

## HADITH SELECTION METHODS IN THE STUDY OF SIRAH NABAWIYYAH

(An Analysis of Shahih Sirah Nabawiyah by Akram Dhiya al-'Umari)

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### **Abstract:**

The *Shahih Sirah Nabawiyah* by Akram Dhiya al-'Umari is one of the contemporary books of *sirah*. This research aims to find out the methods of selecting hadiths in *sirah nabawiyah* according to Akram Dhiya al-'Umari. The research is based on the accepted principle of hadith studies that hadith used as *hujjah* is authentic (*shahih*) hadiths. If there is no authentic hadith, weak (*dhaif*) hadiths can be used as long as it is not related to the issues of beliefs (*aqeedah*) and law. This research concludes that the hadith selection method in *sirah nabawiyah* used by Akram Dhiya al-'Umari is the method of hadith scholars which is flexible in treating the weak hadiths. In *sirah nabawiyah*, al-'Umari still prioritizes the authentic hadith as the main source. If the authentic hadith about an issue is not found, the weak hadith can be used. However, it shall be noted that the hadith should not be related to the issues of beliefs (*aqeedah*) and law.

**Keywords:** Method, Hadith, *Sirah Nabawiyah*

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

The biography of the Prophet Muhammad (*al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah*) is one of the first writing of Islamic history (Gu, 2013:124) that is closely related to the science of hadith. At first, the study of Islamic history was a branch of the science of hadith (Goerke, Motzki, & Schoeler, 2012), so it can be ascertained that the historiography of Islam was earlier influenced by the science of hadith (Alsehri, 2014). However, what happened is that these two disciplines tend to stand independently. Even, after the Muslim historians adopted the western criticism methods, the relationship between the science of hadith and Islamic historiography seemed to be farther away and had no interrelations between them (Peters, 1991). This condition made the hadiths used in the writings of *sirah nabawiyah* was not scrutinized (Al-Dawoody, 2009:31). Therefore, Muslims today should be able to know hadith of *sirah nabawiyah* sources which are clearly authentic (*shahih*).

Since the earliest period in Islamic history, scholars have made a distinction between the hadith of law (*al-hadis al-ahkam*) and the pure historical hadith (Cf, Berg, 2013:106). Rahman mentions the hadiths of law (legal traditions) as a dogmatic or technical hadith, namely hadith concerning faith and worship (Rahman, 1995). Meanwhile, the pure historical hadith is a hadith that is generally associated with the biographical history of prophets and the struggle of apostolic preaching, or commonly called the hadith of *sirah*. The scholars are very cautious and critical to the hadith of law, but lenient in dealing with the historical hadith (Goto, 1995).

In connection with the existence of the relationship between hadith and history, Ahmad Amin in *Fajr al-Islam* has traced the history of compilation and codification of hadith, as well as the methodological contribution of hadith literature to Islamic historiography. According to historians,

almost all of the early Islamic historical literature such as *Sirah* by Ibn Hisham and *Futhuh al-Buldun* by al-Baladhuri, follow the method and *uslub hadith* (Amin, 1975:233).

Meanwhile, Ibn Khaldun in his work *Muqaddimah* reveals the importance of the method of hadith criticism (*al-Jarh wa al-Ta'dil*) to test the validity of historical narratives. However, this method is not the only means of testing to find out the validity of historical narratives. The reports of an event, for example, the degree of the validity or authenticity should also be seen in terms of probability of occurrence and it is more important than only *al-ta'dil wa al-tajrih* (Khaldun, n.d.:35-37). Subhi al-Salih in one of his books '*Ulum al-Hadith wa Musthalah*', also traces the influence of hadith studies on literary study (*adab*), history (*tarikh*) and biography (*sirah*) (Salih, 1965:315-345).

Based on the statements above, a researcher may face a difficult case, which is positioning a work written by a multidiscipline scholar (hadith and history). For example, *sirah* written with historical approaches can be categorized as a work of hadith about the biography of the Prophet (PBUH) written thematically. It needs an appropriate method which is in accordance with the concept of Islam and the methodology used by *muhaditsin* in the discussion of the content of the *sirah*. The scholars themselves set the method in studying the Prophet's *sirah* by using the methods of criticism and the verification of truth. The method is also a method applied by the *muhaditsin* in receiving all reports (*khobar*) by studying the chain of the narrators (*sanad*) and the contents of the hadith (*matan*) of the reports to be able to test the authenticity and the accuracy of those reports. This can be seen in the following explanation:

### 1. The Study of *Sanad/Isnad* Criticism

In the Islamic concept, *sanad* is seen as the backbone of news and criticism media used against the news. By knowing the person who narrated it, the value of the news will be known. The continuity of *sanad* is a characteristic (particularity) from Muslims. The narrations based on the *sanad* are much more important than the narrations or reports (*khobar*) presented without the *sanad*. *Sanad* in a narration can be used to trace the authenticity of the narration and eliminate counterfeiting which may be present.

In the field of the Prophet's biography (*sirah*), *sanad* will help in tracing the authenticity of narration and criticizing the information. It has been noted for a long time by the scholars who continue to make great efforts to straighten and open up the lies presented in the reports (*khobar*) through two aspects, namely:

- a. Theoretical aspects, in the form of determining the rules used to detect the lies. To know the accurateness of the scientific method used by the scholars in this field, the proper way is to simply read the works produced in the form of *al-Jarh and al-Ta'dil* rules. Among the rules of transmission, one of the ways in which it is done is to avoid taking information from weak sources (*dhaif*) and choose the one that comes from the trusted narrators (*tsiqat*) and requires honesty. It is because the existence of a lie will result in the loss of *al-'Adalah* (just) from the narrators.
- b. Practical aspects, in the form of an explanation of individuals who are allegedly a liar and the warnings to mankind to be careful of them. This aspect focuses on mentioning the narrators, the background and the explanation of quality or assessment to them. Many scholars specifically compiled a number of great works and explained it. Hence, there is no doubt that the works have important contribution in the purification of Islam as well as the tracing of the Prophet's *sirah*.

### 2. The Study of *Matan* Criticism

The study of *matan* means to study the narration texts (*khobar* text) from various aspects. For examples, there are some which focus on research about the authenticity (*shahih*) of the hadith and some are focused on understanding the meaning of the text (*nash*) itself, including those concerning the understanding of the legal content.

In the research of hadith and *sirah* sources, the scholars do not only stop at the research of *sanad* but also give serious attention to *matan*, because *'illat* (defect) in a narration can occur to *sanad* and *matan*. Based on that matter, the scholars who criticize a hadith as having weakness in the *sanad* do not need to prove that the *matan* is also weak and vice versa (*Majalah As-Sunnah*, 2001).

Similarly, the hadith scholars may not only use the method for the hadith, but also use it in other Islamic fields such as Islamic history, especially on *sirah nabawiyah* which is a manifestation of the prophet's life and society at that time.

Many contemporary Muslim historians write *sirah nabawiyah*. One of them is Akram Dhiya al-'Umari. Al-'Umari's main work *Shahih Sirah Nabawiyah* became the most monumental contemporary work of *sirah*. In his work, he attempted to offer a new approach to the Prophet's biography and Islamic history that is using a methodology of hadith narration applied to the *sirah nabawiyah* and the early history of Islam. Al-'Umari in his book, cautioned that the reader should not be too *'saklek* to reconstruct *sirah nabawiyah* by standardizing the methodology of hadith criticism.

In terms of the quality of history and criticism, *sirah nabawiyah* and *tarikh* (history) cannot be equated like hadith. It is because their orientations are different. The orientation of hadith is *aqeedah* and *sharia*, while the orientation of the methodology of *sirah nabawiyah* and the history of the beginning of Islam belongs to the historical construction which is important in viewing the biography and the Prophet's struggle of preaching globally. It is proven by the scholars in the early days of the hijriyah century who have distinguished between the criticism of the hadith narrations and the criticism of the *sirah* history and Islamic history.

In revealing the status of the narrations, the earlier scholars did not select which narrations were used for the standard of hadith and which were used for *sirah* and *tarikh*, because there was no clear distinction between the hadith narration and the narration of *sirah/tarikh* at that time. Nevertheless, the scholars seem to be lenient in dealing with the writing of the *sirah nabawiyah*.

Al-'Umari himself belongs to contemporary scholars who try to emphasize the difference between the standard methodology of hadith and *sirah*, as well as to clarify the urgency of both for the sake of the studies of *sirah* and Islamic history. The idea of the method used by al-'Umari can be considered to be a very good and powerful idea to use as a guide to the new research of *sirah nabawiyah* (Martasyabana, 2017).

The hadiths in *sirah nabawiyah* itself include several classifications, either by quality or quantity. However, the point of justification of a historical hadith is the quality of the hadith that supports the writing of the biography of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) or *sirah nabawiyah*. There are two basic conditions of the narrators (*rawi*) whose narrations can be accepted, namely: (1) *Al-'adalah*; narrators must be muslim, mature (*baligh*), sensible, honest, free from the wickedness, and free from the things that damage the *murua'ah* (dignity) and (2) *Al-dhabit*; the narrators master what he narrates, memorize what is narrated if he narrates it with the method of memorization, be cautious with his book if he narrates it through writing, understand the meaning of hadith narrated, and have strong memories (not forgetful).

Normatively, an authentic (*shahih*) hadith which has both basic requirements of narrators is supposed to be a support in the investigation of the historical facts. However, there are several

scholars who make a weak (*dhaiif*) hadith as a basis in *sirah nabawiyah*. As a result, Muslims have difficulty in determining the standard of the historical facts and it makes this standard is easy to misuse today.

Akram Dhiya Al-'Umari named his *sirah* book *Shahih Sirah Nabawiyah*, but the fact is that not all of the hadiths contained in the book are authentic (Umari, 2010:97). Therefore, researchers need to know the method of hadith selection used by Akram Dhiya al-'Umari which made him include weak hadiths in his book *Shahih Sirah Nabawiyah*.

Academically, there are four reasons why the author examines Akram Dhiya al-'Umari's thoughts about the use of hadith in *sirah nabawiyah*. They are (1) Akram Dhiya al-'Umari is a professor of Islamic history and modern science in Iraq who lived in this era, (2) The work of *sirah nabawiyah* by al-'Umari is learnt and used as a reference by a lot of students, (3) Akram uses some hadiths in *sirah nabawiyah* based on the study of Mushtalah Hadith and does not use the Western historical method as a whole when most of Islamic historians today use this method as a whole, (4) Akram Dhiya al-'Umari uses the word "*Shahihah*" to name his book. However, some hadith in the book are proven to be not authentic (*shahih*). Following up this issue, it will be an interesting discussion to be studied extensively and deeply, particularly in the investigation of historical facts based on hadiths that support the writing.

## B. METHOD

Method of the research is a study of the way how to investigate the tools in a research (Muhadjir, 2000:6). This research is qualitative. Therefore, the most appropriate method used in this research is descriptive method with content analysis approach. Technique used to collect the data in this research is library research, which is studying several texts or documents related to the subject matter. This technique is used to obtain appropriate literature for the research by collecting data sources. Then, the data which has been collected is analyzed. Lastly, the conclusions are drawn from the materials collected and analyzed.

## C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Hadith Selection Methods By Akram Dhiya Al-'Umari

#### Akram Dhiya al-'Umari and Shahih Sirah Nabawiyah

##### 1. Biography of Akram Dhiya al-'Umari

Akram Dhiya al-'Umari was born in Mosul, northern Iraq in 1361 H (1940 CE). His BA and MA were obtained from the University of Baghdad in the field of Islamic History in 1382 H (1962 CE) and in 1386 H (1966 CE) and Ph.D from Ayn Shams University, Cairo, at 1394 H (1974 CE). He taught at Baghdad University from 1386 H to 1396 H (1966 CE to 1976 CE). He served as the Chairman of the Department of Graduate Studies, Islamic University of Madinah as well as the Chairman of the Academic Board from 1397 H to 1402 H (1977 CE to 1982 CE). He was currently a Professor of Sunnah History at the University of Madinah for S1 degree (Umari, 1994:v).

Al-'Umari, has authored and edited about twenty books on Islamic History, especially in the field of Prophet's *Sirah*. Among his most important works are:

His original works include:

1. *Buhuth fi al-Sunnah al-Mushriqin* (4 vols)
2. *Al-Mujtama' al-Madani fi Ahad al-Nubuwwah* (2 vols)

3. *Al-Risalah wa al-Rasul*
4. *Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah al-Shahihah*
5. *Manhaj Al-Naqd 'Inda al-Muhadditsin Muqâranan bi al-Manhaj Al-Naqd al-Gharbiy.*

Edited works are:

1. *Al-Ma'rifah wa al-Tarikh* by Ya'qub Ibn Sufyan al-Fasawi
2. *Tarikat al-Nabiy* by Hammad Ibn Ismail al-Ansari
3. *Musnad Khalifah Ibn Khayyat* by Ibn Khayyat al-'Ushuri al-Basri (w. 240 H) (Umari, 1994:v).

## 2. An Overview of Shahih Sirah Nabawiyah

*Shahih Sirah Nabawiyah* is a contemporary book of *sirah* about the journey of life and preaching of the Prophet (PBUH). The original title of this book is *al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah al-Shahihah: Muhawalah li Tatbiq Qawa'id al-Muhadditsin fi Naqd Riwayat al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah*. This book is written by an expert historian, modern scientist and also *muhaddits* from Iraq, DR. Akram Dhiya al-'Umari. The title of the Indonesian edition of this book is "Shahih Sirah Nabawiyah" translated by Farid Qurusy, Imam Mudzakir, Amanto Surya Rangka and Abdur Rahman. The first print containing 800 pages was published by Pustaka as-Sunnah, East Jakarta in March 2010 (Umari, 2010:6).

This book focuses on the quality of texts and narrations and uses hadith methods to determine these qualities, without disregarding the methods and attempts of historians. The debate over the authenticity or accuracy of a story is described in the book.

This book has three interesting points compared to other books, those are:

1. This writing is not the result of the desire to fulfill ambitions but an attempt to take lessons from the methods of hadith scholars in bringing the historical narratives.
2. The narration by the eyewitnesses who participated in the event is also found in this book.
3. This study is not based on taking the narrations related to a thought in the realization of a particular ideology, but based on the most powerful narrations taken by either the historical method or the hadith scholar method (Umari, 2010:14-15).

### Methods of Hadith Criticism by Akram Dhiya al-'Umari

According to al-'Umari, Muslims do not inherit certain methods to establish narrations or rules to determine historical and literary news, even though the Arabs in Jahiliyyah period know the narrations in the lyrics of poetry, *nasab* and *ayyam al-'Arab* (their battle). They required strong memorization in a narration. From this point, a method of criticism appeared together with Islam and it seemed that this method was not interfered by the limited methods in the past (Umari, 1997:23). Al-'Umari emphasized that indeed the Arabs did not have any particular method in the problem of narrations. They only required a strong memorization for the narrators. It continued until the early Islamic era. The criticism in this period only applies to memorization only.

In line with the development of Islam, the method of criticism also developed. Criticism methods are more focused on facing the counterfeiting and unmasking those counterfeiters. The emergence of the methods together with other complementary actions might reach the goals, which are to pay attention to the mention of *sanad*, to examine the justness of the narrators and their memorization, and to emphasize the existence of *liqa'* (meeting) between narrators by limiting *thabaqat* (span of their life) in the transmission of hadith, similarly, traveling to seek

knowledge and whatever resulted from the journey in collecting hadith in *diwan* sunah, which is essentially memorizing what is in the book in accordance with that is in the heart. The last is reviewing the journey of time, such as viewing what happened in the history of other people.

Undoubtedly, the absence of science restrictions early with a large area and the existence of doubts in limiting the intelligence and the justness of narrators belong to the strongest impulses to produce a method of criticism from Muslims to criticize narrations taken from the Prophet (PBUH), especially those relating to aqeedah and sharia, including the narrations from one to another received by reliable first-century written sources (Umari, 1997:24).

The works containing the method of hadith criticism are written in the book *al-Muhaddits al-Fashil* by ar-Ramahurmuzi and the book *Ma'rifat Ulum al-Hadith* by al-Hakim an-Naisabury. The works on the method of hadith criticism developed when al-Khatib al-Bagdady spread the possibility of prioritizing rare books on the various studies of hadith with some of which had never been preceded (Umari, 1997:19).

The most important part in the hadith criticism is to distinguish the authentic (*shahih*) hadiths from the weak (*dhaif*) hadiths, because hadith has an important role for Muslims as the second source of law after the Qur'an and as a means to know the life history of the Prophet (PBUH) accurately.

### 1. Definitions of Authentic (*Shahih*) Hadith

Akram Dhiya al-'Umari explicitly mentioned the definition of authentic hadith:

مَا وَصَلَ إِلَيْنَا بِنَقْلِ الْعَدْلِ الضَّابِطِ عَنِ الْعَدْلِ الضَّابِطِ مِنْ أَوَّلِهِ إِلَى مُنْتَهَاهُ مِنْ غَيْرِ شُدُوزٍ وَلَا عِلَّةٍ.

"The hadiths that came to us that is delivered by the 'just and dhabith (perfect memory)' from the 'just and dhabith' from beginning to end (connected sanad or continuity) without any syadz (absurdity) and the absence of 'illat (defect)' (Umari, 1997:33).

The statement mentioned by al-'Umari about the definition of authentic hadith is similar to that of the hadith scholars. The author will describe it as the evidence of justification and comparison. Here is one definition of authentic hadith according to other hadith scholar. Ibn al-Shalah in his book *Muqaddimah Ibn al-Salalah* defines authentic hadith as:

الْمُسْنَدُ الَّذِي يَتَّصِلُ إِسْنَدُهُ بِنَقْلِ الْعَادِلِ الضَّابِطِ عَنِ الْعَدْلِ الضَّابِطِ إِلَى مُنْتَهَاهُ وَلَا يَكُونُ شَاذًا وَلَا مُعَلَّلًا

"The hadith leaned on the Prophet, sanad continued, narrated by the 'adl and dhabith' narrators, received from the 'just and dhabith' narrators until the end of sanad, there is no syadz (absurdity) and does not contain 'illat (defect)' (Idri, 2013:158).

Based on the definitions, it is known that there are several criteria of authentic hadith in the *sanad* and *matan* that must be fulfilled by a hadith in order to reach the degree of *Shahih*, namely:

*Criteria in the sanad:*

1. The continuity of the *Sanad*
2. The narrators are 'adl (reliable)
3. The narrators are *dhabith* (retentive)
4. Free from syadz (absurdity)
5. Free from 'illat (defect)

*Criteria in the matan:*

1. Free from *syadz* (absurdity)
2. Free from *'illat* (defect)

## 2. The Rules of The Authenticity of Hadiths

Authentic hadiths are used as a base of the hadith authenticity. The rules of the authenticity according to al-'Umari are not much different from the hadith scholars. There are five rules (These five rules are basic requirements, not the alternatives) that will be explained as follows:

### *The Continuity of the Chain of Narrators (Sanad)*

According to al-'Umari, the continuity of *sanad* means that each narrator in the chain receives the narrations from the closest preceding narrators where it continues until the last narrator or the one hearing from the Prophet (PBUH). The chain of the narrators should not stop at a single sequence, but must stand on each other until the end or the highest narrators (companions or *tabi'in*) (Umari, 1997:33).

Regarding to the continuity, the quality of the narrators is divided into *tsiqah* and not *tsiqah*. In the transmission of narrations, the *tsiqah* narrator has high accuracy (precision, carefulness and exactness) to make his narrations more reliable. If the narrator is not *tsiqah*, it is necessary to research on their reliability (*'adl*) and retentive (*dhabit*). The chain in which all of the narrators are *tsiqah* (*'adl* and *dhabit*) but the chain of narrators is not continuous, then the hadith is not authentic (*shahih*). Also, the hadith will be not authentic if the chain is continuous but one of the narrators is not *tsiqah*.

Similarly, the reports presented in the documents or the secondary books are not different from people who directly involved in the history if the chain continues until the eyewitnesses. Then, the eyewitness is considered as the real agent of history. At that time, their witness was built on direct observation because there was no intermediary between them and the events. However, the researchers' interest lies in the strength of eyewitness's honesty, the honesty of the transmitters and the honesty of the author of the book or the compiler of the document. It also applies to secondary works relied on the primary sources that have been lost. Thus, secondary works are a substitute for primary sources, and it is closer to events because they relied on previous sources in the taking of the reports. For example, *al-Târikh al-Baghdâd* by al-Khathib al-Baghdâdi transmitting the reports relating to the Abbasiyah Caliph al-Râdhî through the intermediary of the narrator Abu Bakr al-Shûli is not considered as a secondary source since Al-Shûli lived in the same era as Caliph al-Râdhî. In other words, he is an eyewitness. However, there is still a research on the chain from al-Baghdâdi to Al-Shûli. It is the text of Al-Shûli's *al-Auraq* al-Baghdâdi has which become the authentic narrations (Umari, 1997:34).

### *The Reliability ('Adl) of Narrators*

According to Akram Dhiya al-'Umari, the reliable narrators must be honest, Muslim (even though Islam is not regarded as a requirement when receiving the narrations), mature (*baligh*), sensible and *mumayyiz* when transmitting the narrations, consistent in carrying out Allah's command and abstain from His prohibition (*taqwa*) and regardless to all traits that harm the honor (*muruhah*) and his religion so that his narrations can be trusted (Umari, 1997:36-37).

### *The Accurate Retentive Ability (Dhabit) of Narrators*

The narrators should have an accurate retentive ability, whether the memory or the book. In memorizing, the narrators have a pure intelligence and understanding. Their writing and quotes

should be good when they compile a book. If it is blended or forgotten in a period, their *tsiqah* is lost even though they are careful. Even sometimes, the righteousness of the intention results in forgetfulness that affects the accuracy of the narrations. Ibn Sirin said: "*We do not see the pious people in a more potentially lying situation than they are in the hadith*". Thus, the narrators must be grateful for their pure mind and intelligence to be able to differentiate well. If their power and mind are lost, the narrations are rejected. This is the final stage of the method of western criticism which requires the narrators to be intelligent so that they know the essential details or principal matters without making great efforts, which gives a real effect in the phenomena they observes (Umari, 1997:37-38).

#### *There is No Syadz*

Akram Dhiya al-'Umari believes the *syadz* hadith is a hadith narrated by many reliable narrators but one of narrations is different from the others. This may be due to the defect of the memorization or the narrator wants to be famous. Shu'bah ibn al-Hajjaj said "*Syadz* hadiths will not be presented except by those who are also *syadz*" (Umari, 1997:41).

#### *There is No 'Illat*

Etymologically, *'illat* means disease (Ma'luf, 1973:523). According to hadith scholars, such as Ibn al-Shalah and al-Nawawi, *'illat* is a hidden cause that can damage the quality of hadith. Its existence will result in hadith which seems to be authentic (*shahih*) become unauthentic (Ismail, 1995:147). The scholars of hadith criticism have acknowledged that the study of *'illat* which become one of the elements of authenticity of the narrators' chain (*sanad*) and the content of the hadith (*matan*) is difficult to conduct. Some of them said that to examine the *'illat* of hadith needed inspiration (*ilham*), intelligence, memories of many hadiths, understanding of the hadiths memorized, deep knowledge of the retentive ability (*dhabit*) of the narrators and experts in the field of *sanad* and *matan* of hadith (Ismail, 1992:87-88). Al-'Umari himself explicitly does not discuss further about *'illat*. Therefore, the author better describes *'illat* on criticism of *sanad* and *matan* according to al-'Umari in the next explanation.

### **3. Steps of Hadith Criticism**

#### *Analyzing the Chain of Narrators (Sanad)*

*Sanad* is an important component in a hadith. The authenticity of a hadith is determined by its chain of narrators first. *Sanad* is a group of narrators from the beginning to the end of the transmission. The *muhaddits* are very earnest in criticizing *sanad*. If *sanad* is not authentic (*shahih*), then there is no longer need to criticize the content (*matan*). It is just as time-consuming for useless things. This criticism is focused on two matters; the narrators themselves and the continuity of the chain. Al-'Umari explains that the criticism of *sanad* aims to know honest narrators with the help from the group of honest and retentive narrators as an intermediary (Umari, 1997:42).

The *muhaddits* paid a great deal of attention in criticizing the orientation and inclination of the narrators, whether their beliefs or practices. They observe very carefully all of their narrations, whether they are lusts (political interests) or those that encourage people to heresy (*bid'ah*; in the matters of Aqeedah). If a narrator includes such orientation and inclination in the narrations, then their narrations are rejected.

Furthermore, al-'Umari explains that the best opinion is to avoid the narrations of those that encourage people to heresy (*bid'ah*), because their spirit and preaching are very influential on their narrations. Other than that, there is no need to abandon. If abandoning happens, a lot of narrations might be lost without any verification. Al-'Umari quoted Ali al-Madini saying, "If I had



abandoned the narrations of the Kuffahs (the supporters of Sayyidina Ali bin Abi Thalib at that time). because of that opinion, then the books would be destroyed". The destruction of books by al-Madini means the loss of hadiths. However, there are some heretics whose narrations are still accepted such as Khawarij, because their heresy forces them to be harsh to the sinner. They judge the great sinner as infidel and lying in the name of the Prophet is a great sin. The point of criticism of such tendencies and orientations is to recognize the personal impulses of the narrators and the effects on their narrations.

The criticism of *sanad* is also addressed to the health of mind and body of the narrators. It separates between the time of illness and the health of the narrators. If there is a mistake in their narrations after the illness, it causes the narrations rejected (Umari, 1997:39-42). Thus, because of its importance, the criticism of *sanad* in a hadith is more prominent than the criticism of *matan*.

#### *Analyzing the Contents of Hadiths (Matan)*

*Muhaddits* have stated that the authenticity of *sanad* does not guarantee the authenticity of *matan* (Umari, 1997:42). *Matan* is the core information in a hadith. A hadith whose *sanad* is authentic, the authenticity of the *matan* still must be examined. The aim is to know the mistakes and changes that occur to the *matan*, so that the information transmitted to us is true. *Muhaddits* criticizes *matan* by verifying and analyzing the *matan*. The verification is done by observing the presence of speculative information, information that violates the senses, the peculiar meaning, the style of language which is different from the *Sunnah* or violates the Qur'an (Umari, 1997:43).

Regarding *matan* that contradicts the Qur'an, the companions such as Sayyidina Ali ibn Abi Thalib, Aisha, Ibn Umar, Ibn Abbas ra., when they find a hadith that contradicts the Qur'an, they reject it as long as the contradiction is only on the surface. The example is the hadith specifying the general matters in the Qur'an, or limiting the absoluteness of the Qur'an. Such contradiction is not a real contradiction because there is still a possibility to be compromised.

For *matan* that contradicts other authentic hadiths, the companions compare the superiority of these two hadiths with various criteria:

1. The narrator of the hadith is more aware of the laws contained in the hadith.
2. The narrator is an eyewitness or a performer in the hadith.
3. There is reinforcement from other hadiths.

But sometimes, they also compromise those contradicting hadiths (Umari, 1997:44).

After the verification, the *matan* is analyzed. Hadith analysis requires several tools that support it such as linguistics, history and deep knowledge of sharia. Critics of hadith in the period of *tabi'in* expanded the method of *matan* criticism. It results a variety of new established rules which encourage the emergence of the sciences of hadith and *ushul fiqh*.

From the beginning, the critics of the hadith tried to analyze the congruence of the text (*nash*) which was contradictory on the surface. The rule emerging is to compromise the authentic narrations and practice it which is more important than eliminating one of them. Further, the contradiction between the narrations can occur only at the surface and there is a specific and general meaning between them or the existence of *nasikh* and *mansukh*.

The criticism of *matan* is also be done by comparing the content with (a) an accurate historical event; if it is contradictory, *matan* is rejected; (b) general sharia rules; if *matan* contradicts, then the narration is rejected because the sharia rules is logical and in accordance with the needs of the soul; or (c) the laws of nature or social law; if *matan* contains matters impossibly happen or denied by common sense of people, the narration is rejected. However, if the content of the

hadith is the news or reports about the Prophets (PBUH) or the saints, then it is considered as an extraordinary event (*mu'jizat* dan *karamah*), so that the narrations are still accepted (Umari, 1997:45-46).

Therefore, the criticism of *matan* is verifying and analyzing it so that *matan* becomes clear and accurate information from the Prophet (PBUH).

## Principles of the Use of Hadiths as Source of Sirah Nabawiyah

### 1. Selecting Authentic (*Shahih*) Hadiths

According to Akram Dhiya al-'Umari, hadith scholars have their own methods of transmission of hadith to know which authentic (*shahih*) hadith and weak (*dhaif*) hadith are. It means practicing the method in the historical narrations relating to the beginnings of Islam. It is because these narrations resemble hadiths in terms of the existence of *sanad* before the content which allows a researcher to know the narrators who narrated it from the preceding narrators (Umari, 2010:39).

The requirement of authenticity in any historical narrations is difficult to fulfill. The one to notice is the relationship between the method of hadith scholars and the historical narrations. The narration of history is somewhat considered easy. Historians such as Mohammed Ibn Ishaq, Khalifah Ibn Khayyat and Ath-Thabari, they transmitted many *mursal* and *munqathi* narrations. Ath-Thabari much narrates from the very weak (*dhaif*) narrators such as Hisham ibnul Kalbi, Saif bin Umar At-Tamimi, Nashr bin Muzahim and others. These historians do not select historical narrations as they do with the hadiths. It is enough to state that the narrators are in the chain of the narrators (Umari, 2010:39-40).

The first reference in the exposition of history is always the authentic or strong (*shahih*) narrations, the good (*hasan*) narrations and the weak (*dhaif*) narrations corresponding to the event sequence at the beginning of Islam. If there is a contradiction, the strong narration is preferred. Meanwhile, the weak narration can be used as a substitute on the absence of the strong ones, as long as it is not related to the issues of aqeedah or sharia. It is based on the rule, "There is no tolerance in aqeedah or sharia issues." The weak narrations, relating to the physical development such as urban planning, building construction, drainage or relating to the naming of warfare, or the heroic tales of the *mujahidin* showing their courage and sacrifice, do not matter to use (Umari, 2010:40).

Prioritizing the authentic hadiths must be carried out, so the information obtained is accurate. However, it should also be noted that not all of the narrations about *sirah nabawiyah* is authentic so that the other hadiths are needed to fill in the voids of history sequence of the Prophet, even though the quality is unauthentic. It means that all narrations about *sirah nabawiyah* are compiled and selected. Authentic narrations are prioritized. If the authentic ones are not found, the other unauthentic narrations can be taken to fill in the sequence of the story, so the story is fully known. For example, al-'Umari in his book mentions the authentic narrations as in the story of the Prophet's hijra to Medina and its influence in the formation of Medina society:

"The Muhajirins arrived in Medina (Yathrib). They came from different Quraysh tribes. This hijra continued until it became an obligation for Muslims who are newly converted to Islam and were in the Arabian peninsula. This order continued until the liberation of Mecca which occurred in the eight hijriyah. After that time, the command to migrate (*hijra*) to Madina ended.

Hijra is a major event which later was set as the starting point of the calendar of Hijriyah by the second Caliph, Umar bin Khathab.

Hijra is a proof of sincerity and sacrifice in the way of aqeedah. The Muhajirins sincerely left their homeland, property, family and customs to comply the command of Allah SWT and His Messenger. When the Quraysh tried to block the way of Shuhaib Ar-Rumi to migrate with the

statement that Shuhaib had collected his treasure in Mecca while he previously had no possessions, he willingly abandoned the treasure and handed it to the Quraysh, then migrated to Medina without armed possessions. It was heard by the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), He said: "Shuhaib has made a profit." The Mushrikin also forbade Abu Salamah to migrate with his wife and children, but they did not prevent him from pursuing hijra without his wife and children. To the extent that Umm Salamah always went in the morning to the near sandy and pebbly river (Abthah), sitting crying until the afternoon. She did it for a year until she finally could migrate to Medina with her child and meet again with her husband. Thus, hijra is always in a difficult situation. It is the purification of faith for the believers, as a test of their aqeedah and as a means of keeping their faith from material elements and worldly interests.

And indeed the event of hijra became the proof of cleanliness and purity of teaching (*tarbiyah*) done by the Prophet (PBUH) to the companions. In the end, they are entitled to be the Caliph (leader) on this earth, by establishing the Sharia of Allah SWT and His commandments and carrying out His jihad ways. Also, they were contributing to the formation of the city of Medina Munawwarah, where they previously lived in a state of oppression until there was a fear of abuse against their aqeedah.

Allah SWT has chosen Medina Munawwarah as a place of hijra for the Muslims. This is in accordance with the saying of the Messenger of Allah, the meaning is: *"It has been shown to me that the place of hijra is the area where the land has a lot of water, most of the land is planted with dates, located between Tsauro and 'Air."*

The Prophet (PBUH) had not been able to migrate, so did Abu Bakr, until Allah SWT permitted the Prophet (PBUH) to carry it out. 'Aishah said: "Abu Bakr had prepared to migrate to Medina, the Prophet (PBUH) said: "Be patient and wait, for I also hope that Allah will permit hijra". No one knew this except Ali, Abu Bakr, and his family. While the people of Mushrik were very angry to see the Muslims migrate. Therefore, they held a meeting and the result was an agreement to kill the Prophet (PBUH) as it has been immortalized in the Qur'an Surah Al-Anfal verse 30.

Both went to Mount Tsur and sheltered in a cave. While the Quraysh followed their footsteps to the place, until the marks of the soles of the feet were seen outside the cave. Abu Bakr said: "If any one of them looks down, they will see us," The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) calmed Abu Bakr's panic by saying: "O Abu Bakr, what do you think of two people and Allah is the third", Allah turned the eyes of the Mushrikins so they did not know it. Finally, they both came out of the cave after three days of traveling across the desert to Medina. At that time, The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) was 53 years old, while Abu Bakr was 51 years old. However, only the heart that was always in contact with God could bring them both to the destination and capable of carrying out apostolic tasks, so that nothing could hinder them.

Islam came to solve various problems, whether the ones related to worship or social community. Islam is a law for life which has to be established on this earth of God. It is formed a society living based on the perfect sharia of Allah. By using Allah's revelation given in Medina, from the Qur'an and the hadiths conveyed by the Prophet, either through his oral, deed or command, the Medina government has provided the ideal form of an Islamic government that embodies the ideal form of society emerging in human history.

The government is a model for every Muslims anywhere and anytime to follow as a guarantee to get happiness in the world and in the hereafter, as well as trying their best to keep themselves from the misery and suffocating life in the system of Jahiliyyah that has caged them in every place. Therefore, there is no escape that can save oneself except by returning to Allah SWT and holding onto the instructions of the Prophet (PBUH).

The Hijra of the Prophet (PBUH) was a little too late, while most of the Muslims among the companions who were able in complying the command of Allah had migrated to Medina. However, the call of hijra and the explanation of all matters related to the superiority of the migrating people continued with the present of the verses of the Qur'an, as well as the waves of Muslim migrants from various places which were newly converted to Islam continued. The growing Daulah Islamiyah in Medina Munawwarah desperately needs the Muhajirins to support and strengthen the development and dominance of Islam in Medina, so it cannot be easily destroyed by Jews, Mushrikin and munafiqin.

This Daulah was surrounded by the power of mushrikins of the Arabs around Medina. Likewise, the pagan forces of Quraysh always stalked the movements of the Muslims, and they would make plans to destroy the new Islamic dominance as well as the Daulah Islamiyah. Therefore, the verses relating to the hijra command, the explanation of the greatness of the reward, and the virtue of hijra were decreased continuously. Even, Allah SWT in those verses promised to the Muhajirins that they were preserved and protected from the threat of mushrikins. Moreover, Allah promised them the spaciousness of sustenance, as Allah says:

وَمَنْ يُهَاجِرْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يَجِدْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُرَاغَمًا كَثِيرًا وَسَعَةً وَمَنْ يَخْرُجْ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ مُهَاجِرًا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ يُدْرِكْهُ الْمَوْتُ فَقَدْ وَقَعَ أَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا

"Whoever migrated in the way of Allah, they will find on the earth a wide place of migration and a lot of sustenance. Whoever comes out of his house with the intention of migrating to Allah and His messengers, then death picks him (before reaching the destination), then the reward is in the sight of Allah. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." (Surah an-Nisa' [4]: 100)

Interpretation:

Those who come out of their homes with the intention of hijra, then death comes to him, he can get reward in the sight of Allah for the intention of his hijra. In another verse, regarding the hijra, Allah SWT says in Surah Al-Haj: 58, in which it is explained that Allah swore to grant His sustenance to those who migrated in the way of Allah, whether they died in His way through the process of jihad, or died on the bed without going through the process of jihad. Allah SWT had affirmed His prohibition against Muslims, who were able to migrate but stay in Mecca with the mushrikins in His word in Surah An-Nisa': 97-99. The prohibition of Allah was caused by some Muslims who still stayed in Mecca with mushrikins, which it increased the number of mushrikins. They would also use the Muslims in the field of industry, agriculture, or others. In fact, sometimes they forced the Muslims to join them in the fight against the Muslims, as happened at the Battle of Badr. In addition, if they lived in Mecca, it would trigger the imposition of the infidels of Quraysh to the Muslims to leave Islam. Also, there was no doubt that they were far away from Daulah to utilize their power in the fight against the enemies of Islam, as well as to increase the number of Muslims in the Daulah. Therefore, the Messenger of Allah said, which means: "Whoever associates with mushrikins and lives with them, it should be known that he is like them" (Umari, 2010:236-240).

Al-'Umari's explanation about the hijra story, contains authentic (*shahih*) hadiths. Those authentic narrations/reports are in accordance with the authentic hadiths from Imam Muslim and the hadiths taken by him are from the authentic books. Al-'Umari explains this story without any criticism of *sanad* because indeed the hadiths in this story are authentic (*shahih*). On the other hand, he always criticized the *sanad* of other stories containing weak (*dhaif*) hadiths.

In this story, al-'Umari focuses on explanations about the state of Muslims during the *hijra* and the hard life they lived before they did it. Hijra is a sign of the sacred faith and the cleanliness of the soul. Hijra is also a sign of the Muslims' obedience to the command of Allah SWT and His Messenger to face a new life in a new land. In addition, hijra is the most important moment in Islamic history and the beginning of the rise of Islam after experiencing difficult times.

Such explanation is also done by al-'Umari to describe the expulsion of Banu Qainuqa':

#### The Year of War

"Historians agreed that this war happened after the Battle of Badr Kubra. Az-Zuhri mentioned that the war was on Shawwal of second year of Hijriyah. Al-Waqidi added that the war was on Saturday mid-month of Shawwal.

#### Causes of War

Historical books mentioned that Banu Qainuqa' showed their envy after the Muslims had triumphed in the Battle of Badr. Even, their envy was so excessive that their enmity was clearly seen.

To get a description of the psychological condition surrounding the Jews of Banu Qainuqa' when they were expelled from Medina, the series of events must be presented firstly, those are: after

winning the Battle of Badr, the Prophet (PBUH) saw it necessary to gather Jews and advise them. The Prophet (PBUH) then gathered them in the market of Banu Qainuqa' and said: "O Jews, convert you to Islam before it befall you what happened to Quraysh", they replied: "O Muhammad, do not be lulled by victory. You defeated a group of Quraysh being drunk and unaware of the war. If you fight us, then you will realize who we really are and you will not find a strong enemy like us".

A threat was apparent in their response, whereas they were under the leadership of the Prophet (PBUH) when the covenant occurred. This narration was obtained from the path of Ibn Ishaq. Ibn Hajar considered it *hasan*. However, there is a narrator called Muhammad bin Muhammad, the former slave of Zaid bin Thabit in the *sanad*. Ibn Hajar considered him *majhul*.

If we accept that the narration is *hasan*, it does not mean that the cause of the expulsion of Banu Qainuqa' is their rejection of Islam, because in this phase, Islam accepts to coexist and keep peace with anyone. Also, the Prophet (PBUH) did not require anyone to convert to Islam because of his stay in Medina. Even, the whole section of the covenant affirms that the Prophet (PBUH) gave freedom of religion to the Jews. The reason for their expulsion was because they exposed enmity to the Prophet (PBUH) so the sense of security had lost in the city of Medina. It is narrated that one of the Jews tied the tip of a Muslim woman's clothing when she was in the market of Banu Qainuqa', so when that woman stood, her private parts were uncovered causing her to shout. The heart of a Muslim who happened to be on the place was moved to help the woman and he killed the Jew. A few moments later, other Jews came to defend their brother. They persecuted the Muslim, so he shouted for help to the Muslims. Then, the Muslims became angry and there was a fight between the two. This narration is weak because of the discontinuity between Ibn Hisham and Abdullah Ibn Ja'far Al-Makhrami. In addition, the narration is *mauquf* on a *majhul* named Abu 'Aun. However, from the historical point of view, it can be used as *hujjah*, because some historical sources have described the sequences of events that led to the expulsion of Banu Qainuqa'. Their refusal to convert to Islam was not the cause; it is because they were not responsible to the security of the city of Medina. Also, their enmity to the Prophet (PBUH) and the Muslims was clearly seen. It convinced the Prophet (PBUH) that it was impossible to live peacefully with the Jews of Banu Qainuqa'.

### Siege

The expulsion story of Banu Qainuqa' is true. Ibn Ishaq mentions the narrations of 'Ashim ibn Umar ibn Qatadah about the event. Al-Waqidi also mentions even without the *sanad*. Historians follow the path of Ibn Ishaq in their books. From the point of view of the hadith studies, this event does not appear in an authentic degree. However, according to the hadith scholars, the historical narrations in detail do not give priority to the authenticity of the narration. Similarly, historical method does not require the authenticity of *sanad*. Thus, it is not proper to ignore such reports in the study of history. Unless it is related to aqeedah or sharia issues, the authenticity of narration is necessary to be a *hujjah*. There is a detailed narration of the siege of Banu Qainuqa'. Earlier, they allied with Abdullah ibn Ubay ibn Salul. They were the bravest of the Jews and most obeyed. Therefore, when they openly expressed their animosity and hatred, the Prophet (PBUH) feared against their treachery. So, he appointed Abu Lubabah ibn Al-Mundzir as a mayor of Medina for a while, and set the white battle flag bearer, Hamzah ibn Abdul Muttalib. The Prophet (PBUH) besieged Banu Qainuqa' with his companions for approximately 15 days until the beginning of the month of Dzulqad'ah. The siege was greatly enhanced, so that they were finally willing to accept all of the Prophet's decree on condition that their property would be handed over to the Prophet (PBUH), while their wife and children remained with them. The Prophet (PBUH) ordered them to leave Medina gradually. Their allies, Abdullah ibn Ubay ibn Salul, who was in their midst said to the Prophet (PBUH): "Four hundred armored soldiers and three hundred horsemen prevent me from getting fruits and dates, while you harvest in an instant?" The Prophet replied: "It is all your part." The Prophet (PBUH) ordered them to leave the city of Medina immediately. The person responsible for the expulsion was 'Ubadah ibn As-Shamit. They met in Adzriat. While the person who was responsible for collecting their belongings was Abdullah ibn Maslamah Al-Anshari. The distribution of the property among the companions was finished after giving a fifth to the Prophet (PBUH) at first.

When the expulsion of Banu Qainuqa' happened, Allah SWT said:

قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَعْتٌ لَّيْسَ لَهُمْ صَوْلَةٌ وَتُحْشَرُونَ إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ وَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ

“Say unto those who reject Faith, “Ye shall surely be defeated (in this world) and will be led into Hell. And that’s the worst place”.”

قَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ آيَةٌ فِي فِئَتَيْنِ الْتَقَتَا فِئَةٌ تُقَاتِلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَأُخْرَى كَافِرَةٌ يَرَوْنَهُمْ مِثْلَهُمْ رَأْيَ الْعَيْنِ وَ اللَّهُ يُؤَيِّدُ بِنَصْرِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِّأُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ

“There is indeed a sign (and a lesson) for you in the two groups who have met (battle). A group fights in the way of Allah and (another group) unbelievers who with the eyes of the head see (as if) the Muslims are twice their number. Allah strengthens with His help whom He wills. Verily in that there is a lesson for the one who has the eye of the heart.” (Surah Al-Imran: 12-13)

The experts of interpretation (*tafsir*) mention that verse:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَى أَوْلِيَاءَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنَّهُ مِنْهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

“O ye who believe, do not take the Jews and the Christians into your leaders; some of them are leaders for others. Whosoever of you shall take them to be a leader, then verily that person belongs to them. Allah does not guide those who do wrong.”

فَتَرَى الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ يُسَارِعُونَ فِيهِمْ يَقُولُونَ نَخْشَى أَنْ تُصِيبَنَا دَائِرَةٌ فَعَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِالْفَتْحِ أَوْ أَمْرٍ مِنْ عِنْدِهِ فَيُضْبِحُوا عَلَى مَا أَسْرُوا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ نَادِمِينَ

“(But), you will see people that there is a disease in their heart (hypocrites) hasten closer to Jews and Christians (to establish friendships with them) saying, “We are afraid of getting trouble (and we need their help)” Maybe God will bring victory (for His messenger), or a decision from His side. Therefore, they are sorry for what they keep in themselves.” (Surah al-Maidah: 51-52)

According to the experts of *tafsir*, these verses are addressed to Abdullah ibn Ubay ibn Salul who gave his loyalty to the Jews of Banu Qainuqa’.

At the same time, 'Ubadah ibn As-Shamit announced that he was detached from alliance with the Jews and would give his loyalty only to Allah and His Messenger and said: “O Messenger of Allah, I have a large number of Jewish slaves and I release my loyalty to the Jews and that loyalty is only I give to Allah and His Messenger.”

It is clear the difference between Abdullah ibn Ubay ibn Salul whose heart has been filled with hypocrisy and 'Ubadah ibn As-Shamit who clean his heart because of the education from the Prophet to be free from Jahiliyyah fanaticism, lust and egoism. Thus, he sees that it is a must to give priority to the aqeedah rather than the personal benefit. Therefore, he becomes an example for every believer who is conscious and committed to their religion (Umari, 2010:307-312).

Al-'Umari's explanation of the expulsion of Banu Qainuqa' was explained in his own *sirah* book which is taken from the authentic narrations. However, there are a few narrations that he quoted from good (*hasan*) hadith. Al-'Umari himself immediately criticized on it. This is his carefulness in explaining history. He adheres to the principle of prioritizing the authentic hadiths. Furthermore, he also includes verses of the Qur'an relating to the story as well as his interpretation. It aims to complement the story and strengthen its validity.

## 2. Applying the Method of Criticism of Hadith Flexibly in Sirah Nabawiyyah

The issue in *sirah nabawiyyah* is the lack of accurate information about the whole life of the Prophet (PBUH). This can be understood logically because no one always accompanied the Prophet (PBUH) from his birth until his death. The informants of *sirah nabawiyyah* are also limited. As we know, Islam flourished when the Prophet (PBUH) was in Medina. What matters are how the life of the Prophet is and who informed the life of the Prophet in Mecca are. The condition of the informant whose narrations accepted must be a Muslim, mature (*baligh*), intelligent, *mumayyiz*, *'adl* and *dhabit*. However, when the Prophet was in Mecca, most of the people had not converted to Islam.

In response to this issue, al-'Umari acknowledges the requirement of the authenticity of historical narrations to be a difficult one, because a qualified narration is not enough to explain all the events occurred throughout Islamic history and will only create a void in the history. If we compare it with the history of the world, we find the history of the world comes from weak narrations and unknown narrators. In addition, the history is full of shortcomings. Hence, it is enough for us to know the accuracy and reliability of a historian in processing their writings using the method of hadith scholars in summing up the authenticity when there is a contradiction between two historians.

Trustworthiness, reliability, and religion of the historians are important requirements in accepting their witness of individuals and groups and all of their activities in the history. The whole history requires an alignment with the Islamic view. It is proven by the changing of history at a time when it was handled by Muslim writers. The alignment of the Daulah Umawiyya, the Abbasiyya and the afterwards till the present history will be enormous and will reveal counterfeittings in history (Umari, 2010:45).

The flexibility of the application of the hadith criticism methods described by al-'Umari before gives an understanding that the first thing to do is to find the authentic narrations in the *sirah nabawiyah*. Furthermore, to complete the sequences of historical stories, the unauthentic hadith may be included as long as it does not contain the issues of aqeedah and law. For example, the story of the death of the Prophet's father, Abdullah, that al-'Umari describes in the *sirah*:

"The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) had never seen his father who had died in Medina, in the midst of the family of his mother's uncle from the Bani 'Adi ibn Najjar. At the time, there was a trade, he got sick when he was about to return and finally died, then buried there. There is no authentic narration about the event of his death because every narration related to this event is *dhaif* or *mursal dha'if*. The most powerful story is Az-Zuhri's *mursal* words, "Abdul Muttalib sent Abdullah bin Abdul Muttalib to take the dates brought from Yathrib and Abdullah died on the way. Not long after that, Aminah gave birth to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) and he was under the care of his grandfather, Abdul Muttalib."

There is a hadith that corresponds to the words of Az-Zuhri that is narrated by Qais ibn Makhramah, a friend who mentions the birth of the Prophet (PBUH), he said: "His father died when his mother was pregnant."

This is the famous and considered as most powerful by Ibn Ishaq, Al-Waqidi and Ibn Sa'ad. The ones unlike them are Al-Kalbi and 'Awanah ibn Hakam, both of them argue that when Abdullah died, the age of the Prophet (PBUH) was 8 months, and some said 7 months" (Umari, 2010:93).

In the story, it can be seen how al-'Umari treats the narrations honestly. He mentioned that the narrations of Abdullah's death were very weak. The narration is *mursal* and there are narrators named Shadaqah ibn Sabaq and Muttalib ibn Abdullah ibn Qais ibn Makhramah in the *sanad*, neither of whom no one ever considered *tsiqah*. He studied various narrations and then incorporated them in the *sirah* so what contained in the *sirah* are the narrations of Abdullah's death and his criticisms. If he only included the authentic hadiths in his *sirah*, then the story of Abdullah's death would disappear and be unknown.

It can be known that Abdullah died in Medina. He died on the way when he would bring dates from Yathrib (Medina) to Mecca under the orders from Abdul Muttalib. Not long after, Aminah gave birth to the Prophet (PBUH). Since the Prophet (PBUH) had no father, he was treated by his own grandfather, Abdul Muttalib.

There are other weak (*dhaif*) narrations contained in the *sirah* book of al-'Umari, such as the story of the Prophet's marriage with Khadija:

“There are so many weak narrations; even most of them are weak, elaborating the story of the Prophet's marriage with Umm al-mu'minin Khadija bint Khuwailid. The narrations explain that the beginning of the introduction between the two through the work of the Prophet (PBUH) in running the business of Khadija known as a wealthy woman. He brought his merchandise to Jurash which was twice near Khamis Masyit, the part of Yemen or Habashah, one of the markets in Tihamah located at the corner of Mecca. Then, he made a profit from the merchandise. A servant of Khadija named Maisarah who had accompanied his journey, told her employer about his character and attitude. This story made Khadija astonished and amazed. The Prophet (PBUH) finally proposed her through her father Khuwailid ibn Asad, who then married him to Khadija.

Ibn Ishaq argues that Khadija's age was only 28 years old, while Al-Waqidi states that Khadija's age reached 40 years. From the marriage, they had two sons and four daughters. That is the strong narration according to Ibn Ishaq because usually if a woman reaches the age of 40, she can no longer bear children.

Although this statement is not supported by strong hadiths, it is well known among historians. The Prophet (PBUH) lived in the house of Khadija. That house was a place where he married, Khadija gave birth to his children, and Khadija died. The Prophet (PBUH) stayed at the house until migrated to Medina, and then the house was taken over by Aqil ibn Abu Talib.

No authentic narration has been found to explain the event. The ones in the authentic narration are his marriage with Khadija and his praise to her, and how deeply he feels his love, as well as his reaction when the name of Khadija was called after her death. It is also mentioned in the authentic narrations, the attitude of Khadija when calming the Messenger of Allah receiving the revelation, and Khadija who immediately believed in him. It is the attitude that shows the position and the virtue of Khadija in Islam. One thing that was agreed by the scholars was that Khadija was his most noble wife compared to the other wives. Khadija and the Prophet (PBUH) had two sons named Al-Qasim (nicknamed At-Thayyib) and Abdullah (nicknamed At-Tahir), and four daughters named Zainab, Umm Kulthum, Fatima, and Ruqayyah. Qashim and Abdullah died before the coming of Islam while all his daughters had embraced Islam. Khadija died three years before the Prophet migrated to Medina, the incident occurred before the events of Isra' and Mi'raj” (Umari, 2010:110-112).

Al-'Umari's explanation, shows that there is no authentic narration about the Prophet's marriage with Khadija in detail. The narration is *matruk* because there is a lost *sanad* and *tadlis* Abu al-Zubair narrated with the word "from" which makes the *sanad* become *dhaif*. Logically, only a few people knew the marriage of the Prophet (PBUH) and Khadija. Before being appointed as a prophet, he was an ordinary person. He was not the center of attention whose every move was always noticed and imitated. The existing narration states that the Prophet married Khadija.

The famous one states that Khadija was 40 years old. However, according to Ibn Ishaq, she was 28 years old because the age of 40 is almost approaching the menopause stage so it is rather impossible to bear many children. From this marriage, they had six children: two sons and four daughters. They were named Abdullah, Al-Qasim, Fatima, Ruqayyah, Umm Kulthum and Zainab. Their two sons died before the arrival of Islam.

Back to al-'Umari's *sirah* book, there is the story of the women who breastfed the Prophet (PBUH):

“In the authentic hadiths, it is stated that Tsuwaibah, the slave of Abu Lahab once breastfed the Prophet (PBUH). As for the story of Halima as-Sa'diyah who breastfed him in the village of Banu Sa'ad and the blessings which he brought, it is presented in almost all the books of *sirah*, both the old and the new ones. The first to narrate the story in the book of *sirah* is Muhammad ibn Ishaq (d. 151 H). Although the news about Halima, which is widely known because of the Prophet's breastfeeding, have not been succeeded to be authenticated by hadith scholars since much *'illat* in the *sanad*, the event of the Prophet (PBUH) and Halima As-Sa'diyah in Bani Sa'ad remains strong because it is supported by narrations from the other ways” (Umari, 2010:100-101).

From this story, it can be known that the women who breastfed the Prophet (PBUH) are Tsuwaibah and Halima Al-Sa'diyah. Al-'Umari did not discuss further about the blessings Halima



found when she was breastfeeding the Prophet (PBUH). In his explanation, he only focuses on criticizing the narrations and selecting it. Firstly, he included authentic narrations about Tsuwaibah then explained about Halima despite the weak narrations.

The weakness of the narration is caused by the narrator named Jahm ibn Abil in the *sanad*, Jahm from Abdullah ibn Ja'far or people who told him from Abdullah ibn Ja'far with hesitation and Jahm is *majhul* as well as no one thinks he is *tsiqah*. He also took the opinions of other historians such as Ibn Ishaq. Another example is the story of the Prophet's hijra to Tha'if:

"Indeed the Prophet's departure to Tha'if is due to the stronger resistance of the Quraysh to the Prophet (PBUH) after the death of Abu Talib. The Prophet (PBUH) tried to go finding a new land for his preaching by asking for help to Banu Tsaqif. However, he did not get a positive response from them. Even, they ordered the children to pelt the Prophet (PBUH) with stones. On the way back from Thaif, he met with Addas who was a Christian and converted to Islam.

Al-Waqidi mentions the event happened on Shawwal at the tenth year of prophetic, after the death of Abu Talib and Khadija. He also mentioned that the Prophet (PBUH) stayed in Thaif for 10 days. The whole details of this event were written by the writers of al-Maghazie. However, nothing is valid except the narration of 'Aisha who once asked the Prophet (PBUH): "Did you experience a very troublesome event after the Battle of Uhud?" He replied: "I really find a very troublesome in your people. That is Aqabah in Thaif. When I offered my mission to Ibn Abdu Yalil ibn Abdi Kalal, he did not respond to my will. I went away with a sad condition, and I did not realize until I reached Qarn Tsa'alib. I raised my head. Suddenly, there was a group of clouds shading me. I also looked at there and saw Gabriel. He said to me: "Allah hear what your people do to you, and their refusal to you. Allah has sent a mountain angel to serve all your desires." So the angel called me and greeted me, then said: "O Muhammad, Allah heard what your people said to you. I am the angel of the mountain sent by your Lord to serve all your commandments and desires. If you wish, undoubtedly we will bring and drop this mountain of Ahsabbain onto them". However, the Prophet (PBUH) replied: "But, I just hope later on there are generations of them who worship God and do not do syirk at all".

This narration is enough to know that the *rihlah* event has occurred, as well as the rough refusal of the people and the angel's offer to punish them. It is his affection and desire so that they remain unpunished. Also, the memories of *rihlah* events are very heartbreaking for him, even though many years have passed.

Meanwhile, his prayers for the people of Tha'if: "O Allah, I report to you the weakness of my power, and so on" and his meeting with Addas are not established through the authentic (*shahih*) ways.

*Sanad* of Addas story:

- Baihaqi
- Imam Zuhri (mursal)
- Musa ibn Uqbah (mursal)
- Muhammad ibn Ishaq (mursal)

This *mursal* narration is not mutually reinforcing one another. On the surface, this narration comes from one source because Ibn Ishaq and Musa Ibn Uqbah are both the disciples of Zuhri" (Umari, 2010:187-188).

This story tells the Prophet's journey to preach to Tha'if. The Prophet (PBUH) was really sick at heart after the death of Abdul Muttalib and Khadija. He received a strong resistance from the Quraysh. He decided to preach to Tha'if, hoping that they would accept him. Instead, he experienced rejection and even expulsion from the Thaifs. This explanation is the core of the various reports about the Hijra of the Prophet (PBUH) to Tha'if.

Al-'Umari explained that none of the details of the Prophet's hijra events to Tha'if was authentic. The only narration is Aisha's narration that explains the existence of an Angel offering to drop mountains on the Thaifs. Al-'Umari did not include the narrations of the Prophet's meeting with Addas, because all of the narrations are *dhaif* (*mursal*) from Imam Zuhri, Musa ibn Uqbah and Muhammad ibn Ishaq. He prefers to criticize it because the story of Addas is not reinforcing each other despite having various narrations.

It can be concluded that al-'Umari gives more attention to the weak (*dhaif*) hadiths here. Al-'Umari does not actually include all weak hadiths and nor exclude it away. Those hadiths are treated flexibly based on the methods of hadith criticism. The weak narrations may complement the authentic ones and may also be a substitute for the authentic narrations about an event which cannot be found, so he mentions the weak ones in the story. However, sometimes he only criticizes the weak narrations without mentioning the contents and even he exclude the narration.

It can be seen that al-'Umari treats the narrations honestly. He mentions the narrations along with the criticism of the hadith. He believed that the authentic (*shahih*) narrations should be prioritized in the explanation of *sirah*. It does not mean that weak narrations must be eliminated. It can still be a reference as long as it is not contrary to the authentic ones and does not contain the issues of aqeedah and law. In other words, weak narrations may complement a historical story not mentioned by the authentic narrations. Moreover, when he did not find an authentic narration, he depended on the weak narration. The reason is not to let the story interrupted. If the weak narrations were removed, there would be many unknown historical sequences, such as Abdullah's death and the Prophet's marriage with Khadija.

This is the characteristic of al-'Umari's book of *sirah*. He is flexible in treating the narrations of *sirah*, but still adheres to the methods of hadith criticism. This method of criticism should also be used in researching the history of Muslims. In the opening of his *sirah*, al-'Umari emphasizes the method of hadith criticism cannot only stop at *sirah nabawiyah*. However, it should be used in criticizing the whole history of Islam. This is very important to give specific characteristics in the study of Islamic history. The history of the Daulah Umawiyah, the Abbasiyah and others is extremely prone to counterfeiting and distortion because many narrators are influenced by their lust, madhhab fanaticism and political interests. Therefore, it is necessary for making a great effort to bring back historical stories to be in accordance with the rules of hadith criticism so that Muslims can avoid historical stories influenced by madhhab fanaticism and political interests.

#### D. CONCLUSION

This research concludes that the method of hadith criticism is very important to use in history. History is an event that has happened and cannot be changed. It contains very useful stories of the past to be a reflection of what will happen in the future. History must be accurately known. The method of hadith criticism should be applied in the history especially the history of the Prophet or *sirah nabawiyah*. *Sirah nabawiyah* includes a variety of narrations from the strong ones to the weak.

A large number of the weak (*dhaif*) narrations or hadiths is caused by the lack of informants or eyewitnesses of the historical events, especially during the period of Mecca. It can logically be known that most people in the Mecca period oppose the Prophet (PBUH). Thus, the informants at that time did not care about the Prophet's life, even wanted him to die.

Al-'Umari applied the method of hadith criticism in *sirah* through his book entitled *al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah al-Shahihah*. In his book, most of which he quoted are authentic (*shahih*) narrations, even though there are some weak (*dhaif*) narrations. He believed that if all of the weak (*dhaif*) narrations were eliminated, there would be a void in the historical sequences.

Al-'Umari adheres to the principle of the method of hadith criticism. Based on the method, the authentic hadiths must be prioritized. This method also requires the flexibility of the use of the weak hadiths. These hadiths can be used as long as it does not contain the issues of aqeedah and law. To describe a story in the book, al-'Umari firstly mentioned the authentic hadiths. The hadiths became the references for every event that occurs in the story.

Al-'Umari treats the hadiths in his *sirah* honestly. Firstly, he mentions the authentic narrations. Then, if authentic hadiths are not found, he uses the weak hadiths. He is very careful in mentioning the weak hadiths. He will mention the criticisms and the reinforcement proposition every time he mentions the weak hadiths. In the book, al-'Umari may mention the weak hadiths and its contents, and then criticizes the *sanad* of the hadiths; but sometimes, he may criticize the weak hadiths related to the story without mentioning the contents of the hadiths.

Al-'Umari is very selective in choosing a hadith about an event. If the hadiths are not too weak and can be used as a foundation, he mentions it. However, if it is not appropriate, he excludes it away. The author assumes that naming al-'Umari's book *al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah al-Shahihah*, which means the authentic biography of the Prophet, is not a mistake. The title informs the readers that the book only contains authentic hadiths of *sirah*, but in reality, there are hadiths which are qualified as unauthentic. Again, this is not a mistake. After the author has examined this book further, it can be seen that al-'Umari is very selective in using weak (*dhaif*) hadiths. Al-'Umari did not include all of the weak hadiths. He only included the hadiths which are in accordance with the criteria existing in the method of hadith criticism. Therefore, the naming is correct and valid.

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