Epistemological Transformation of Hadith Transmission in Post-3rd Century of Sufi Tradition

Ahmad Ubaidillah Ma'sum Al Anwari*
Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia
ahmadalanwari3@gmail.com

Muhammad Akmaluddin
Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia
muhammad.akmaluddin@uin-suka.ac.id

*Corresponding Author

Abstract: The discourse on hadith transmission within the Sufi tradition presents a compelling subject for inquiry, particularly concerning its inherent dynamics and the intellectual tensions arising between Sufi practitioners and ḥadīth scholars. While Sufis define themselves as guardians of Prophetic teachings through spiritual realization and divine connection, a paradoxical divergence emerges: their methods of transmission often contravene the principles of validation recognized by mainstream scholarship. Departing from this apparent contradiction, this study investigates the epistemological framework through which Sufis engage with hadith and the methodological principles underpinning their transmission practices. Employing a descriptive-qualitative methodology in library research methodology, relevant data were systematically collected, verified for authenticity, classified thematically, and subjected to critical analysis and reflection. This inquiry reveals that the transformation within Sufi circles and the doctrine of taṣawwuf itself is fundamentally shaped by historical shifts, with each epoch developing distinct forms and modes of praxis. The principal finding of this research lies in the demonstration that the evolution of transmission practices follows a discernible trajectory: it originated within the traditional framework governed by the *isnād* system, transitioned into a phase marked by the simplification or truncation of isnāds, and culminated in the emergence of methods radically distinct from the established tradition of hadith scholars. This final stage is characterized by alternative methodologies based on *kashf* and *ru'yā*. The adoption of these alternative methods stems from the Sufi ambition to maintain a continuous spiritual connection with the Prophet, a connection they contend is accessible primarily through contemplative practice. While contemplation possesses a basis for legitimacy within Prophetic tradition, its application as a formal channel for transmitting ḥadīth risks replicating a historical peril: the proliferation of fabricated hadiths. This risk arises from the inherent difficulty of verifying the chain of transmission (isnād) and the matn of such experientially-received knowledge through the systematic criteria developed within the classical science of hadith.

Keywords: Sufism, epistemological transformation, hadith transmission, *kashf* and *ru'ya*

Abstrak: Diskursus periwayatan hadis dalam tradisi kaum sufi selalu menarik untuk dilakukan, khususnya terkait dinamika dan ketegangan yang terjadi di antara mereka dan

ahli hadis. Kaum sufi menyebut dirinya sebagai penjaga ajaran nabi melalui penjiwaan dan keterhubungannya dengan tuhan, namuna paradoksnya, mereka justeru melakukan bentuk periwayatan yang menyelisihi prinsip periwayatan yang diakui validitasnya oleh mayoritas ulama'. Berangkat dari realitas tersebut, penelitian ini mengkaji kerangka pemikiran kaum Sufi terhadap hadis dan metode yang mereka lakukan dalam periwayatan hadis. Menggunakan metodologi penelitian kepustakaan berbasis deskriptif-kualitatif, berbagai informasi yang ada dikumpulkan, diverifikasi keabsahannya, diklasifikasikan secara tematis, lalu dianalis dan direfleksikan. Darinya, penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa transformasi yang terjadi di dalam tubuh kaum sufi dan ajaran tasawuf disebabkan oleh pergesarn masa, di mana setiap masa memiliki bentuk dan caranya masing-masing dalam bertasawuf. Adapun temuan utama dari penelitian terletak pada realitas bahwasanya transformasi dalam periwayatan hadis terjadi dari masa ke sama, di mana awalnya dilakukan secara tradisional melalui skema sanad, kemudian terjadi pemangkasan sanad, lalu muncul periwayatan yang dilakukan dengan jauh berbeda dari tradisi ahli hadis dengan munculnya metode alternatif melalui *kashf* dan *ru'ya*. Munculnya metode alternatif tersebut disebabkan oleh ambisi kaum sufi untuk senantiasa terkoneksi dengan nabi, yang mana hal tersebut hanya bisa dilakukan melalui kontemplasi. Meskipun kontemplasi memiliki dasar legalitas dari hadis nabi sendiri, namun penggunaannya sebagai metode periwayatan justeru akan mengulang pengalaman buruk dengan munculnya banyak hadis maudhu', karena kesulitan memverifikasi sanad dan matannya melalui skema-skema yang berkembang dalam tradisi ilmu hadis.

Kata Kunci: Tasawwuf, transformasi epistemologi, periwayatan hadis, *kashf* and *ru'ya*

INTRODUCTION

The tradition of Hadith transmission has been a fundamental practice since the formative period of Islam, with the Prophet Muhammad, serving as the central axis and authoritative source. He is regarded as the *insān al-kāmil* (the perfect human) who embodied divine values in tangible life.[1] This perception fostered a conviction in the absolute truth of everything conveyed by the Prophet—be it his words, actions, or approvals.[2] According to Max Weber's theory of "charismatic authority", this conviction emerged from the prophetic charisma of Muhammad, which in turn generated immense enthusiasm among his companions.[3] This enthusiasm is reflected in the transmission paradigm, where Hadith became a source of normativity in Islam, serving as a legal foundation for the validity of religious practices and worship.

Hadith, alongside the Qur'an, constitutes a primary foundation of Muslim faith, profoundly influencing the lives of the community by inspiring beliefs, practices, attitudes, and sentiments.[4] Simply put, the prophetic authority of Muhammad was not only conceptual but also practical, creating a harmony between the two. Consequently,

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[1] Simuh, *Tasawuf Dan Perkembangannya Dalam Islam* (Yogyakarta: IRCiSoD, 2019).

[2] Muhammad 'Ajjāj al-Khaṭīb, *Ushūl Al-Hadīš: 'Ulūmuhu Wa Musthalahu* (Mesir: Dār al-Fikr, 2006).

[3] Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretative Sociology* (University of California Press, 1978).

[4] Roberto Tottoli, 'Genres', in *The Wiley Blackwell Concise Companion the Hadith*, ed. Daniel W. Brown (UK: Wiley Publisher, 2020), 187.

many endeavored to record and emulate every aspect of the Prophet's life.[5] In this context, the Prophet's practice of *zuhd* (asceticism) and profound spirituality became particularly inspirational for Sufis. This is evident in symbolic practices such as wearing *ṣūf* (woolen garments), residing in the *ṣuffah* (the mosque's portico), fervor in *dhikr* and worship, and consistently *tazkiyah al-nafs,*[6] such as Hossein Nasr's argument that Sufis, as practitioners of taṣawwuf, occupy a unique position as the group most intensely dedicated to emulating the Prophet.[7]

The most fundamental aspect of Sufism lies in the continuous effort to remain connected to God, an endeavor that originates from prophetic spirituality. The ideal dimensions of the Prophet's character were continually read, understood, and implemented in daily life through the framework of Hadith transmission. However, some scholars, such as Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597 AH) and al-Dhahabī (d. 784 AH), precisely criticized him for the Sufistic predisposition to accept narrations without verifying their chains of transmission.[8] This one reflects the perennial tension between exoteric (*ahl al-ḥadīth* predisposition) and esoteric (sufi's predisposition) approaches to understanding the Hadith. The historical dynamic has significant implications for contemporary Islamic studies, where Sufi and mystical movements actually emerged to reform the spirituality and ethics of Muslim generations perceived as having strayed from the purity of Islamic teachings.

Beyond the dichotomous narrative that has long dominated the discourse, a few scholars, such as al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī,[9] Roberto Tottoli,[10] and Aiyub Palmer,[11] have identified significant epistemological variations in the practices of hadith transmission between the Sufi tradition and the *ahl al-ḥadīth*. Similar findings are reinforced by the studies of Idri,[12] Kudhori,[13] and Tajuddin Arafat,[14] who affirm that within the Sufi framework, hadith transmission is not invariably bound to the traditional-systematic methodology characteristic of hadith science canonization. However, these studies have not comprehensively explained how Sufistic thought could emerge, the dynamics that developed, and the initial reasons behind the fundamental differences that subsequently triggered tension. Many Companions and Successors, for indeed, were

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[5] Mu'min Jamal Abdul Aziz Mar'iy, '*Al-Maqāmāt Wa al-Ahwāl 'inda al-Shūfiyyah Wa Muwaqqifu al-Salaf Minha'* (Thesis, Jāmi'ah al-Quds, 2021).

[6] Abdul Karim al-Qusyairi, *Risālah Al-Qusyairiyyah Fī 'Ilm al-Taṣawwuf* (Beirut: Dar al-Khayr, 2004).

[7] Sayyed Hossein Nasr, *Islam: Religion, History, and Civilization* (HarperCollins e-book, 2002), 82.

[8] Ahmad Ubaidillah Ma'sum Al Anwari, 'Kajian Autentisitas Hadis Dalam Kitab Ihya' 'Ulumuddin: Perbandingan Metodologi Antara Ahl Al-Hadits Dan Ahl Al-Shufi' (Skripsi, UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2022).

[9] Al-Hakīm al-Tirmīżi, *Nawādir Al-Uṣūl Fī Ma'rifah Ahādīṡ al-Rasūl* (Beirut: Dar al-Nawadir, 2010).

[10] Tottoli, 'Genres'.

[11] Aiyub Palmer, 'Sufism', in *The Wiley Blackwell Concise Companion to the Hadith* (UK: Wiley Publisher, 2020).

[12] Idri, *Problematika Autentisitas Hadis Nabi Dari Klasik Hingga Kontemporer* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2020).

[13] Muhammad Kudhori, 'Metode Kashf Dalam Penilaian Hadis: Studi Tashih Hadis Di Kalangan Kaum Sufi', *Jurnal Afkaruna* 14, no. 1 (2018).

[14] Ahmad Tajuddin Arafat, 'Interaksi Kaum Sufi Dengan Ahli Hadis: Melacak Akar Persinggungan Tasawuf Dan Hadis', *Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities* 2, no. 2 (2017).

also considered Sufis, yet why their intellectual frameworks were ultimately rejected and contested remains an unresolved question.

Based on this discourse, the author assumes two distinct phenomena: the Sufis' awareness of the status of Hadith, the urgency of direct transmission, and the importance of essential meaning; and yet, simultaneously, the emergence of transmission methods, which appear contradictory to that initial awareness. From this point, the author seeks to explore further the dynamics of Hadith transmission among Sufis, particularly after the third century AH, when various Islamic sciences began to be constructed epistemologically,[15] Hadith had been codified,[16] and the fundamental principles of '*ulūm al-ḥadīth* (hadith sciences) had emerged.[17] To delimit the research, this study focuses on two problem formulations: Why is there a difference in paradigm between the Sufis and the hadith scholars in viewing hadith? What was the systematics of transmission that occurred within the Sufi tradition?

This research seeks to chart emergent within Hadith studies, advocating for a methodological framework that is inclusive and interdisciplinary rather than constrained by sectarian or institutional boundaries. This intervention is particularly salient given the persistent perception of Sufism as a tradition tangential to Islam's foundational texts, despite Sufis' consistent grounding in the Prophetic paradigm as the central axis of their doctrinal and practical formulations. The proposed multidisciplinary analysis deliberately transcends the classical paradigm of the *muḥaddithīn*, incorporating diverse epistemic perspectives within Islamic intellectual history, with particular attention to the substantive, though often overlooked, role of Sufi scholars in the transmission of Hadith.

RESEARCH METHOD

Departing from the problems outlined, this study employs a descriptive-analytical method based on library research[18] to examine each component of the research. In its procedural stages, the author commenced by conducting data collection through several relevant primary texts and extant research works. This was followed by verify and classify data, systematic analysis and critical reflection, which were subsequently synthesized and presented in accordance with the prescribed journal format.

This study employs a multi-source documentary analysis, drawing upon the fields of taṣawwuf and hadith sciences. Primary sources encompass *kutub al-rijāl* from both Sufi and Hadith scholar traditions, including foundational works such as Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyyah, Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā', Ḥilyat al-Awliyā', and Tahdhīb al-Kamāl. While secondary sources consist of modern academic analyses and peer-reviewed studies that critically engage with issues of Sufi tradition and Hadith transmission. These were

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[15] Ahmad Tajuddin Arafat, Mutma'inah, and Hanik Rosyida, 'Sufistic Approach in Understanding Hadith: Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī's Viewpoint', *Teosofia: Indonesian Journal of Islamic Mysticism* 11, no. 1 (2022).

[16] Muhammad Ibn 'Alawi al-Māliki, *Al-Qawā'id al-Asāsiyyah Fi 'Ilmi Muṣṭalaḥ al-Hadiṡ* (2002).

[17] Al-Ḥasan Ibn Abd al-Raḥman Al-Raḥmahurmuzī, *Al-Muḥaddiṡ al-Fāṣil Baina al-Rāwī Wa al-Wā'ī* (Dār al-Fikr, 1984).

[18] Mestika Zed, *Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan* (Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2004).

identified through searches of established digital repositories, such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, and accredited journal portals, provided the source constitutes a specialized study explicating the role of Sufis in the discipline of hadith scholarship. All gathered data will be systematically catalogued, summarized, and subjected to verify, ensuring the validity of references and their substantive relevance to the research theme.

Following the comprehensive collection of data, the research proceeds to the analytical phase. In its analytical framework, this study is primarily grounded in the philosophy of science, with its focus on the objectivity of knowledge, and is supported by a comparative approach. The works of Suryasumantri and the epistemological framework of Abid al-Jabiri are considered essential to this analytical process, to facilitate an understanding of the differing methodologies, viewpoints, methods, and other aspects, without abandoning the foundational frameworks of *'ulūm al-ḥadīth* and taṣawwuf, which constitute the core epistemology of each respective tradition. The final stage involved composing the manuscript with deliberate attention to discursive form. The objective was twofold: first, to construct a framework for equitably weighing the respective arguments; and second, to produce a compelling scholarly text that invites critical reading and further study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Sufism transformation: from spiritual extremism to academic study

The third Islamic century heralded the incipient institutionalization of scholarly traditions, during which proto-disciplinary modes of inquiry crystallized into formally constituted fields of study (*'ulūm*).[19] This trajectory of formalization is equally evident in the development of taṣawwuf (sufism), one of the treasures of early Islamic tradition. Sufism, initially perceived through the lens of spiritual intensity or even antinomian excess, gradually evolved into a systematic discipline with its own epistemological foundations and pedagogical lineages (silsilah). A core tenet in early Sufi cosmology refers to the affirmation of Divine immanence in all phenomena, coupled with the belief in the Prophet Muhammad's enduring *ḥaḍarah nabawiyyah* (metaphysical presence) within the Muslim community after his *intaqala ilā rafīq al-a'lā* (died).[20]

Recognized as the archetypal perfect human (*al-insān al-kāmil*), the Prophet's persona served as the paramount inspiration for Ṣaḥābah and successive generations of 'ulamā, motivating a sustained pursuit of divine proximity (*qurb*) and a cultivated consciousness of God's immanence in all aspects of life.[21] Simuh used the concept of "spiritual extremity" to delineate one axis of early Sufi praxis, *zuhd* (asceticism), which denotes a comprehensive Prophetic paradigm characterized by material simplicity

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[19] Arafat, Mutma'inah, and Rosyida, 'Sufistic Approach in Understanding Hadith: Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī's Viewpoint'.

[20] Abu Nashr al-Siraj Al-Thusi, *Kitab Al-Luma' Fi al-Tashawwuf* (Mesir: Dar al-Kutub al-Haditsah bi Mishr, 1960).

[21] William Rory Dickson, 'Sufism and Shari'a: Contextualizing Contemporary Sufi Expressions', *Religions* 13, no. 449 (2022).

and detachment from worldly enticements.[22] Elevating the Prophet's personal conduct to the status of an ideal religious exemplar, rendered his individual practices normative injunctions for emulation, showing that the trajectory of Islamic piety into distinctively ascetic and mystical modes of praxis was already underway by the first Hijrī century.

Although the formal designation (taṣawwuf) was not extant in the time of the Prophet, its essence was in the foundational archetypes of *al-'ubbād* (the perpetually devout), *al-zuhhād* (the renunciants), *al-siyyāḥīn* (the itinerant wayfarers in God's path), and *al-fuqarā'* (the impoverished), previously existing.[23] The statement of Imām al-Sha'rānī (d. 973 AH) reinforced the work compiled to elucidate the practice of Sufism. Notably, he included numerous ṣaḥābah in this work, such as Abū Bakr (d. 13 AH), 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 23 AH), 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān (d. 35 AH), 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (d. 40 AH), Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubaydillāh (d. 36 AH), Zubayr ibn al-'Awwām (d. 36 AH), Salmān al-Fārisī (d. 35 AH), Ubayy ibn Ka'b (d. 29 AH), Abū Hurayrah (d. 59 AH), 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās (d. 68 AH),[24] including the presence of the *aṣḥāb al-ṣuffah*, who constitute the genealogical-epistemological foundation for Sufi doctrine and practice, a tradition rooted in the normative foundations of the earliest Muslim community, given the involvement of many prominent Ṣaḥābah within the Sufi lineage.[25]

Besides that, an authenticating Sufism also involved extending the tābi'īn, such as Sa'īd ibn al-Musayyib (d. 94 AH), Ibrāhīm al-Nakha'ī (d. 96 AH), 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz (d. 101 AH), Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110 AH), Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn (d. 110 AH), Mālik ibn Dīnār (d. 129 AH), Sufyān al-Ṡaurī (d. 161 AH), Abdullah Ibn al-Mubārak (d. 181 AH), Fuḍail Ibn 'Iyāḍ (d. 187 AH), Bishr al-Ḥāfī (d. 227 AH), and Aḥmad ibn Abī al-Ḥawārī (d. 246 AH). In this period, especially the second century Hijri, many religious scholars sought to withdraw from worldly distractions. Their religious practice was generally shaped by personal spiritual inclinations, which in turn gave rise to distinct doctrinal schools within Sufism. For instance, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī with *khauf wa al-rajā'* (fear and hope) in religious devotion, Sufyān al-Ṡaurī with *'ilm and 'amal*, and Rabī'ah al-'Adawiyyah (d. 183 AH) with *maḥabbah* (divine love) for her *maẓhab*, through which she expressed a need for nothing but Allah Swt.[26]

This explanation strengthens one of the foundational sources within the academic framework (epistemology) of Sufi studies: namely, that Sufi teachings have existed since the time of the Prophet and his Companions. Furthermore, several Sufi authorities have asserted that Sufism is a doctrine firmly grounded in the Qur'an and Hadith. In this regard, three quite representative opinions illustrate the scholarly sources underpinning Sufism. Al-Qushayrī—notably a Sufi himself—held that one who

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[22] Simuh, *Tasawuf Dan Perkembangannya Dalam Islam*, 38.

[23] Al-Thusi, *Kitab Al-Luma' Fi al-Tashawwuf*, 42.

[24] Abdul Wahhab al-Sya'rani, *Al-Ṭabaqāh al-Kubrā* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 2006).

[25] Muḥammad Ibn Isḥāq Al-Kalābaẓī, *Al-Ta'arruf Li Maẓhab Ahl al-Taṣawwuf* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1993), 12.

[26] Ahmad Ubaidillah Ma'sum Al Anwari, 'Melacak Konstruksi Dasar 'Adālah al-Rāwī Dalam Tradisi Sufi' (Tesis, UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2025).

has not memorized the Qur'an and recorded Hadith cannot be taken as a model.[27] Aḥmad ibn Abī al-Ḥawārī likewise insisted that any act of worship is rejected if it is not based on the Prophet's sunnah.[28] Al-Ṭūsī, also, affirmed Sufism as a teaching that consistently takes the Qur'an and *aṡar* (hadith) as its proof-texts (*ḥujjah*), thereby distinguishing truth from falsehood.[29]

Then, in the midst of intellectual developments, the doctrinal premises of Sufism itself began to be subjected to critical inquiry. This process of scrutiny generated a proliferation of evolving definitions concerning its nature and origins. These definitions often sought to ground Sufism in symbolic signifiers, such as the distinctive woollen garment (*ṣūf*), the ascetic cohort of the Prophet's Mosque (*ahl al-Ṣuffah*), inner purity (*ṣafā'*), and wisdom (*sophos*).[30] This definition, articulated among others by Bishr al-Ḥāfī (a third century AH Sufi) and al-Kalābāżī (a fourth century AH Sufi), grounds the fundamental Sufi framework in linguistic terms, which is then connected to praiseworthy moral qualities. For instance, ṣūfī is said to refer to one who purifies the heart (*ṣafā' al-qalb*) for God alone, renders all acts of worship sincere (ikhlāṣ) for God alone, and strives to abandon the world with all its clamor and distraction.[31]

This development facilitated the identification and standardization of what constituted a Sufi, the doctrines of Sufism, and the essence of the tradition itself. A divergent perspective, however, emerged from within Sufi circles. While many proponents concurred with these formalizing definitions, a significant contingent—particularly among early practitioners of the third Islamic century—explicitly rejected them. Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī (d. 465 AH), for instance, challenged the influential definitions. He argued that the essence of Sufism (taṣawwuf) is irreducible to its external manifestations or nominal origins. For al-Qushayrī, the validity of any symbolic practice was contingent upon a sincere inner state (niyyah) and righteous action ('amal). He emphatically warned that a devotional act—like wearing wool—if devoid of this inner concordance and corresponding pious conduct, would be rendered spiritually void and consigned to the infernal fires.[32]

Al-Ṭūsī similarly asserted that conventional honorific titles (*alqāb*), typically bestowed for mastery of a particular scholarly discipline or form of devotion, remain inadequate and irrelevant when applied to the essential nature of Sufism. He gave the examples of the differentiation of titles in Sufism from the others: a hadith scholar is called a *muḥaddith*, an exegete a mufassir, a jurist an *al-faqīh*, a theologian a *mutakallim*, a devout worshipper *al-'ābid*, and an ascetic *al-zāhid*. Meanwhile, Sufism is an attitude of steadfast adherence to the Qur'an (and Hadith), taking the Prophet's character as a model, emulating the personalities of *ṣaḥabah*, *tābi'īn*, and the righteous,

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[27] al-Qusyairi, *Risālah Al-Qusyairiyyah Fī 'Ilm al-Taṣawwuf*, 430–31.

[28] Arafat, 'Interaksi Kaum Sufi Dengan Ahli Hadis: Melacak Akar Persinggungan Tasawuf Dan Hadis', 2.

[29] Al-Thusi, *Kitab Al-Luma' Fi al-Tashawwuf*, 21.

[30] Nurdin, *Pengantar Ilmu Tasawuf*, 3–4.

[31] Al-Kalābāżī, *Al-Ta'arruf Li Mażhab Ahl al-Taṣawwuf*, 9–11.

[32] al-Sya'rani, *Al-Ṭabaqāh al-Kubrā*, 26.

also restricting oneself to what is explained by the Qur'an and Hadith.[33] Echoing this view, Yūsuf Khaṭṭār states that Sufism is a teaching rooted in the Qur'an and Hadith. So, the epistemology of Sufism in fact maintains the Hadith and the Qur'an as its ontological foundation.[34]

In the development of their epistemological system and method, they also elaborated an intuitif framework of thought. In the terminology of Abid al-Jabiri, the epistemological construct of Sufis aligns with the *'irfānī* (gnostic) mode of reasoning, which in the philosophy of science corresponds to an intuitif. This is demonstrated by the Sufi focus on the practical utility and transformative benefit of a Hadith, rather than its formal mode of transmission. The *'irfānī* mode is generally deemed not to meet scientific qualifications, rendering its truth claims relative and contested. Within the the philosophy of science, however, the validity of pragmatic knowledge—which shares fundamental principles with *'irfānī* epistemology—is recognized as one justifiable paradigm. The emphasis lies not on a prescribed method or procedure, but rather on the values and utility that can be derived from a given phenomenon.[35]

The modern psychologist Nitze offers a rational framework that potentially explains the phenomenon of inspiration in scientific terms. Although he does not use the term ilham and rejects its characterization as divine intervention, the underlying principle is analogous. He argues that humans possess a subconscious mind capable of suddenly solving complex problems, a phenomenon often termed a "Eureka moment" or "insight." A pertinent example can be observed in thesis writing. When a student encounters a cognitive block, their subconscious mind engages in a process of synthesizing scattered informational fragments, which can lead to a creative cognitive breakthrough, thereby generating a viable pathway to resolve the scholarly dilemma. In another way of analogy, consider the situation in which the frame of an individual's eyeglasses becomes damaged: they will then employ a series of adaptive strategies to restore the functionality of the corrective lenses.

This knowledge emerges abruptly in the subconscious, as if acquired without prior study. However, Nitze posits that this ability arises from the accumulation of intensive habitual thinking, cognitive mechanisms operating outside conscious awareness, and innate talent that surfaces under particular conditions, such as intense pressure.[36] Thus, the Sufi predisposition towards metaphysical dimensions, cultivated through rigorous spiritual training, may enable them to access cognitive states beyond ordinary human experience. Ultimately, the transformation in transmission practices within the Sufi tradition is inextricably linked to a cognitive and spiritual orientation. This ensures that the method is not used as a convenient shortcut that negates other intrinsically connected and indispensable aspects of the tradition.

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[33] Al-Thusi, *Kitab Al-Luma' Fi al-Tashawwuf*, 21.

[34] Yūsuf Khaṭṭār Muḥammad, *Al-Mausū'ah al-Yūsufiyyah Fi Bayāni Adillah al-Ṣūfiyyah* (Dār al-Taqwā, 2003).

[35] Jujun Suriasumantri, *Filsafat Ilmu: Sebuah Pengantar Populer* (Jakarta: Pustaka Sinar Harapan, 2005).

[36] Richard Nitze, *The Unconscious Mind and Problem Solving* (Cambridge University Press, 2018).

The development of sufism			
Sufism doctrine	**First and second century of hijri**	**The third century of hijri**	**Post-third century of hijri**
Forms of understanding and meaning	Limited to the awareness to emulate the spirituality of the prophet	The purification of Sufism as in the first century	The emergence of definitions based on spiritual activities
Sources	The Qur'an, hadith, and the Prophet's personality	The Qur'an, hadith, the Prophet's personal life, his companions, and the tabi'in	The Qur'an, hadith, the Prophet's personal life, his his shahabah and tabi'in, alo righteous people
Main characteristics	Adhering strictly to the Qur'an and hadith, including involvement in narration	The integration of knowledge and action, as well as the development of forms and types of spirituality	Development of alternative methods through *kashf* and *ru'ya* through *'irfānī* to gain knowledge

The shifting transformation of hadith narration among Sufi traditions

Sufis, as a group that takes Prophetic spirituality as its primary exemplar, fundamentally place the intensity of their relationship with Allāh Swt at the core of their existential and intellectual-spiritual orientation. As a preliminary standard for identifying a scholar as a Sufi, one can refer to the various inclinations and teachings that developed within taṣawwuf, such as *zuhd* (asceticism), *warā'* (scrupulous piety), *'ābid* (devout worship), *bakkā'* (weeper out of Godly fear), *sakhā'* (generosity), and others. In this regard, the *kitāb* like Ḥilyat al-Auliyā' and Tażkirah al-Auliyā' often bestow such titles at the outset of their biographies, such as Sufyān al-Ṡaurī as *al-wara'*, Shu'bah ibn al-Ḥajjāj as *al-Ṣawwām*, and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal as *al-wara'*.[37] These attributions point to their spiritual dimensions, manifested in diverse forms, indicating their identity as Sufis.

Referring to this description, the key point to emphasize here is that each historical period played a significant role in formulating the shape of taṣawwuf. In its early phase, Sufism was not yet identified as an independent scholarly discipline with a distinct epistemological foundation. Its primary focus was the endeavor to maintain a constant connection with Allāh (*ta'alluq billāh*) through spiritual purification (*tazkiyat al-nafs*), *żikr*, worship, and the internalization of meanings transcending formal-traditional structures.[38] Thus, its existence was essentially a religious

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[37] Abū Nu'aim al-Aṣfihānī, *Ḥilyah Al-Auliyā' Wa Ṭabāqah al-Aṣfiyā'*, vol. 9 (Dār al-Fikr, 1996); Farid al-Dīn al-'Aṭṭār, *Tażkirah Al-Auliyā'*, trans. Muhammad al-Ashīly al-Wasṭānīy (Syuriah: Dār al-Maktabī, 2009).

[38] Al-Thusi, *Kitab Al-Luma' Fi al-Tashawwuf*; al-Qusyairi, *Risālah Al-Qusyairiyyah Fī 'Ilm al-Taṣawwuf*.

inclination among its adherents. In other words, those engaged in the Sufi path were not precluded from participating in hadith transmission, as demonstrated by many early Sufis.

The most evident proof is the number of Sufis also identified as ḥadīth transmitters within the *Kutub al-Tis'ah* (the Nine Canonical Books), such as *khulafā' al-rāsyidīn*, Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubaydillāh (d. 36 AH); Zubayr ibn al-'Awwām (d. 36 AH); Salmān al-Fārisī (d. 35 AH); Ubayy ibn Ka'b (d. 29 AH); Abū Hurayrah (d. 59 AH); 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās (d. 68 AH); and among the Tābi'ūn such as Sa'īd ibn al-Musayyib (d. 94 AH); 'Urwah ibn al-Zubayr (d. 94 AH); 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz (d. 101 AH); al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr (d. 105 AH); Sulaymān ibn Yasār (d. 107 AH); Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn (d. 110 AH); Makḥūl al-Shāmī (d. 118 AH); Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī (d. 131 AH); Thābit al-Bunānī (d. 127 AH); 'Aṭā' ibn Abī Rabāḥ (d. 117 AH); Manṣūr ibn al-Mu'tamir (d. 132 AH); Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 124 AH); Muḥammad ibn al-Munkadir (d. 130 AH); Khālid ibn Ma'dān (d. 103 AH); Ibrāhīm ibn Adham (d. 161 AH); al-Fuḍayl ibn 'Iyāḍ (d. 187 AH); Bishr al-Ḥāfī (d. 227 AH); and Aḥmad ibn Abī al-Ḥawārī (d. 246 AH).[39]

The defining characteristic of transmission during this period was the scholars' conscious inclusion of a complete *sanad* (chain of transmission) for hadith. The sanad served to authenticate the information as genuinely originating from the Prophet.[40] Hence, scholars articulated their views on its paramount importance: 'Abdullāh ibn al-Mubārak stated that "the sanad is part of religion; were it not for the sanad, anyone could say whatever they wished".[41] Sufyān al-Ṡaurī reinforced this urgency with an analogy: "The sanad is the weapon of the believer. Without a weapon, how can one fight?".[42] Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn further asserted that only transmissions from *ahl al-sunnah* were acceptable, while those originating from *ahl al-bid'ah* were entirely rejected.[43] Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that scholars' understanding of *sanad* construction was not entirely uniform. This is evident in the transmission method of Mālik ibn Anas, where some of his reports directly reference the Prophet (tadlīs).

A similar practice is observed in others, such as Sa'īd ibn al-Musayyib, Mālik ibn Sulaymān al-Harawī (d. 163 AH), Abū Bakr ibn Ḥazm (d. 117 AH), Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 124 AH), al-Ḥasan ibn 'Aṭā' ibn Yasār al-Madanī (d. 100 AH), Sufyān al-Ṡaurī (d. 161 AH), Sufyān ibn 'Uyaynah (d. 198 AH), Ṭāwūs ibn Kaysān al-Yamanī (d. 106 AH), Sulaymān ibn Abī Dāwūd al-Ṭayālisī (d. 275 AH), Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj (d. 261 AH), Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī (d. 256 AH), and several others. However, not all transmissions involving *tadlīs* are automatically rejected, as Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī established specific qualifications determining their acceptance or rejection,[44] Among

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[39] Arafat, 125–262; Muhammad Mustafa Azami, *Hadis Nabawi dan Sejarah Kodifikasinya*, trans. oleh Ali Mustafa Ya'qub (Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus, 2020), 201–440.

[40] Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Tadrib Al-Rāwī Fī Syarḥ Taqrīb al-Nawāwī* (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Kauṡar, 1994).

[41] Muslim Ibn al-Hajjaj, *Shahih Muslim* (Dar al-Tashil, 2014), 315.

[42] Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ḥayyi Al-Laknawi, *Al-Ajwibah al-Fāḍilah Li al-As'ilah al-'Asyrah al-Kāmilah*, 7th edn (Halb: Maktabah al-Maṭbū'āt al-Islāmiyyah, 2007), 22.

[43] Muslim Ibn al-Hajjaj, *Shahih Muslim*, 315.

[44] Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, *Ta'rīf Ahl al-Taqdīs Bi Marātib al-Mauṣūfīn Bi al-Tadlīs* (Madinah: Maktabah al-Manār, n.d.).

tadlīs narrations (later classified as mursal al-ḥadīth), those traced back to Sa'īd ibn al-Musayyib are regarded as the most reliable, followed by those from al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, and subsequently by narrations attributed to several other scholars.[45]

Despite the dynamics of the first and second centuries of hijrī, transmission practices in the third century became more varied. On one hand, many Sufi figures maintained the practice of complete sanad. Works such as al-Zuhd wa al-Raqā'iq by 'Abdullāh ibn al-Mubārak,[46] al-Zuhd by Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal,[47] and Nawādir al-Uṣūl by al-Ḥākim al-Tirmīdhī[48] demonstrate that transmission with sanad remained integral to their intellectual heritage, albeit often presented through a more adaptive, thematic, contextual, and spiritually transformative approach. A concrete example lies in the thought of al-Ḥākim al-Tirmidhī, who argued that a ḥadīth's validity relied not only on the reconstruction of its sanad but also on its semantic congruence with the Qur'ān, necessitating that transmission be supported by profound meaning conducive to spiritual elevation.[49]

Conversely, on the other side, transmission practices omitting sanad also began to proliferate and continued thereafter. Several Sufi-oriented works, such as Risālah al-Mustarshidīn by al-Ḥāriṡ al-Muḥāsibī,[50] Qūt al-Qulūb by Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī,[51] al-Risālah al-Qushayriyyah by 'Abd al-Karīm al-Qushayrī,[52] Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī,[53] Ṣafwat al-Taṣawwuf by al-Maqdisī,[54] Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam by Ibn 'Arabī,[55] and others, are known for not consistently providing complete hadith isnāds. This orientation diverged significantly from the tradition of hadith scholars, which was based on rigorous transmission methodology (*riwāyah*), meticulous examination of sanad and matn, and textual exegesis (*dirāyah*) to affirm the authority and validity of reports.[56] Consequently, the Sufi approach to hadith contravened the scholarly standards set by hadith scholars through practices like simplifying isnāds or directly attributing statements to the Prophet.

The tension between the sanad-based transmission methodology of hadith scholars and the spiritual methods of the Sufis extended beyond technicalities to touch upon fundamental questions of epistemology and religious authority. On one hand, the *'ulūm al-ḥadīth* had constructed a stringent verification system with sanad as the foundation of scholarly accountability.[57] On the other hand, Sufis—particularly from

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[45] Al-Hākim al-Naisabūrī, *Ma'rifah 'Ulūm al-Hadīṡ Wa Kamiyyah Ajnāsih* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Hazm, 2003); Muḥammad Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī, *Qawā'id al-Taḥdīṡ Min Funūn Muṣṭalaḥ al-Ḥadīṡ* (Beirut: Muassasah al-Risālah, 2004).

[46] Abdullāh Ibn al-Mubārak, *Al-Zuhd Wa al-Raqāiq* (Riyadh: Dār al-Mi'rāj al-Dauliyyah, 1995).

[47] Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, *Al-Zuhd* (Mesir: Dār al-Ghadd al-Jadīd, 2005).

[48] al-Tirmīżi, *Nawādir Al-Uṣūl Fī Ma'rifah Ahādīṡ al-Rasūl*.

[49] al-Tirmīżi, *Nawādir Al-Uṣūl Fī Ma'rifah Ahādīṡ al-Rasūl*.

[50] Al-Ḥāriṡ al-Muḥāsibī, *Risālah Al-Mustarsyidīn* (Ḥalb: Dār al-Salām, 1983).

[51] Abī Ṭālib al-Makkī, *Qūt Al-Qulūb* (Dār al-Turāṡ, 2001).

[52] al-Qusyairi, *Risālah Al-Qusyairiyyah Fī 'Ilm al-Taṣawwuf*.

[53] Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' Ulūm al-Dīn* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Hazm, 2005).

[54] al-Maqdisī, *Ṣafwah Al-Taṣawwuf* (Beirut: Dar al-Muntakhab al-'Araby, 1995).

[55] Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ Al-Ḥikam* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, n.d.).

[56] Azami, *Hadis Nabawi Dan Sejarah Kodifikasinya*.

[57] Al-Raḥmahurmuzī, *Al-Muḥaddiṡ al-Fāṣil Baina al-Rāwī Wa al-Wā'ī*.

the third century hijrī onward—actually cut the sanad as seen in al-Ḥāriš al-Muḥasibi's (d. 243 AH) Risālah al-Mustarshidīn, which cites Hadith directly from the Prophet using "*qāla rasūlullah*" without providing an *isnād*.[58] A similar pattern is observed in Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī's (d. 386 AH) Qūt al-Qulūb, where he frequently employs formulae such as "*wa ruwiya 'an al-nabī*", "*wa fī al-khabarī*", and "*wa fi al- ḥadīthī*" to introduce narrations.[59]

This trend of occasional citation without full *isnād* continued unconsciously in subsequent periods; the transmission practices of Sufis after the third century increasingly involved direct attribution to the Prophet, often bypassing established chains of transmission,[60] as evidenced by seminal works such as al-Tusi's al-Luma', al-Sulami's Ṭabaqat al-Ṣūfiyyah, and al-Ghazali's Iḥya' 'Ulūm al-Din.[61] Within the context of his ḥadīth transmission practices, al-Ghazālī faced substantial criticism from leading authorities, particularly within the field of hadith studies. Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, for instance, stated that over nine hundred reports cited by al-Ghazālī could not be traced back to an established source (lā yu'rafu aṣluhā). Similarly, al-'Irāqī, while citing a different total, likewise affirmed the presence of numerous weak (ḍa'īf) and even fabricated (mawḍū') hadith within al-Ghazālī's corpus.[62]

Furthermore, alternative methods emerged, developing a knowledge model sourced from inner experience (kashf, ilhām, or ru'yā), which was used in the narration of hadiths within the Sufi tradition.[63] Ibn 'Arabī, for instance, explicitly stated that Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam was received directly from the Prophet in a state of heightened spiritual consciousness, placing his work outside the framework of conventional sanad verification.[64] Consequently, he was heavily criticized and opposed by many ulama', who argued that his approach had undermined the established epistemological framework of hadith studies—a system painstakingly constructed by previous scholars to authenticate and distinguish between autentic and problematic hadith. Thus, by introducing an alternative methodology of transmission, his work risked reviving a chronic vulnerability: the resurgence of widespread fabricated (*mawḍū'*) reports, thereby threatening to reintroduce the very flaw it purported to address.

This reality indicates that while the sanad framework was generally maintained, a personal space for verification through spiritual experience was acknowledged by certain scholars. However, such claims were not broadly accepted within mainstream hadith circles, primarily due to their susceptibility to subjectivity and the difficulty of collective verification.[65] Simultaneously, the rise of radical Sufi currents that failed to maintain a balance between inner experience and compliance with Sharī'ah aroused suspicion among hadith scholars. Some third-century Sufi writings implicitly hinted at

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[58] al-Muḥāsibī, *Risālah Al-Mustarsyidīn*.

[59] al-Makkī, *Qūt Al-Qulūb*.

[60] al-Muḥāsibī, *Risālah Al-Mustarsyidīn*.

[61] al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' Ulūm al-Dīn*.

[62] Tajuddin al-Subki, *Thabaqah Al-Syafi'iyyah al-Kubra* (Dar Ihya' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah, 1918).

[63] Idri, *Problematika Autentisitas Hadis Nabi Dari Klasik Hingga Kontemporer*.

[64] Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ Al-Ḥikam*.

[65] Kudhori, 'Metode Kashf Dalam Penilaian Hadis: Studi Tashih Hadis Di Kalangan Kaum Sufi'.

emerging deviations,[66] which in turn prompted purification efforts by figures like al-Junayd al-Baghdādī, al-Ḥāriš al-Muḥāsibī, and al-Tustarī.[67] Thus, this dynamic reflects not merely a methodological divergence but an ongoing historical and intellectual struggle between formal authority (based on text and transmission) and spiritual authority (based on experience and unveiling) within Islamic intellectual history.

Form of narration in the Sufi tradition

	First and second century of hijri	**The third century of hijri**	**Post-third century of hijri**
Form of Narration	Referring to the narration framework that refers to the complete chain of transmission	There was a massive reduction in the chain of transmission, referring directly to the companions or directly to the Prophet.	The use of alternative methods of kashf and ru'ya in narration
Focuses	Memorizing the Qur'an and actively participating in the transmission of hadith	Developing teachings and interpretations that refer to the Qur'an and hadith	Like the third century, but with more emphasis on explanations of spiritual experiences and karamah.

The analysis of the alternative method in hadith narration among Sufis: epistemological transformation of the post-third century of Hijri

For the Sufis, the figure of the Prophet holds paramount importance, not merely as a figure represented by the Qur'an and hadith—the two principal legacies tenaciously upheld—but as a presence in the most tangible sense. Given the Prophet's sublime status, the temporal gap that precluded direct encounter, and their profound devotion, contemplative practice (mushāhadah) became the essential means to realize this ambition. Consequently, numerous Sufis reported contemplative experiences of meeting the Prophet, holding discourse with him, and even directly verifying a narration through him, as exemplified by the case of al-Suyūṭī, which exhibits the integration of scholarly rigor and spirituality operating in concert.[68]

In a similar vein, al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmiẕī contributed substantively to the epistemological framework of hadith within Sufism. In his Nawādir al-Uṣūl, he systematically cites traditions with complete isnāds, underscoring a methodological commitment to the principle that an authenticity of hadith is contingent upon a verifiable chain of transmission.[69] Furthermore, the thematic discernment evident in his hadith selection consolidates his status as a scholar-mystic who navigated the dual imperatives of formal transmission (riwāyah) and interiorized comprehension

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[66] al-Muḥāsibī, *Risālah Al-Mustarsyidīn*; Al-Thusi, *Kitab Al-Luma' Fi al-Tashawwuf*.

[67] Daniel W. Brown, ed., *The Wiley Blackwell Concise Companion to The Hadith* (UK: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2020).

[68] Ibn Al-'Imād, *Syaẕārah Al-Ẕahab Fi Akhbār Man Ẕahab* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Kaŝīr, n.d.), 10:77; al-Aṣfihānī, *Ḥilyah Al-Auliyā' Wa Ṭabāqah al-Aṣfiyā'*, vol. 9.

[69] al-Tirmiẕi, *Nawādir Al-Uṣūl Fī Ma'rifah Ahādīš al-Rasūl*.

(dirāyah). This integrative model finds an earlier prototype in Sufyān al-Ṡaurī, renowned for synthesizing exacting isnād-criticism with experiential piety. His reported declaration—that he would refrain from transmitting any hadith until he had personally actualized its injunction—epitomizes an ethic that solidified his reputation as *amīr al-mu'minīn fī al-ḥadīth*.[70]

Conversely, a contrasting paradigm is discernible among many Sufis who prioritized unmediated spiritual experience at the expense of engaging with hadith as a formal textual discipline—a field predicated on source-critical verification and empirical demonstrability. This presents a fundamental tension, given the role of hadith as a constitutive ontological source for Sufi doctrine and a normative guide for its praxis. It is within this context that al-Junayd's seminal dictum gains salience: he posited that genuine Sufism (taṣawwuf) entails emulation of the Prophet, not the uncritical adoption of Sufi masters, unless such following remains circumscribed by prophetic precedent.[71] This assertion signals an acute internal recognition of doctrinal drift within the tradition and articulates a prescriptive call for corrective realignment—an epistemological stance later rigorously elaborated by figures such as al-Tūsī and al-Qushayrī in their comprehensive efforts to delineate the term's substantive meaning beyond mere linguistic etymology.

On the other hand, the study of hadith within the Sufi tradition, particularly during the third century of hijri, was marked by several significant tendencies. First, there emerged the phenomenon of the simplification or even outright omission of the *isnād* (chain of transmission) in Sufi writings. This practice is thought to have been driven by a teleological view that emulating the Prophet's example was the ultimate objective, irrespective of the completeness of the transmission chain. Second, the development of spiritual-contemplative methods created an alternative pathway for verifying the authenticity of a narration. Consequently, the fundamental reliance on the *isnād* became diminished or supplanted by the authority of inner experience. These developments not only reflect a distinct epistemological approach but also illuminate the inherent tension between the authority of collective transmission (naql) and the authority of direct spiritual experience (kashf).

Through such intuitive experiences, a Sufi could feel capable of accessing the figure of the Prophet directly, whether through dreams, visions, or specific spiritual states, thereby enabling verification without recourse to the conventional chain of transmission in receiving and transmitting knowledge. Historically, such practices have long existed within the Islamic tradition, for instance, in the concept of revelation (*waḥy*) to the Prophet Muhammad, which produced the Qur'an, or reports of Ali ibn Abi Talib's knowledge of Umar ibn al-Khattab's condition in the grave. For this one, the renowned scholar Muhammad ibn Sirin, when questioned about *al-ru'ya*, responded that what is seen in a dream, particularly *yaqẓah*, is not without validity.[72] The notion

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[70] al-'Aṭṭār, *Taẓkirah Al-Auliyā'*, 240.
[71] Al-Junaīd al-Baghdādī, *Tāj Al-'Arifīn* (Dār al-Syurūq, 2005), 34–35.
[72] al-Sya'rani, *Al-Ṭabaqāh al-Kubrā*.

finds a foundation in the Prophetic hadith that identifies authentic dreams as a facet of prophethood, wherein divine guidance may be imparted.[73]

A seminal example of this principle is the revelation received by Prophet Ibrāhīm concerning the sacrifice, which is understood to communicate in a dream state. Evidence suggests that while *kashf* and *ru'ya* originated in early Islam, figures such as 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī played a pivotal role in expanding their function beyond the initial scope of *tazkiyah al-nafs*.[74] Although some maintain that he met and directly transmitted hadith from Nabi saw, the author leans toward just meeting without constituting formal acts of transmission (*riwāyah*). In contrast, Ibn 'Arabī employed the method of *kashf* and elevated it into a novel mode for hadith transmission. His spiritual experiences, detailed in works such as Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam, exemplify this alternative epistemological channel.[75] Nevertheless, 'Adnān Zuḥar note that this mode of transmission is regarded as authoritative (*mu'tamad*) within Sufi circles, though Zuḥar stipulates two primary conditions for its legitimate application.[76]

The first condition pertains to the spiritual station of the Sufi, determined through the key concepts of *maqāmāt* and *aḥwal*. According to al-Tusi, *maqāmāt* is a stable rank attained before God through prolonged worship, spiritual exercises (*riyāḍah*), intense self-strivation (*mujāhadah*), and absolute trust (*tawakkul*) in God.[77] *Ahwal*, in contrast, are temporary psycho-spiritual states that graze the heart, such as love (*maḥabba*), fear (*khawf*), or longing (*shawq*). For a *sālik*, the journey begins with the foundational station of repentance, purifying oneself from despicable traits. This is a gradual process; as devotional intensity and spiritual purification increase, the Sufi ascends to higher stations like scrupulousness (*wara'*), asceticism (*zuhd*), poverty (*faqr*), patience (*ṣabr*), and contentment (*riḍā*), culminating in total reliance on God (*tawakkul*).[78] The attainment of *maqāmat* and the emergence of *aḥwal* are not merely subjective but are verified through a clear system within the Sufi tradition, with objective benchmarks for each stage that integrate inward states with outward praxis.

The second condition requires that any narration received through *kashf* must conform to the established general principles of Islamic law (shara'). This principle bears resemblance to the condition set by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (d. 852 AH) for the permissibility of using a weak (ḍa'īf) Hadith as supporting evidence, namely that it must not contravene a known general principle derived from primary sources. In other words, a Hadith received through spiritual unveiling must not contradict the Qur'an, sahih al-hadith, or the legal rulings formulated by scholars based thereon,[79] as did al-Suyūṭī, claiming encounters with the Prophet to verify the authenticity of Hadith.[80] In al-Jabiri's typology, this is the integration of both *'irfānī* and *bayānī* modes of reasoning,

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[73] Muslim Ibn al-Hajjaj, *Shahih Muslim*.
[74] Kudhori, 'Metode Kashf Dalam Penilaian Hadis: Studi Tashih Hadis Di Kalangan Kaum Sufi'.
[75] Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ Al-Ḥikam*.
[76] 'Adnan 'Abdullah Zuhar, *Taṣḥīḥ Al-Ḥadīṡ 'inda Sādah al-Ṣūfiyyah* (n.d.).
[77] Al-Thusi, *Kitab Al-Luma' Fi al-Tashawwuf*, 65–66.
[78] Ibid, 65-104.
[79] al-Tirmīżi, *Nawādir Al-Uṣūl Fī Ma'rifah Ahādīṡ al-Rasūl*.
[80] al-Aṣfihānī, *Ḥilyah Al-Auliyā' Wa Ṭabāqah al-Aṣfiyā'*, vol. 9.

equated with empirical data from classical sources (a scientific tradition primarily recognizes empiricism and rationalism) as the basis for acquiring and conveying reliable knowledge.[81]

Examining the scholarly discourse in hadith transmission within Sufi circles, this study posits a profound commitment to preserving an unbroken connection with the Prophet following his physical demise. In the Sufi tradition's contemplative, the imperative to connect with the Prophet is pursued through a paradigm of direct spiritual cognition (kashf or 'irfān). Here, the connection is maintained not solely through textual mediation but through transformative inner experience (dhawq). Sufi praxis employs contemplative (mushāhadah) designed to facilitate a personal, unmediated encounter with the enduring spiritual reality (ḥaqīqah) of the Prophet. This encounter is often conceptualized as occurring through a graduated, initiatic path comprising formulated spiritual stages (maqāmāt) and states (aḥwāl). In this framework, the authenticity of a teaching or spiritual insight may be validated internally through this experiential "witnessing," which can, in certain contexts, function as an alternative or parallel epistemological pathway to the external isnād.

This stands in contrast to the tradition of hadith scholars, wherein the mechanism for sustaining this connection is meticulously structured upon the principles of textual adherence and verifiable transmission (naql). Their methodology necessitates rigorous conformity to Islamic teachings as formally codified in the Qur'an and the Prophetic corpus. Consequently, a logical prerequisite for such adherence is the establishment of textual authenticity. The critical verification of a hadith's validity—determined through the scrupulous evaluation of its chain of transmission (isnād) and its textual integrity (matn)—thus emerges as the paramount epistemological concern. This process transcends mere academic inquiry; it is fundamentally soteriological, as a religious obligation can only be properly enacted once its provenance is reliably traced to the Prophetic source.

This juxtaposition reveals a fundamental dialectic within Islamic intellectual history: the tension between an epistemology grounded in collective, verifiable transmission and one rooted in personal, spiritual unveiling. The methodological divergence—and the concomitant demands for rigorous verification intrinsic to each—originate from a shared reverence for the Prophetic figure who developed the diverse theological and philosophical avenues through which post-prophetic Muslim communities have sought to navigate continuity with the foundational source of revelation. Far from being irreconcilable, these epistemologies possess a latent complementarity. Their synthesis could foster a more holistic approach to Hadith studies, one that moves beyond a sole reliance on classical textual authority, also to cultivate a deeper, internalized personification and context of every narrated hadith.

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[81] Suriasumantri, *Filsafat Ilmu: Sebuah Pengantar Populer*.

CONCLUSION

The transformation within the discourse of hadith transmission, particularly among Sufis, evolved across centuries. Each period developed its own distinct forms and modes of practicing Sufism (taṣawwuf). The first Islamic century, for instance, demonstrates that although no formal term for "Sufism" yet existed, its core teachings were widely disseminated among the foremost Companions (Ṣaḥābah) and Successors (Tābi'ūn). A similar pattern continued into the second century AH, where scholars inclined toward Sufi values—bearing titles such as al-'Ābid (the Worshipper), al-Zāhid (the Ascetic), and al-Ṣuwwām (the Vigilant)—were actively engaged in hadith transmission. Their names are reliably documented within the canonical Nine Books (Kutub al-Tis'ah), thereby reinforcing the historical and doctrinal validity of Sufism as an integral, Qur'an- and Sunnah-based dimension of Islamic tradition, with the person of the Prophet Muhammad serving as its foundational inspiration.

By the third century AH, a fundamental shift occurred, compelling scholars to scrutinize Sufism with renewed and critical attention. This focus was directed not at the nobility of its teachings, but at growing indications of deviation within its ranks. This period also instigated novel and problematic developments in transmission practices, including the simplification or omission of isnāds, the implementation of hadith of uncertain validity, and the adoption of religious practices lacking a clear textual basis. Ultimately, these phenomena catalyzed a comprehensive project of doctrinal purification, as undertaken by figures such as al-Junayd, al-Tustarī, and al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī. These three authorities are recognized for reorienting Sufism toward the paradigm of prophethood (nubuwwah), positing the Prophet as the singular archetype representing the tradition's original purity. Al-Junayd explicitly rejected a Sufism that entailed the uncritical imitation of Sufi masters, except within strictly defined limits, arguing that such imitation often led to fundamental errors in comprehending and practicing Sufism's true essence (ḥaqīqah).

Following the third century, modes of transmission grew increasingly diverse, especially with the emergence of alternative, experientially-based methods such as spiritual unveiling (kashf) and visionary encounter (ru'yā). These methods purported to facilitate direct, personal communion with the Prophet, driven by an enduring ambition to maintain a connection with him despite his physical absence. Ibn 'Arabī stands as the pivotal figure in systematizing these alternative methodologies, although the possibility of prophetic encounter through spiritual witnessing (mushāhadah) had been alluded to earlier by 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī. Ibn 'Arabī, however, explicitly asserted that his seminal work, Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam, was directly sourced from instructions received from the Prophet through *kashf*, thereby establishing *mushāhadah* or *mukāshafah* as a legitimate, though controversial, new mode of "transmission". Thus, the transformation in hadith transmission becomes starkly evident: it originated within a traditional framework strictly governed by the *isnād* paradigm, then underwent a process of *isnād* abbreviation, and ultimately gave rise to methods of "receiving" Prophetic wisdom that diverged radically from the established tradition of hadith scholars (*ahl al-ḥadīth*).

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