

The Criticism on Sufi's Hadith Narration Methods

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Abstract

The Sufis (scholars of Islamic mysticism) have their own methods of Hadith narration, namely *liqa' al-Nabiy* and *kashf* stating that a Sufi, with high ranking of spirituality, can meet the Prophet directly and accepts Islamic doctrine including the narration of Hadith from him in awakening state or through dreams. This article criticize the sufi methods of narration according to the scholars of Hadith, authentic Hadith criteria, the meaning of Hadith about meeting the Prophet through dream, *kashf* as a source of science, the prohibition of false Hadiths transmission, and the ability to obtain knowledge through dreams meeting the Prophet and *kashf* except in the field of Hadith narration. They say that the Hadiths narrated by such a way are authentic so they can use them as the basic arguments in Islamic religion. The two methods above are not found in Hadith transmission according to scholars of Hadith so that its validity cannot be recognized. Furthermore, every Hadith narrated by that way is considered false; it is not from the Prophet Muhammad.

Keywords: *Sufi and sufism, scholars of Hadith, authentic Hadith, fabricated Hadith*

Introduction

The Sufis make Hadith (Muhammadan Tradition) as a foothold in their spiritual ascent (al-Qaradawi, 2008: 59). This can be seen from famous Sufis thoughts such as al-Junayd, whose full name is Abu al-Qasim al-Junayd ibn Muhammad (d. 297 H./910 M.). He has ever claimed that someone who does not memorize the Qur'an and write Hadith of the Prophet is not worth to be followed (al-Qushayri 2004: 430-431). This means that the Sufis have to cling to the Qur'an and the Hadith in running their sufism and they are strongly encouraged to memorize the Qur'an and understand even record the Traditions of the Prophet.

According to al-Junayd, quoted by al-Sha'raniy, the sciences of sufism are supported by the Qur'an and the Hadith. This opinion was presented as a protest against those who alleged that sufism has left the rails of Islamic law (al-Sha'raniy, 2006: 4). Dhu al-Nun al-Misriy (d. 245 AH), quoted by al-Asbahaniy, also recommends that a Sufi should always loves Allah and His Messenger by following His commandments and the *Sunna* of His Prophet. According to him, the signs of one who loves Allah is that he follows Him in a matter of moral, deed, order, and

sunna, loves what God loves and hates what He hates, does every good things and rejects anything that can cause to forget Him, does not fear to the reproach of detractors, behaves firmly to the Believers and gentle to the infidels, and follow the Prophet Muhammad in religious matters (al-Asbahaniy, 1988: 394).

Besides recognizing the Hadith as a source of sufism, the Sufis also recognize the method of its narration directly without *sanads* of the Hadith as they are found in its books. According to them, a Sufi in his high spiritual level, can meet the Prophet after his death, while he is sleeping (dreaming) or awakening and accept Hadith from him. Therefore, it is known among the Sufis two methods of Hadith narration called *liqa' al-Nabiy* and *tariq al-kashf*. These methods of transmission can only be done by the Sufis who have reached certain station so they can meet the Prophet and receive Hadith from him directly. Both methods are not only different from the methods of Hadith transmission known and developed by scholars of Hadith, but also they are not accepted by them as methods of transmission and hence the Hadith authenticity narrated by the two methods has always been questionable.

This paper is a result of library research at Sunan Ampel State Islamic University Surabaya Indonesia in 2016. The methods used are descriptive analysis and content analysis. This study tries to answer questions on how are the methods of Hadith narration among Sufis and the criticism of their methods according to the Hadith scholars.

Sufis' Hadith Narration Methods

As all Muslim community, the Sufis recognize the method of Hadith transmission among Hadith scholars. They also recognize the Hadith in the books of Hadith, such as the Book of Muwatta' by Malik ibn Anas (93-179 AH), Sahih al-Bukhariy by al-Bukhariy (d. (H. 256), Sahih Muslim by Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj (d. 261 AH), Sunan Abi Dawud by Abu Dawud al-Sijistaniy (d. 275 AH), Sunan al-Tirmidhiy by al-Tirmidhiy (d. 279 AH), Sunan al-Nasa'iy by al-Nasa'iy (d. 303 AH), Sunan Ibn Majah by Ibn Majah (d. 273 AH), Sunan al-Darimiy by al-Darimiy (d. 255 AH), and other Hadith books. Otherwise, different from Hadith scholars in determining the authenticity of the Hadith of the Prophet, the Sufis do not only depend on the presence or absence of its *sanad* as required by the Hadith scholars. Certain words can be attributed to the Prophet as long as they are in line with al-Qur'an and delivered by people who have high level of piety. In determining the authenticity of the Hadith, the Sufis have their own methods, namely *liqa' al-Nabiy* and *tariq al-kashf* (al-Sha'raniy, 2002: 50).

The *liqa' al-Nabiy* is a method used by Sufi to determine the authenticity of Hadith, which can be seen from many Sufis who claim having met the Prophet, either through dreams or talking directly in awake or asleep condition (Sha'rani, 2002: 50). They met the Prophet as the Prophet Companions met him, although indeed he had long died. For the people who do not know the world of sufism or never practice it, it seems that the experience is irrational and contradict with their beliefs. But for the Sufis, the experience can be justified and indeed can occur (al-Wilatturiy, 2004: 57). According to them, one can meet the Prophet Muhammad after he died on 12 Rabi' al-Awwal 11 AH., because essentially he still alive and oversees his people continually (al-Mubarakfuriy, 2003: 82). This Sufis' faith is based on the verses of the Koran (al-Baqara: 154, Ali Imran: 169, and al-Nisa': 69).

Such belief of the Sufis based on the Prophet Hadiths, one of them is that narrated by al-Bayhaqi that the Prophet said, "The prophets of Allah are alive in their graves, they are always praying". This is narrated by al-Bayhaqi in his book *Haya al-Anbiya' fi Quburihim* (al-Azhariy, 2003: 82). Thus, the prophets live in the underworld (al-barzakh) even though the life there is different from the life in this world (al-Hamamiy, 2004: 263). Only the saints who get *kashf* (openness experience) who can see the Prophet. According to al-Ghazaliy, those who follow the Sufis methods will be able to see the angels, spirits of prophets, hear the spiritual sounds, and take advantage from them. Then, their psychiatric experiences will continue to increase to the extent that is difficult to be pronounced (al-Ghazaliy, 2006: 39).

The meeting with the Prophet Muhammad may be directly or indirectly. The indirect meeting is going through a dream. The Muslim scholars divide the dream into three categories: (a) *al-ru'ya al-nafsiyya*, namely a dream influenced by anxiety or whisper lust, (b) *al-ru'ya al-shaytaniyya*, that is a dream of devil meddling, where satan invade or affect one's sleep caused by anxiety due to the encouragement of his soul so that satan can put something in his dream, and (c) *al-ru'ya al-sahiha* (true dream), namely the spiritual dreams or dreams that come from God (Hawwa, 2001: 221-222).

The dreams meeting the Prophet is included in the third category, namely *al-ru'ya al-sahiha*, a dream that comes from the spiritual or God. The Sufis believe that the dreams meeting the Prophet is the right thing because the satan (devil) cannot resemble the Prophet and those who see the Prophet in his dream, he will see him in a conscious state. This belief is not only based on their experiences but also on the Hadith of the Prophet, for example that was narrated al-Bukhariy from Abu Hurayra that the Prophet said, "Whoever saw me in a dream, he would see me in waking state, and the devil will not resemble me" (al-Bukhariy, 2003: 92). According to Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalaniy, as quoted by al-Qaradawiy, there are many Hadiths explaining about the dream meeting the Prophet Muhammad so that al-Bukhariy in his *Sahih Book* has collected the Hadiths in a special section called the *Book of al-Ta'bir*. In this chapter, he collected as many as 99 Hadiths. Almost all of the Hadiths are also narrated by Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj in his book *Sahih Muslim* (al-Qardawiy, 2004: 155).

Many Sufis claim that they have met the Prophet Muhammad through their dreams, for example, al-Junayd ever dreamed meeting the Prophet and he asked him to speak in public because al-Junayd had for a long time not speak in front of people so the Prophet ask him to do so (Nicholson, 2001: 41). Similarly, another Sufi, Ahmad al-Jala' who claimed that he had been given a bread by the Prophet in his dream. The bread was eaten half, and when he woke up the rest of the bread was still there (al-Qushayriy, 2004: 371). Al-Kattaniy, also a Sufi, tells us that he ever dreamed meeting the Prophet and begged him to pray to God for not switching off his conscience (al-Sha'raniy, 2002: 91).

Meeting directly with the Prophet is experienced by Sufis in a waking state, not in a dream. The Sufis believe that the Prophet is still alive in his grave and certain people who have a high level of spirituality can meet and get spiritual teachings from him, including being able to get Hadith or the teachings of sufism recorded in a certain book. This meeting was experienced by Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn al-Mukhtar Tijaniy (born in Maghrib at 1150/1737), the founder of *al-Tariqa al-Tijaniyya* or also called *al-Tariqa al-Muhammadiyya*. He called this *tariqa* by the

second name because he got all the spiritual teachings directly from the Prophet Muhammad in awakening state, not in a dream. According to him, the basic teachings of *tariqa* is reading a lot of *salawat* (peace be upon the Prophet Muhammad) that has many benefits such as someone can meet the Prophet, ask him about the problems of world life, and ask about the Hadiths that are considered weak by scholars of Hadith while according to the Sufis that Hadith can be practiced. Ahmad al-Tijaniy also claimed that all of his words are from the Prophet Muhammad (Fathan, 2010: 23,111).

Muhammad ibn 'Aliy ibn Muhammad ibn 'Arabiy, known as Ibn 'Arabiy (d. 638/1240), a famous Sufi in Andalusia, also claimed that he had met the Prophet. In his introduction of *Fusus al-Hikam*, he stated that he had met the Prophet at 20th of Muharram 627 AH. in Damascus. Ibn 'Arabiy said that the Prophet gave the book of *Fusus al-Hikam* to be delivered to mankind so that they can get benefits from it. He then spread the book without any reductions or additions as the first time he received from the Prophet (Ibn 'Arabiy, 2005: 47).

The *al-kashf* or *tariq al-kashf* as one of the methods used in determining the authenticity of Hadith of the Prophet is introduced by Ibn 'Arabiy. The *kashf* is obtained by someones who used to perform spiritual though (*riyada al-nafs*), by holding all desires and seeking sincere in every deeds, so that their hearts will be able to get a divine light (Basil, 2007: 230-231). According to Ibn 'Arabiy, the *kashf* means an unveiling curtain of potential knowledge and awakening of saints awareness sleeping in human heart. When the veil was lifted, the heart eye will be able to see all things, the eternal and the temporal, the actual and the potential, when they are in a state of latency (thubut). Knowledge gained through the *kashf* is not speculative but certain or definite (Afifi, 1995: 151).

To acquire knowledge through *kashf*, one is required to firstly perform *mujahada* and *riyada* through certain steps. *Mujahada* is a struggle against the impulse of lust or a passion in worship without expecting rewards (al-Kalabadhiy, 2001: 168). While *riyada* is loading oneself with an act that eventually become a character in his personality (John, 1996: 230). The stages are called *maqamat* or position of a Muslim obtained through *mujahada* and *riyada*. Through this struggle and mental training, the soul of someone will be holy and close to Allah so that he has a chance to become the *wali* (guardian) of Allah (al-Tirmidhiy, 2009: 331-332). According to al-Qushayriy, to get the experience of *kashf*, a Sufi must firstly undergo some positions (*al-maqamat*), namely the stages of ethics of Muslim in order to achieve the connectivity with God by various attempts (al-Qushayriy, 2004: 56). According to al-Tusiy, the positions (*al-maqamat*) in Islamic mysticism are *tawbat* (repentance), *wara'* (pious), *zuhd* (ascetic), *faqr* (poverty), *sabr* (patience), *tawakkal* (resignation), and *rida* (willingness) (al-Tusiy, 2007: 42).

Ibn 'Arabiy mentioned that the acquisition of *kashf* through *ladunniy* knowledge is a result of obedience to the Prophet through his or her speaking and deeds. A Sufi will get *kashf* when he follows the rules of law, does not doing anything immoral or illegal (Hilal, 2010: 153). Among the Hadiths that are considered authentic (*sahih*) gotten by Ibn 'Arabiy through *kashf* is that saying, "He who knows himself, he will know his God". In his book, *al-Futuhat al-Makkiyah*, Ibn 'Arabiy cites the Hadith in several places (see Ibn 'Arabiy, 2008: Vol. 2: 308 and 472, Vol. 3: 72, 101, 305, and 404). Similarly in his monomental book, *Fusus al-Hikam*, he cites the Hadith as one of the arguments about *ma'rifat* (Ibn 'Arabiy, 2005: Vol. 1, 81 and 92; Vol. 2, 324).

The Criticism on Their Hadith Narration Methods

As discussed earlier, it is known certain methods of Hadith transmission among Sufis, namely the method of *liqa' al-Nabiy* (meeting with the Prophet) and *tariq al-kashf* (the way to unveil). The method of *liqa'* is usually used by a Sufi in Hadith narration through dream or in a waking state. A Sufi sometime dreams meeting the Prophet and get Hadith from him or he awakes and accept the Hadith, because according to the Sufi, the Prophet Muhammad is still living in the underworld and he meet certain people who have high levels of spirituality. In this way, a Sufi can get a *matn* (text) of Hadith directly from the Prophet without narrations of Hadith narrators. Meanwhile, the *tariq al-kashf* is used as a method of Hadith narration through spiritual exercises (*riyadat al-nafs*) by holding all desires and trying to be sincere in every worship and daily practice, so that the heart of a Sufi can get Divine light (Basil, 2007: 230-231), including the ability to communicate with the Prophet so he can get the Hadiths directly from him through *kashf*.

In the perspective of the epistemological study of Hadith, the *al-liqa'* and *al-kashf* methods cannot be used as a way to narrate Prophet Hadiths. The reason is as follows. Firstly, there is no method of Hadith transmission using the *liqa' al-Nabiy* or *tariq al-kashf* in various disciplines of Hadith literature. These two methods are not known among scholars of Hadith in transmitting or determining its authenticity. Hadith narration among them uses certain methods known as *al-tahammul wa ada' al-Hadith* (the way to get and deliver Hadith methods). Hadith scholars divide that methods into eight categories: (a) *al-sama' min lafz al-shaykh* (narration of Hadith by listening directly from a Hadith teacher), (b) *al-qira'a 'ala al-shaykh* (a narrator reads a Hadith in front of his teacher or other person reads it and the teacher listens), (c) *al-ijaza* (the narration of Hadith when a teacher permits someone to narrate his Hadiths), (d) *al-munawala* (Hadith transmission when a teacher gives Hadith book to his student saying, "This is a Hadith I have heard", or "This is a Hadith I have narrated"), (e) *al-mukataba* (Hadith narration when a Hadith teacher writes his transmission and gives it to certain person), (f) *al-i'lam* (Hadith narration when a teacher tells his students a Hadith or a book of Hadith he has received from the narrator, for example through the methods of *al-sama'* without being followed by a statement that his pupil can narrate it further), (g) *al-wasiya* (the narration of Hadith when a narrator makes testament that his book of Hadiths can be transmitted to others), and (h) *al-wijada* (Hadith narration when someone obtains a written Hadith and not through *al-sama'* or *al-ijaza* methods). Each method of transmission has its own way and its own texts as well.

Secondly, the Hadiths accepted by Sufis from the Prophet through *liqa'* and *kashf* have no *sanad* (chains) because they have been narrated from him through a dream or in a waking up without the transmission of Hadith narrators. It's so unusual among the scholars of Hadith that according to them a Hadith is acceptable and valued as authentic from the Prophet when it meets certain criteria, namely having attached chains (*muttasil*), its narrators are fair (*'adil*), its narrators have strong memory (*dabit*), both the *sanad* and *matn* regardless of *shadh* (irregularities) and *'illat* (disability) (Ibn al-Salah, 2002: 10). The Hadiths received through *liqa'* and *kashf* do not fulfill these criteria because they have no chain (*sanad*), they have just *matn* (texts) of Hadith. According to Hadith scholars, a Hadith narrated without *sanad* is a false hadith

(al-Jawziyya, 2001: 46-82). Therefore, every Hadith narrated by *liqa'* or *kashf* is fabricated Hadith that is not from the Prophet but from other.

Thirdly, the Hadith explaining the dreams about meeting the Prophet that one who dreams that he have met him and he will actually meet the Prophet in a waking condition (al-Bukhariy, 2003: Vol. 7, 92), should be interpreted and not be understood literally. According to al-Nawawiy, the Hadith contains three terms: (a) To the people living at the same time with the Prophet but did not have time to migrate to Medina and then they saw him in their dreams, Allah would provide guidance to them so they could met the Prophet. (b) Someone who dreams that he meets the Prophet, he or she will see him in afterlife as a condonation of his dream because in at that time each of his people who have ever met or not, will have a direct meeting with him. (c) They will see him in the afterlife closely and get his intercession (al-Nawawiy, 2009: 219-220). Meanwhile, Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalaniy concludes the interpretation of the Hadith as follows: (a) It must be understood as a parable (*tashbih*) because the Hadith is reinforced by other narration indicating the parable meaning. (b) The person who dreams that he has met the Prophet will see the truth, either in real or through imagery. (c) The Hadith is devoted to people who are at the same time with the Prophet Muhammad and for those who believe in him but have not had time to see him. (d) A person who dreams him willd look at him like when he looks at a mirror, but it is impossible. (e) It means that they will see the Prophet Muhammad on the Day of Judgment and not only for those who have dreamed of meeting him. (f) The person who sees him in his dream will really see him. This opinion is very strange and debatable (al-'Asqalaniy, 2001: Vol. 12, 400.).

Fourthly, as stated by al-Shatibiy in *al-Muwafaqat*, everything violates the rule of *shar'iy* or the law of *shar'iy* should be recognized incorrect because it could be fantasy, expectation, or the satanic suggestion that may be right or wrong. The case like this is not worthy to be considered because it opposes to the teaching of Islam. According to *sharia* law, someone is not allowed to do something based on the disclosure of clairvoyance (*kashf*) as long as it is not certain any cause. The Prophet decided the law based on what he heard and not only on what he solely knew (al-Shatibiy, 2003: 266-268), as his saying, "Surely, you denounce the case to me and perhaps most of you are smarter in expressing arguments than others. So I will judge him according to what I heard from him" (al-Bukhariy, 2003: Vol. 4, 80). Therefore, the *kashf* can not be used as a legal basis because the Prophet commanded his people to decide the law based on physical rather than the spiritual aspect. Similarly, the narration of Hadith should be obtained empirically (not through a dream or contemplation) through narration coming from the Prophet Muhammad about his words, actions, resolution, or his characters then being accepted by his Companions, then being passed empirically to their followers (*tabi'in*) and so forth until those were booked by the *Mukharrijs* in their books. Because the method of *liqa'* and *kashf* is outside of the empirical path as seen in the *sanads* of Hadith, it has no epistemological foundation that is valid and reliable.

Fifthly, a statement that is not a Hadith then called Hadith is prohibited in Islam and recognized as a great sin that the doer will be punished in hell. In a *mutawatir* Hadith, the Prophet said, "Whoever knowingly lies against me let him occupy his seat in hell" (al-Laknawiy, 2010: 22-36). A certain statement that doesn't come from the Prophet but claimed from him is

called false Hadith (*mawḍūʿ*). The scholars of Hadith state that the fabricated Hadith is the worst of weak Hadith and they hardly prohibit the creation and transmission of false Hadith unless accompanied by an explanation of its falsehood (al-ʿIraqiy, 1996: 130-131). Otherwise, according to some Sufis, the weak or false Hadith can be used as a basis of Islamic teachings if it doesn't contradict with the Qur'an and the *Sunna* of the Prophet so that it should not be rejected (al-Zubaydiy, 2003: 67). This opinion is clearly contrary to the above *mutawatir* Hadith. This means that some Sufis have done great sins of engaging in false Hadith narration threatened by the Prophet to hell.

Perhaps because of this opinion, some of them dare to create or narrate false Hadiths in order to make people more fear to Allah. This kind of Hadiths are made by Sufis whose knowledge about Hadith and its sciences so little but they want to encourage people to do good (*al-tarhib*) and prevent them from doing evil (*al-tarhib*). By making the Hadiths, they think that they have devoted to Islam because they make people happy to worship and obey Allah (al-Siba'iy, 2007: 87). The examples of false Hadith they've made is, "The world is harmful for members of the hereafter and the afterlife is harmful for the members of the world, and the world and the hereafter are harmful for the members of Allah". According to al-Albaniy, this Hadith is false created by Sufis who want to sow the seeds of false Sufi faith. On the pretext of educating people, this Hadith forbids something which God allows to do (al-Albaniy, 2005: Vol. 1, 121). In fact, prohibiting the lawful or legalizing the unlawful is a great sin. To address this, the false Hadiths used by Sufis in their mystical teachings are not claimed as Hadiths but as opinions of Islamic scholars, so that even if an error occurs in their transmission, it is not a punishable sin in hell. It is known among the Hadith scholars a term: *al-hadith aw kama qal* (This is a Hadith of the Prophet or the same as what he said) when someone is doubt in narrating the Hadith.

Sixthly, acquiring knowledge through dream meeting the Prophet is indeed not prohibited, especially there are many Hadiths explaining it. Similarly, getting knowledge through *kashf* is permissible because actually *kashf* is an understanding method of a closed to the rational and sensual understanding, which is exposed to a person as if he had seen with his naked eyes (al-Tusiy, 2007: 42). According to al-Ghazaliy, *kashf* method can be justified as a mean to acquire knowledge if the knowledge generated is not contrary to the principles of Islamic religion (al-Ghazaliy, 2005: 125). This intuitive way, even if in a particular discourse categorized as non-scientific approach, but its presence in scientific research can still be recognized as a method to obtain knowledge or truth (Suryabrata, 1997: 4-5). However, when associated with the transmission of Hadith which must be proved by historical-empirical approach through the chain of narrators as stated in the *sanad*, the method of *kashf* can not be used in narrating Hadith because there is no evidence of the people who deliver the Hadith since the Prophet until the writers of Hadith books. In other words, historically those Hadiths have no origin (*la asla lah*) and therefore they are falses (*mawḍūʿ*).

Conclusion

Among scholars of Hadith, Hadith narration uses certain methods that standardly shown in its chains (*sanads*). The narration is delivered from the Prophet to his Companions (*Sahaba*) then

to their followers (*Tabi'in*), and so forth to the *Mukharrij* of Hadith (the scholars who booked Hadiths). Therefore, the Hadith must be delivered through an authentic chain in order to be accepted as a basis of Islam. A Hadith, eventhough its text is very good, but if it has no chain is considered as false (*mawḍū'*). This is in contrast with the Hadith transmissional system among Sufis using *liqa' al-Nabiy* and *kashf* method stating that a Sufi, with his high spiritual level, can meet the Prophet and narrated Hadith directly from him either by dreams or in the waking state (does not sleep). According to them, the Hadith obtained in such a way is authentic eventhough it has is no chain. Such differences should be addressed scientifically by submitting the problem to its experts, namely the scholars of Hadith. The Hadith narration method that can be accepted is what has been determined by the scholars of Hadith, which has been standardized in the discipline of '*Ulum al-Hadith* (sciences of Hadith). The Sufis' claim meeting the Prophet and getting Hadith from him can be understood as a human spiritual experience that should be appreciated especially in the case of self-purification, but not as a religious postulate like the Hadith that actually coming from the Prophet.

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