

ON LIVING *HADĪTS*: A New Trend of Hermeneutics Approach to Study *Hadīts* in Indonesia

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Abstract: The Living *Hadīts* interprets *hadīts* through the cultural and social practices alive in Indonesian society. This method offers contextual sensitivity and involves hermeneutical, anthropological, and phenomenological frameworks. However, this approach also raises epistemological and methodological concerns—particularly regarding the integrity of *isnâd-matn* authentication, the potential weakening of textual authority, and the risk of cultural syncretism inconsistent with *Syarî'ah*. This study, using historical genealogical analysis and a literature review, evaluates whether the Living *hadīts* contributes to a valid understanding of the *sunnah* or deviates from the principles of *hadīts* science established by scholars. Therefore, the authors will examine how this approach is used and the challenges that arise when it is applied to the study of *hadīts* in Indonesia. It found that the Living *Hadīts* method fosters multiculturalism because the *hadīts* applied within society is influenced by the community's diverse social and cultural contexts. As a result, the *hadīts* no longer refers to the application found in authoritative sources, such as the views of the Prophet's companions or the statements of '*ulamâ'* with authority in understanding *hadīts*. However, this study recommends integrating textual verification and methodological reflexivity into Hadith pedagogy in societal life to balance social relevance with normative Islamic scholarship.

Keywords: living *hadīts*, hermesneutics, *hadīts* studies, Indonesia

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Introduction

The development of understanding of the *hadīts* in Indonesia has undergone significant changes since its inception. Although there is controversy surrounding the late emergence of this development, others believe that it has progressed since its inception.¹ Therefore, the development of the study of understanding the *hadīts* itself, which in its early stages was understood in a traditional manner, focused on understanding the Hadith to serve the public interest. This is evident in the first book on *hadīts* in the archipelago, “*Hadiyah al-Habīb fī al-Targhīb wa al-Tarhīb*” written in the 17th century by Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī (1658),² and the book “*Syifā’ al-Qulūb*” in the 18th century by Abdullah al-‘Asyī,³ These two books were written as guidebooks for Indonesian Muslim community.

However, starting at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, substantial alterations commenced. The development of the Islamic movement increased awareness of understanding the *hadīts* and returning to the guidance of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Some groups were influenced by Western thought, while others maintained the traditional approach.⁴ Then, after Islamic universities began to be established in Indonesia, the subject became a requirement in all faculties.⁵

Nevertheless, Recent studies have experienced substantial transformations, especially with the advent of hermeneutics in studying texts. This method emerged in the mid-20th century and gained widespread adoption in Islamic universities by the end of that century.⁶ From this Hermeneutics idea, the study subsequently moved in a new direction, which was called the “Living Qur’an” and “Living *Hadīts*” study. Since the influence of Hermeneutics was a traditionally controversial topic, some agreed on its importance, while others rejected it.⁷ Therefore, it is necessary to study the issue in greater depth. The study presented in this paper by the authors is a critical examination of “Living *Hadīts*” as a new approach to understanding the *hadīts* of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

A few research papers have been conducted on Living *Hadīts*, both theoretically and practically, in the context of understanding the *Sunnah*, such as the one by Saifuddin Zuhri Qudsy and his colleagues, with the article titled: “*The Making of Living Hadith: A New Direction of Hadith Studies in Indonesia*”,⁸ the article entitled: “*Living Hadith as A Social Cultural Phenomenon of Indonesia: A Systematic Review of The Literature*”,⁹ and the article deals with the application of this approach: “*The Concept of Prayers in the Joged Shalawat Mataram Group: A Study in Living Hadith*”.¹⁰ Reading these articles, however, it can be understood that they generally agree on the study of the Living *Hadīts*.¹¹ However, there is one article titled “*Living Hadith as a Social Cultural Phenomenon of Indonesia: A Systematic Review of the Literature*” written by Norsaleha Mohd. Salleh and several researchers argue that acculturation should be approached with caution. It is necessary to distinguish between what is acceptable and what is unacceptable, particularly those that do not reflect the teachings of the *Sunnah Wal Jamā’ah* scholars. The researchers do

not entirely reject the Living *Hadîts* method. Still, they argue that caution is needed in understanding the *hadîts* about the community's understanding of religion within their society.¹²

From this standpoint, this research aims to analyze the phenomenon from a critical perspective by tracing the intellectual and historical roots of the concept of Living *Hadîts*, deconstructing its theoretical structure, examining its practical applications in Indonesian society, and assessing its impact on the understanding of the *hadîts*. The study aims to provide an objective reading of this trend and to clarify the extent to which it is consistent or inconsistent with the scientific approach to the study of *hadîts*, in order to preserve the status of the prophetic texts and ensure their correct understanding and application in contemporary reality.

Method

This study employs a qualitative-descriptive approach, combining analytical and critical analysis. The study was conducted through library research of relevant primary and secondary literature, including classical works by *hadîts* scholars and contemporary research on the methodology of Living Hadith in Indonesia. The primary sources of this research include authoritative *hadîts* literature, such as *Shahîh al-Bukhâri* and *Shahîh Muslim*, as well as books by *hadîts* scholars that discuss authority and *sanad-matn* methodology. Secondary sources include journal articles, dissertations, and academic works that highlight the phenomenon of Living *Hadîts*, especially within UIN Sunan Kalijaga and other Islamic universities.

The data analysis technique uses historical and genealogical analysis to trace the roots of the emergence of the Living *Hadîts* concept.¹³ The study was conducted in three stages: Firstly, a Data inventory was conducted, namely collecting and classifying literature on the concept of Living *Hadîts* and its development in Indonesia. Secondly, Critical analysis involves analyzing the arguments supporting the Living *Hadîts* method by comparing it to the methodology of classical hadith science. The third: Normative evaluation, which is to evaluate the extent to which the Living *Hadîts* approach deviates from the principles of *hadîts* science, as well as its impact on the understanding of the *hadîts* in Indonesian Muslim society.

Results and Discussion

The Concept of Living *Hadîts* and Its Development in Indonesia

The term Living *Hadîts* in Indonesia was first coined by lecturers at Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University, Yogyakarta, particularly among lecturers in the Department of *Tafsîr* and *Hadîts* (now the Department of Quranic Studies and *Tafsîr* and the Department of *Hadîts* Sciences are two independent departments).¹⁴ However, this term is actually

not new, but was already known earlier. In 1993, for example, there was an article written by Barbara D. Metcalf entitled “*Living Hadīth in the Tablīghī Jama`āt*”.¹⁵ Nevertheless, if the authors examine this term, it becomes apparent that Fazlur Rahman has used it in several of his articles, such as “*sunnah and ḥadīts*”, in which he mentions the term “*The Living Sunnah*”.¹⁶ In fact, this term is influenced by the ideas of Orientalists such as Margoliouth and Joseph Schacht. Schacht, for example, mentions in his book *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence: the traditional idea of the sunnah*, “*practice*,” and the common opinion of recognized scholars, which together constitute the “*Living Tradition*” of the doctrine.¹⁷

Therefore, the study of Living *Ḥadīts* is understood as an approach to established practices that originate in the traditional community (which could be in the form of culture, rituals, etc).¹⁸ Furthermore, the starting point in the study of Living *Ḥadīts* is from the practices existing in society to the text (*al-Mumârasât al-maujûdah fî al-Mujtama` ilâ an-Nash*), the Qur’an and *ḥadīts*, not from the text to the application or practice in society. Based on this, the term Living *Ḥadīts*, if translated into Arabic by supporters of this approach, would be “*al-Ḥadīts al-Ḥay fî al-Mujtama` the Living Ḥadīts in Society*” or “*Thyâ` al-Ḥadīts fî al-Mujtama` Reviving the ḥadīts in Society*”.¹⁹ However, in this case, the authors disagree with this translation because the concept of Living Hadith is based on the community’s common practice of the text, and therefore this word seems closer to “(*al-Taqâlid aw al-Af`âl al-Mu`tabarah fî al-Mujtama` Acceptable Behaviors in Society*)”. On this point, the authors have followed the opinion of S. Z. Qudsy, who stated that the relationship between religion, modernity, and ancestral culture manifests in various forms. Therefore, all of these constitute a socio-cultural practice.²⁰

As mentioned earlier, this methodology was first developed at Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University, Yogyakarta, specifically since 2005. Although the discourse had existed long before that year and had developed in the form of hermeneutics, the study of the Qur’an and *ḥadīts* was given the name “*Living Qur’an and Ḥadīts*” approach starting in 2005. According to S. Z. Qudsy, the idea of the Living *Ḥadīts* approach can be divided into three periods since its earliest inception. The first period spanned from 2005 to 2010, the second period from 2010 to 2016, and the third period from 2016 to the present.²¹

The first period (2005-2010) was a time of creativity and dissemination of ideas, as well as a period of discovery for the Living *Ḥadīts* study method.²² The second period (2010-2016) was marked by the introduction of “*Living Ḥadīts*” and “*Ḥadīts and Social Culture*” into the interpretation and *ḥadīts* study programs. Moreover, since these programs were required, students learned different concepts. This period was divided into two types of studies. The first category is studies that focused on practices and traditions, while the second category is studies that dealt with Living *Ḥadīts* to understand the *sunnah*.²³ The third period (2016-present) has developed through the publication of journals using the Living *Ḥadīts* method.²⁴

Accordingly, before the development of the Living *Hadîts* methodology into a research approach, there was already a subject known as “*Hadîts* and Socio-Cultural Studies”.²⁵ It is clear from this issue that the hermeneutic influence is powerful, as the socio-cultural approach consistently focuses on social changes within society. For supporters of this approach, the context in which God revealed the text was the social culture of Arab society, which differs from the social culture of Indonesian society. In this case, S. Z. Qudsy, for example, said sarcastically:

Saudi Arabia, the production center for the Qur’an and *hadîts*, and Indonesia, the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, have different cultures and environments. The geographical differences between the regions of Mecca and Medina, which are mostly desert, are certainly distinct from those of Indonesia. In this country, most of the land is covered with forests. This is undoubtedly also different in terms of traditions and culture.²⁶

This argument contains a historical inaccuracy, as the Arabian Peninsula was not known as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia at the time of the revelation. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was not founded until 1932, whereas before that year, the Arabian Peninsula was still under Ottoman rule. In addition, S. Z. Qudsy also believes that the Holy Quran and the *hadîts* of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) are cultural products that originated in Mecca and Medina, which differ from Indonesian culture. This argument is similar to Nasr Hamid Abû Zayd’s view that cultural products influenced the composition of the Holy Quran. Therefore, the authors believe that this trend undermines the legal authority of the *hadîts*, rendering it a mere social reflection.

The Approach Model in the Living *Hadîts* Methodology in Indonesia

The practical application of Living *Hadîts* as a new approach in *hadîts* studies in Indonesia is grounded in several theories rooted in sociology and anthropology within the broader context. This approach was chosen based on the realization that humans change dialectically, both as individuals and as members of society. In the study of Living *Hadîts*, supporters are not concerned with the authenticity of the *hadîts*. The most important aspect of this perspective is to look at the practices of people in their daily lives. Therefore, the theories used by the proponents of this method include the following:

Phenomenological Approach

Edmund Husserl’s ideas became the most widely used theory, and Heidegger’s influence on him led to a breakthrough in contemporary hermeneutics. This is where the idea of phenomenology in Islamic studies began. Husserl’s influence also appears to be strong in the Living *Hadîts* model; therefore, many *hadîts* studies utilize this theory. It is assumed that the reason for the popularity of this approach among his followers is that his ideas emphasize empiricism.²⁷ Therefore, what is seen in the study of Living Hadith is

the practice that appears in society, whether in the form of ritual practice, traditions, writings, etc. As S. Z. Qudsy mentioned, quoting Criswell, the goal of phenomenology is to reduce individual experiences of a phenomenon to a description of its general nature.²⁸ The Heideggerian hermeneutics known as phenomenological hermeneutics comes to the fore here, which is considered the most appropriate model for understanding or interpreting texts and social practices. Phenomenology is not a text, artifact, or historical document, but rather the existential reality of human beings as *dasein*.²⁹ Thus, understanding (*Verstehen*) is the reality that is interpreted, and here “understanding” is no longer this or that, but rather the primordial mode of “being” that reveals itself. This influence has been widely used as a method among Indonesian students and intellectuals in various forms of writing, whether in master’s and doctoral theses, scientific articles, or other forms of academic writing.

Ethnographic Research

Ethnography is a qualitative research design in which researchers describe and analyze the shared and acquired patterns of values, behaviors, customs, beliefs, and language within a culturally defined community. As a research process and result, ethnography is a method of studying a culturally shared community.³⁰ The ethnographic study involves extended observation of the community, often through participant observation, where the researcher immerses themselves in the daily life of the people, observing and interviewing community members. Ethnographers study the meaning of behavior, language, and interaction among members of the community who share the culture.³¹ However, the problem with using the ethnographic approach is that it can be biased, which may affect the study’s results. Researchers have unconscious biases and assumptions that can influence how they collect and analyze data. In this case, colonizers originally employed the ethnographic research method to study their colonies, as seen in the work of Snouck Hurgronje in the Indonesian context and Sir William Muir in India. Their ethnographic research aimed to provide political material suitable for application by the colonizers, as they were socially and culturally different from the colonized region.

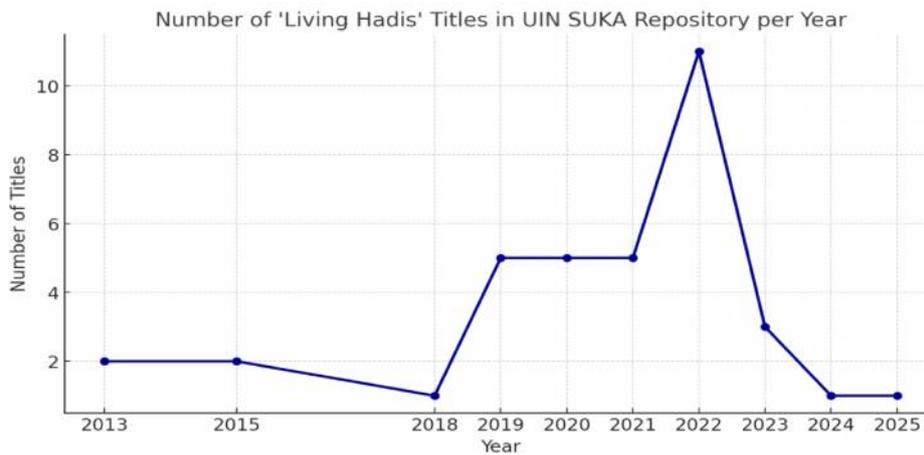
Sociological and Social History Approach

Sociology is the study of human behavior and its relationship to culture. It is a systematic study of the development, structure, relationships, and attitudes of organized human communities. Sociology is the study of society. It paves the way for scientists, social thinkers, and activists to gain a deeper understanding of society. It also helps improve the quality of life for people living in society.³² Meanwhile, Social history is the study of the development of social structures within a particular society or geographical region, and is considered a branch of the social sciences.³³ The aim of this type of social history research, as mentioned by S. Z. Qudsy, is to understand the history of the influence between economics, politics, and culture. Additionally, social history also involves situating economic, intellectual, or political events within their historical context.³⁴

Several Studies on Living *Hadīts* in Indonesia

Using the repository of Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University, Yogyakarta, where the topic of “Living *Hadīts*” first originated, the authors found a collection of 38 academic theses, including bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral-level theses. However, most of them were bachelor’s degree theses. Since 2013, one of the theses that began to appear was written by Muldah Hamtun Najih, entitled: “*Pemahaman dan Praktik Hadis kepemimpinan Perempuan di Yayasan Ali Maksum Pondok Pesantren Krapyak Yogyakarta: Studi Living Hadis*”,³⁵ “*Majelis Bukhoren di Kasultanan Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat: Studi Living Hadis*” by Halimatus Saadiah,³⁶ “*Filantropi Dalam Gerakan Muhammadiyah di Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta: Studi Living Hadis*” by Rohmansyah in 2022,³⁷ “*Living Qur’an dan Hadis Di MI Nurul Ummah Kotagede Yogyakarta :Studi Pendidikan Nilai dalam Pembelajaran Al-Qur’an Hadis Kelas 1-3*” by Muhammad Shaleh Assingkily,³⁸ “*Konsep Pakaian Menurut Salafi Banyumas:Studi Living Hadis*” by Ismail,³⁹ and several other titles, however, the most recent bachelor’s thesis. This data has been modified by the researcher based on what is available in the repository, and the authors believe that there are many other messages that have not been included. Nevertheless, this data shows that the “Living *Hadīts*” method has become widespread in this university, as it is considered a new method in *hadīts* studies.

Graphically, there was an increase in Living *Hadīts* studies at this university in 2022, but a decline in the following year.⁴⁰ The graph below is based on data from the repository of Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University, Yogyakarta:



Considering other Islamic universities, such as UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, for example, many scientific works in Islam employ the Living *Hadīts* model, as evident in the title of a doctoral thesis: “*Living Hadith Pernikahan: Studi Antropologi Hadis dalam Tradisi Islam Sasak Lombok*”, written by Nimatullah in 2019,⁴¹ there is also a title: “*Tradisi Pernikahan di Masyarakat Payudan Karangson Guluk-Guluk Sumenep: Kajian Living Hadis*” by Ahmad Mahfouz, in 2017,⁴² another title: “*Studi atas Fenomena Tradisi Fidyah*

Salat dan Puasa Bagi Orang Meninggal di Indramayu: Living Hadis” by Nurkhalis Safwan in 2018,⁴³ “*Tradisi Kenduri Arwah Di Desa Labuhan Papan Kabupaten Rokan Hilir: Studi Living Hadis*” by Muhammad Solihin,⁴⁴ and “*Living Hadis: Studi atas Fenomena Kegiatan Simaan Alquran Jantiko Mantab di Kabupaten Mesuji* by M. Zainur Rohman.⁴⁵ These are some other theses from other Islamic universities. Furthermore, if the number of Islamic universities throughout Indonesia is examined, the number will certainly be more significant.

It is not limited to academic theses written by university students. The concept of Living Hadith as a model for research in community practice has been written about in numerous academic articles. According to research by Edriagus Saputra and colleagues, based on the Dimension Website, the study of Living Hadith indeed increased in 2022 and then declined in the subsequent year.⁴⁶ This data is similar to the data previously explained by the authors, indicating that studies on the Living Hadith in the form of scientific theses for undergraduate degrees and scientific articles published in academic journals experienced an increase and were of high interest among researchers.

A Critique of the Living *Hadīts* Perspective on Understanding of *Hadīts* in Indonesia

According to some of the previous examples, the practices that occur in society and have been introduced among them are looking for their legitimacy in the face of the Prophetic *hadīts*. Therefore, from the beginning of the researcher’s discussion on “Living Hadith,” it is not the revival of the *hadīts*, but rather a practice known in society, or customs developed within it, or a practice considered legitimate by them. Its basis needs to be addressed in order to find its truth in the *Syar’ah*. The authors do not mean that customs are incompatible with Islamic law; instead, they criticize the confusion between tradition and religion that is fabricated. Moreover, we must remember that the religions practiced by the people before Islam entered the archipelago, especially Indonesia, were Hinduism, Buddhism, and some of them were Animism and Dynamism, and it is possible that the customs of the ancestors of the Indonesian people still influence their children and grandchildren who have already become Muslims, thus there is a mixing of cultures with religion.

As Hamka mentioned in his book *Perkembangan Kebatinan di Indonesia* (The Development of Mysticism in Indonesia), the development of Islam in Indonesia was peaceful and not through conquest, giving the impression of normalizing the existing culture in Indonesia, where some Islamic concepts were influenced by ancient culture. For example, the words *Tuhan*, *Dewa*, and *Hyang*, before the arrival of Islam, carried significant meaning. The word “*Tuhan*” in the history of the Dharmasraya Jambi kingdom is part of the old sultanate,⁴⁷ there was a minister named *Dewa-Tuhan*, and this same name is given to Datuk Perpatih Nan Sebatang, the founder of the Budi Canioago system of law in Minangkabau, West Sumatra.⁴⁸ However, after the coming of Islam, the word

“*Tuhan*” was given a meaning understood by Muslims as God, the name of God in Islam.⁴⁹ Occasionally, the word Allah is also written as *Dewata Mulyaraya*, and it is understood that the word *Dewa* was used in the past to mean Allah.⁵⁰

Additionally, feudalism is also considered one of the primary reasons why it is challenging to eradicate traditional beliefs in Indonesia. Excessive admiration for the king has led to the continued overlap of Islamic beliefs with ancient beliefs. In addition, if the development of the Islamic kingdom in Indonesia is viewed through its history,⁵¹ In addition, there was a political effort to divide Muslims, not only in Indonesia but in all countries colonized by Europeans. In the history of the Mataram Kingdom (in the 16th and 18th centuries AD), for example, Sultan Agung, who sought to implement Islam fully, was forced into conflict with his son, Amangkurat I, whom the colonizers influenced at that time. Therefore, a civil war broke out, resulting in the defeat of Sultan Agung. His son, Amangkurat I, ascended the throne, but the colonists overshadowed his authority. During his reign, Amangkurat I often upheld traditions to the extent that scholars and clerics were considered a threat to the safety of his kingdom.⁵² Therefore, the development of Islam in Indonesia from the beginning was met with hostility, or what is known today as Islamophobia.

Consequently, the concept of Living *Hadîts* appears to be more extreme than the concept of “Living Tradition” as understood by Orientalists in their interpretation of the *Sunnah*. Because the Living Tradition they understand is the *Sunnah*, developed by scholars or jurists, who attribute it to the Messenger of Allah. In Indonesia, the concept of Living *Hadîts* is a normalization of a culture based on the beliefs of ancestors, which, in some aspects, is similar to syncretism. Although according to Metcalf the meaning of Living *Hadîts* is the application of the noble prophetic *hadîts*, he said: To speak of Living *Hadîts*, as my title suggests, has a double meaning. Followers attempt to live by *hadîts* but in such a way that they aspire to internalize the written/heard texts to the point that they ideally become, in a sense, Living *Hadîts*.⁵³

An overview of the article written by Barbara D. Metcalf reveals that it examines the *Tablîghî Jama‘ât* movement in India, which applied the noble Prophetic Hadith through a collection of Prophetic Hadith written by M. Zakaria Qandlawi (1898-1982). Originally published around 1950, the collection is considered a methodology for the members of this group, as it contains hadiths on the virtues of good deeds. The background to its compilation was a suggestion by M. Ilyas Qandlawi, the founder of the group.⁵⁴

The subsequent issue with the Living *Hadîts* approach is that the consideration of the authenticity of the hadith in terms of its acceptance or rejection is not essential. In the author’s view, this approach is as dangerous as that of those who reject the *Sunnah*, and perhaps even more so. How can one practice in society without a basis that confirms its source from the Prophet Muhammad, especially about faith (*‘Aqîdah*), worship (*‘Ibâdah*), morals (*Akhlâq*), and other matters that are among the central teachings of

Islam? The meaning of the hadith itself is everything that has been attributed to the Prophet that can be verified as authentic. Therefore, scholars have developed a rigorous and precise methodology for determining the authenticity of hadith. So how can the authenticity of hadith be unimportant in the field of reviving the *Sunnah* in society?

The idea on which the theory of Living Hadith is based, as a theory applicable in Indonesia, is influenced by Orientalists, as the authors mentioned at the beginning of the study. The basis for this is the “Living Tradition” of the previous society that shaped the concept of the noble Prophetic *hadīts*. This theory was developed by Joseph Schacht, who believes that the “Living Tradition” goes back to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The ancient traditions that originated in Islamic society can be divided into three schools of thought: the Madinah school, the Iraq school, and the Syria school. For him, the formation of this tradition is due to the difficulty of applying the Prophet’s *Sunnah*.⁵⁵ Therefore, the tradition of Madinah, for example, aims to incorporate its traditions, which are suited to it. However, M. Al-Azami criticized his opinion, even though there are indeed some practices of the people of Madinah that have become the basis applied by the Maliki school of thought. However, in reality, Imam Malik’s application of the *sunnah* does not give preference to the practices of the people of Madinah.⁵⁶

In fact, the emergence of Islam during the time of the Prophet brought about significant changes in the cultural system of Arab society at that time, as the Holy Quran and *sunnah* established a new civilization known as Islamic civilization, which encompassed faith, *syarī‘ah*, and morals. In the narration of ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar, for example, he said: “I heard Ibn ‘Umar say: ‘We used to communicate and saw no harm in it, until we heard Rāfi‘ ibn Khadīj say: “*The Messenger of Allah forbade it, so we stopped doing it because of his statement*”.⁵⁷ Another narration mentioned: “*The sunnah is the foundation of religion*”.⁵⁸ And from Hisyām bin ‘Arwah, that he heard from his father: “*Following the sunnah is the foundation of religion (Itbâ‘ an-Sunnah Qawâm ad-Dîn)*”.⁵⁹ In the Narrative, it is said that Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz wrote to the people, “*No one has any opinion except that which is in accordance with the sunnah of the messenger of Allah*”.⁶⁰ Accordingly, following the *sunnah* of the Prophet is part of obeying religious commands. For this reason, it is necessary to base all religious actions on authentic sources.

As a result, from the above evidence, it is clear that the nature of the *hadīts* is important, so that people should not be lenient in understanding it without a basis. Sometimes, there are individuals in society who are superficial in their thinking, not knowing or understanding the truth of Allah’s commands and those of His Messenger, which leads them to drift towards strange ideas. It is the case in Indonesia, where customs that have become part of Indonesian Islamic traditions are not the result of the work of scholars who understand the essence of Islam, but rather the outcome of cultural or popular movements that do not accurately represent the religion. Therefore, the authors believe that this is a grave matter. This leads to the promotion of intolerance, rather than

sincerity in working for the sake of Allah. It can be observed through the prevailing phenomenon in Indonesian Islamic society. However, when traditions do not conform to the commands of Allah in the Holy Qur'an, the *sunnah* of the Prophet, or the guidance of scholars who understand sharia law, they argue that what happened in the past was done by their ancestors, and that traditions should not be criticized because they are part of their culture.

Conclusion

In this study, the Living *Hadîts* approach, which emerged in the context of modern *hadîts* studies in Indonesia, is viewed as a shift in how the Prophetic *sunnah* is approached, moving the focus from the text to human (sociocultural) practice, and from the chain of transmission to the cultural phenomenon. This perspective initially emerged as an attempt to read the prophetic *hadîts* through the lens of social reality. However, a deeper look reveals methodological problems related to transgressing the scientific controls adopted in the science of *hadîts*, particularly regarding the authenticity and validity of texts, as well as the dangers of mixing worldly customs and traditions with Islamic legislation. As the study demonstrated, this approach was influenced by Western hermeneutic, phenomenological, and anthropological perspectives, leading to the emergence of trends that prioritize culture over the text and elevate collective experience above prophetic revelation. Consequently, the biggest challenge for Hadith studies is to maintain its authenticity and authority amid pressure to contextualize methodology in light of sociocultural changes. As a result, applying the Living *Hadîts* approach in *hadîts* studies has the potential to weaken understanding of the *hadîts*, leading to relative interpretations of its meaning and the argument that religion is a product of social change, which is constantly evolving. Therefore, if Living *Hadîts* is maintained to understand the meaning of the Prophet's words, then the definition of religion is understood only as a group of people who believe in exclusive beliefs, changing according to culture, not culture following religion.

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