not be taken to build Islamic worldview. In building Islamic worldview, al-Sunnah must be made as the source and argument especially in Islamic development. The roles of al-Sunnah must be taken into account to form the true Islamic developments' principles.

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