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## HADITH HERMENEUTICS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE THOUGHTS OF MOHAMMED ARKOUN AND MUHAMMAD SYAHRUR

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to examine the hermeneutic thought of hadith from Mohammed Arkoun and Muhammad Syahrur as a new alternative in understanding hadith as a source of Islamic teachings. By raising this research title, the researcher wants to know about the differences and similarities between the hermeneutic thoughts of Mohammed Arkoun and Muhammad Syahrur in hadith. The method used in this research is a critical and comparative analysis of the works of the two figures. The results of this study show that both have similarities and differences in developing hadith hermeneutics. The similarities between Mohammed Arkoun and Muhammad Syahrur are that they use critical and interdisciplinary approaches, reject traditional literalist and orthodox views, and propose the concept of plural authority in interpreting hadith. Arkoun emphasizes the historical, anthropological, semiotic, and linguistic aspects in examining hadith, while Shahrur emphasizes the universal and contextual aspects in distinguishing hadith. This research contributes to the development of hadith hermeneutics that is relevant to the times. It also provides practical implications in helping Muslims to think critically, creatively, and dynamically in interpreting hadith in accordance with the times and human needs.

Keywords:

*Hermeneutics; Hadith; Comparative; Mohammed Arkoun; Muhammad Syahrur.*

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### **Abstrak**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pemikiran hermeneutika hadis dari Mohammed Arkoun dan Muhammad Syahrur sebagai alternatif baru dalam memahami hadis sebagai sumber ajaran Islam. Dengan mengangkat judul penelitian ini, peneliti ingin mengetahui tentang perbedaan dan kesamaan antara pemikiran hermeneutika Mohammed Arkoun dan Muhammad Syahrur dalam hadis. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah

analisis kritis dan komparatif terhadap karya-karya kedua tokoh tersebut. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa keduanya memiliki persamaan dan perbedaan dalam mengembangkan hermeneutika hadis. Persamaan antara Mohammed Arkoun dan Muhammad Syahrur adalah mereka menggunakan pendekatan kritis dan interdisipliner, menolak pandangan tradisional yang literalis dan ortodoks, serta mengusulkan konsep otoritas jamak dalam menafsirkan hadis. Sedangkan perbedaannya, Arkoun lebih menekankan aspek sejarah, antropologi, semiotik, dan linguistik dalam meneliti hadis, sedangkan Syahrur lebih menekankan aspek universal dan kontekstual dalam membedakan hadis. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi dalam mengembangkan pemikiran hermeneutika hadis yang relevan dengan zaman. Penelitian ini juga memberikan implikasi praktis dalam membantu umat Islam untuk berpikir kritis, kreatif, dan dinamis dalam menafsirkan hadis sesuai dengan perkembangan zaman dan kebutuhan manusia.

Kata Kunci:

*Hermeneutika; Hadis; Komparasi; Mohammed Arkoun; Muhammad Syahrur*

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## A. Introduction

Hadith hermeneutics is an interpretive approach that aims to deeply understand the meaning and relevance of hadith in the context of its time of origin. Two contemporary Muslim intellectuals who have developed the concept of hermeneutics with a critical and interdisciplinary approach are Mohammed Arkoun and Muhammad Syahrur. Both attempt to reconstruct the understanding of hadith that was previously confined by textual and literalist traditions, presenting a more contextual and critical view.

Mohammed Arkoun criticizes the traditional perspective that places hadith as the primary source of law and the second authority after the Qur'an. His argument highlights that hadith is not an entity detached from its historical context, affected by social, political, cultural and psychological dynamics. Therefore, according to Arkoun, the investigation of hadith should be conducted through historical, anthropological, semiotic and linguistic approaches in order to understand the context, background and purpose of each hadith. Arkoun also rejects the concept of sole authority (*ijma'*) as a criterion for determining the validity and quality of traditions. Instead, he proposes the idea of multiple authorities (*ijtihad*), which involves various perspectives and disciplines in evaluating traditions. With this approach, Arkoun encourages viewing hadith as a complex and dynamic phenomenon, requiring multidisciplinary analysis to fully understand its value, context and implications.<sup>1</sup>

Muhammad Shahrur proposes a hermeneutical approach to hadith that differs from the existing classical tradition. In his concept, he classifies hadith into two main categories: first, hadith as sayings of the Prophet Muhammad that are universal in nature, containing moral, ethical and monotheistic values consistent with the Qur'an and common sense. Second, they are contextual in nature, encompassing laws, regulations and policies that are relevant for specific conditions and situations. Shahrur argues that contextualized traditions cannot be considered as absolute and

eternal sources of law. Rather, according to him, reinterpretation is required in accordance with the times and human needs. Thus, he reinforces the idea that his hermeneutic of hadith provides a more dynamic understanding of the universal and contextual values contained in the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad.<sup>2</sup>

The hermeneutical views put forward by Mohammed Arkoun and Muhammad Syahrur present a new alternative in perceiving hadith as a source of Islamic teachings. Both seek to unite text and context, overcome the division between past and present, and connect tradition with modernity. Moreover, their thinking challenges the claims of traditional authorities who claim to have sole and absolute knowledge of hadith. With this approach, Arkoun and Shahrur encourage the Muslim community to adopt a critical, creative and dynamic mindset in interpreting hadith. They stimulate a more inclusive and contextualized view of the Islamic heritage, appealing to the need to understand the teachings in light of the dynamics of the times and the development of society.

## B. Discussion

### 1. Mohammed Arkoun

#### a. Biography

Muhammad Arkoun was born on February 1, 1928, in Taouirt-Mimoun, Kabylie, Algeria, a mountainous region inhabited by Berber tribes, located in eastern Algeria. This environment provided the foundation for Arkoun to learn three languages simultaneously: Kabyle, Arabic, and French. From an early age, Arkoun actively interacted with these three languages; Kabyle was used in his daily life, French became the language of instruction in his village's elementary school, while Arabic, which he began studying in high school in Oran, the main city in western Algeria. At one point, the three languages reflected different ways of thinking and understanding. His main endeavor, therefore, was to merge the diverse

<sup>1</sup>Setio Budi, "Menakar Ulang Hermeneutika Al-Quran : Kritik Atas," *Ilmu-ilmu Ushuluddin* 24, no. April (2022): 16–28.

<sup>2</sup> Mochammad Mahrus, *Konsep Islam dalam Pandangan Muhammad Syahrur* (Yogyakarta: UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2017).

mindsets, integrating the religious fervor nurtured in the Muslim community with the rational attitudes that dominated the Western world.<sup>3</sup>

Muhammad Arkoun completed his primary education in Kabylie, his native village, before receiving his secondary education in Oran, a port city located in western Algeria and far from where he was born. Afterwards, Arkoun continued his education at the University of Algiers, Algeria, from 1950 to 1954, with Arabic language and literature as the focus of his studies. During the Algerian war of independence from France (1954-1962), Mohammed Arkoun enrolled as a student at the Sorbonne, Paris, France. Upon completion, he settled in France and lectured at the Sorbonne University for a period of about 29 years, from 1961 to 1990. During his stint at the university, Arkoun earned his Doctorate in literature in 1969 by writing a dissertation on Humanism in the ethics of Ibn Miskawaih (932-1030 CE), a 10th century thinker who specialized in medicine and philosophy.<sup>4</sup>

b. The Urgency of Mohammed Arkoun's Thought

Mohammed Arkoun, as a moderate thinker, made a significant contribution by formulating ideas or concepts that are relevant in interpreting texts through a hermeneutic approach. Arkoun argues that the hermeneutic approach is an integral part of applied Islamology and text semiotics. Text interpretation requires consideration of linguistic rules, socio-historical context, and philosophy of thought. Therefore, this approach is aimed at understanding the text as a

whole, incorporating linguistic, historical, and philosophical aspects.<sup>5</sup>

According to Arkoun's perspective, the exploration of books that tell the history of the Prophet with a new perspective will open up opportunities for new understanding, especially if a diachronic hermeneutic approach is used. Arkoun believes that the social context involving psychological, political, theological, and other contexts in a certain period of time cannot be separated from each author and reader of the text. Therefore, according to Arkoun, the interpretation of texts in the Islamic tradition can always evolve, in line with the changing dynamics of life from one era to the next. Thus, the diachronic hermeneutic approach can open up space to obtain new and relevant information in the interpretation of the Prophet's historical books, in line with the evolution and changes in the life and thought of Muslims.<sup>6</sup>

When interpreting religious texts, Mohammed Arkoun asserts that the text is always related to the context, whether on a small or large scale, and whether or not Muslims are aware of it. Arkoun adds that the process of deconstruction must be balanced with construction, with the aim of building awareness to go beyond limited and conventional understandings. This process also includes an attempt to break away from ideals that may be excessive and could limit the meaning or even edit the text. Therefore, in Islamic studies, the relationship between text and context is strongly linked to socio-historical tradition as a critical theological mechanism. The ultimate

<sup>3</sup>Nunu Burhanuddin, *Filsafat Takwil: Kajian Teks Al-Qur'an* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2022).

<sup>4</sup>Muh. Taufiq, Darmawati H., dan Abdullah Abdullah, "KONSEP IJTIHAD (Studi Atas Pandangan Muhammad Arkoun)," *Sulesana: Jurnal Wawasan Keislaman* 15, no. 1 (2021): 41–52, <http://journal.uin-alauddin.ac.id/index.php/sls/article/view/23599>.

<sup>5</sup> Masruhan Andris Nurita, "ANALISIS KONSEP HERMENEUTIKAHADISPERSPEKTIF MUHAMMAD ARKOUN," *UNIVERSUM* 15, no. 2 (2022): 1–24.

<sup>6</sup> Moh. Ikhsan, "Metode 'Pembacaan' al-Qur'an (Telaah atas Pemikiran Mohammed Arkoun)," *Shautut Tarbiyah* 18, no. 2 (2012): 18–41.

goal is to encourage the emergence of new understandings that arise from new dynamics, breaking away from the limitations and rigidities that may exist in previous interpretations.<sup>7</sup>

Arkoun offers a concept of textual understanding that reflects a high-level philosophy of understanding, attempting to go beyond the intrinsic boundaries of the text with a critical analysis approach based on logic and rationality. Although the goal is the same, namely understanding the texts of the Qur'an and Prophetic traditions, the style of delivery can be different from the scholars. Arkoun realizes the importance of considering the development of the dynamics of life.

From this description, it can be concluded that there are various approaches to understanding the text, including traditional, cultural, anthropological and other approaches. With the idea of hermeneutics, Mohammed Arkoun tries to combine text and social history to produce a more comprehensive interpretation of the text in accordance with the needs of Muslims in a particular context and time period as the dynamics of life develop.

c. Hadith Hermeneutics from the Perspective of Mohammed Arkoun

In the renewal of hadith understanding, Mohammed Arkoun adopts a "*logocentrism*" approach and recognizes the various terms in linguistics but formulates them with his own distinctive view. Within this framework, Arkoun constructs three key terms that form the circle of hadith hermeneutics: author, text and reader.

Mohammed Arkoun chose the epistemological method as a modern framework. His text analysis is based on linguistics, with an emphasis on exploring the socio-historical influences on text formation, as well as engaging the current socio-historical context. Arkoun explains that linguistics acts as an effective instrument of analysis in this context. In examining the text,

grammatical understanding is essential, and the results of the analysis must be presented logically to facilitate the reader's understanding. Arkoun focuses that a hermeneutic approach to understanding the meaning of a text requires detailed attention to the language elements within it. In addition, it is important to consider and analyze past social history in the context of present challenges. This approach is expected to produce thinking that is logical and adaptive to the needs of society. Within the hermeneutic framework, scholars use specific terms, and Arkoun introduced the term "*anggitankorpus*" to refer to the interpretation of the text as a finite collection. Arkoun emphasizes the importance of accepting different types of analysis, valuing the study of limited collections that tend to be dogmatic, the product of the analysis of scholars, including fuqaha and various other schools of Islam. Understanding the hadith text is seen as an ongoing process in line with the changing times and the emergence of new challenges. Freedom in interpretation of hadith texts is contextual, involving the context of changing times, with the aim of providing people with an understanding of new issues. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to prevent errors and distortions of the essential meaning of the hadith text. Thus, the hadith text cannot be understood in isolation, but through a hermeneutic approach as the method of interpretation used.<sup>8</sup>

It can be concluded that the method of applying hermeneutics as a tool for interpreting texts remains relevant as the realities of life evolve. Mohammed Arkoun emphasizes his openness to freedom of thought in interpreting texts, by adopting a logical, critical and contextual analysis approach.

Arkoun in his study refutes the notion that the Prophet's traditions were only applicable in ancient times and relevant for solving the problems of the past. Through in-depth analysis, it is clear that

<sup>7</sup> Ikhsan.

<sup>8</sup> Ikhsan.

the Qur'an and hadith remain valid and relevant over time. The process of interpreting the text is considered a process that will last until the end of time, and unchanging understandings should be abandoned. Therefore, the hermeneutical method is always related to social, historical, psychological, cultural, political, anthropological and other aspects. If it is only viewed from one perspective, there is a possibility of producing thinking that is unchanging and unresponsive to changing dynamics.

d. Analysis of Hadith Hermeneutics from Mohammed Arkoun's Perspective

Mohammed Arkoun points out the importance of maintaining a balance between knowledge of language, social and historical context, and freedom of thought. He sees these three factors as interconnected and inseparable. Furthermore, Arkoun emphasizes the importance of the relationship between hermeneutics and philosophy. Philosophical elements are considered crucial to achieving a thorough hermeneutic interpretation.<sup>9</sup>

However, in the interpretation of the text, overemphasizing the philosophical tone (*freedom of thought*) may neglect the theories and rules that have been established by scholars in hadith science. The interpretation of the text in accordance with the demands of the times should not be dogmatic, but still pay attention to the rules that have been systematized in the science of hadith, both in *dirayah* and *riwayah*.

To apply the hermeneutical approach to text interpretation in the modern context, two aspects must be integrated. The first is to consider historical aspects, especially those related to the rules of hadith science *riwayah* and *dirayah* comprehensively. The second is to consider contemporary aspects related to social issues in daily life, using anthropological, cultural, psychological,

and other approaches. This approach aims to gain a broader understanding of the text without neglecting the basic rules that have been established by the scholars of hadith.

e. Conclusion

From the explanation given earlier, we can formulate that Muhammad Arkoun connects hermeneutic interpretation with the application of Islamology and semiotics. According to Arkoun, linguistics is an important tool in analyzing texts. In the process of interpretation, an understanding of the structure of language and a logical, critical and rational presentation with the support of actual data is essential. The hermeneutic approach requires understanding linguistic rules and considering the social and historical background of the past and present to create a deep understanding of the meaning of the text.

Muhammad Arkoun considers hermeneutics as a tool for philosophizing and encouraging freedom of critical thinking. However, this view has been criticized for overemphasizing philosophy and possibly ignoring the rules of hadith science developed by scholars. Nonetheless, Arkoun's contribution in renewing a contextual and rational understanding of the Quran is still recognized as valuable.

## 2. Muhammad Syahrur

a. Biography

Muhammad Shahrur bin Daib, born on April 11, 1938 in Damascus, Syria, is the fifth son of Deib bin Deib Shahrur, a painter, and Shiddiqah bint Shalih Filyun, his mother. He is married to 'Azizah and they have five children and two grandchildren. His married children were Tariq who married Rihab, Lays who married Olga, and Rima who married Luis. Her other two children are Basil and Masun. He has two grandchildren, Muhammad and Kinan.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Andris Nurita, "ANALISIS KONSEP HERMENEUTIKAHADISPERSPEKTIF MUHAMMAD ARKOUN."

<sup>10</sup>Nunu Burhanuddin, *Filsafat Takwil: Kajian Teks Al-Qur'an*.

From a young age, Syahrur was known as an intelligent and talented individual. He passed his education smoothly. He started his education at the Ibtidaiyah, 'dadiyah (equivalent to junior high school/Tsanawiyah), and Tsanawiyah (equivalent to high school/Aliyah) madrasas in Damascus. Syahrur graduated from Abdurrahman al-Kawakibi's madrasa with a Tsanawiyah degree at the age of 19 in 1957 CE. It is important to note that these schools were not religious schools. Thus, during his childhood and teenage years, Syahrur did not receive a complete religious education.<sup>11</sup>

Muhammad Shahrur bin Daib showed his talent when he was awarded a scholarship by the Syrian government to study in Moscow, Russia, in Civil Engineering (*al-handasah al-madaniyyah*) in March 1957. He spent five years on his studies, from 1959 until he earned his Diploma (S1) in 1964. After that, he returned to Syria and worked at the Faculty of Civil Engineering at Damascus University until 1965. Shortly after, Damascus University sent him to Dublin, Ireland, specifically at the Irish National University (*al-Jami'ah al-Qaumiyah al-Irlandiyah*) to continue his Masters and Doctoral education in the same field with the specialization of Soil Mechanics and Foundations (*Mekanika Turbat wa Asasat*). In 1969, Syahrur earned his Master's degree, and three years later, in 1972, completed his studies at the Doctoral level. In the same year, he became a lecturer at the Faculty of Civil Engineering at Damascus University and taught the course Soil Mechanics and Geology (*Mekanika at-Turbat wa al-*

*Mansya'at al-Ardiyyah*). Syahrur later became a Professor at the Department of Civil Engineering at Damascus University (1972-1999). In 1982-1983, he was sent by Damascus University as an expert at Al Sand Consult in Saudi Arabia. In addition, Syahrur and his colleagues established the Dar al Istisarah al-Handasiyah Engineering Consultancy Bureau in Damascus.<sup>12</sup>

b. Written works

Although he is active as a lecturer at the Faculty of Engineering, Damascus University, Muhammad Syahrur bin Daib's passion for creative writing remains high. His dedication can be seen in some of the works he has written, both in the form of books and articles. He has produced and disseminated several books in Damascus covering his fields of expertise, such as "Foundation Engineering (*Handasat al-Asasat*)" consisting of three volumes, and "*Soil Mechanics (Handasat at-Turbat)*."<sup>13</sup>

In addition to works in engineering, Muhammad Shahrur also wrote several writings on Islamic studies that attracted the attention of Muslim intellectuals and Islamologists. Although his educational background suggests that Syahrur is not a mufassir (commentator on the Qur'an), jurist, or expert in the science of Islamic law (*fiqh*) or principles of law (*ushul al-fiqh*), he has often been involved in issues related to the liberalization of Sharia and the deconstruction of Qur'anic interpretation. In his work, he deconstructs some Islamic laws, principles of tafsir, and principles of law (*ushul al-fiqh*), relying on his knowledge in engineering and emphasizing his Arabic origins. His educational

<sup>11</sup> Abdul Aziz, *Konsep Milk Al-Yamin Muhammad Syahrur Sebagai Keabsahan Hubungan Seksual Non Marital* (Yogyakarta: Pascasarjana UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2019).

<sup>12</sup> Dian Dwi Alifatul Faizah, *STUDI ANALISIS TEORI HUDUD MUHAMMAD SYAHRUR SEBAGAI UPAYA*

*PENCEGAHAN TINDAK PIDANA KORUPSI DI INDONESIA* (Surabaya: Institut Agama Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel, 2009).

<sup>13</sup> Abdul Aziz, *Konsep Milk Al-Yamin Muhammad Syahrur Sebagai Keabsahan Hubungan Seksual Non Marital*.

background and social interactions, both in his education and his surrounding environment, also influence his thought process in his works.<sup>14</sup> Some of Syahrur's works in Islamic studies include:

- 1) *Al-Kitāb wa Al-Qur'ān: Qirā'ah Al-Mu'āṣirah*
  - 2) *Dirāsah Islāmiyyah Mu'āṣirah fī Al-Dawlah wa Al-Mujtama'*
  - 3) *Al-Islām wa Al-Īmān; Manzūmah Al-Qiyām*
  - 4) *Naḥwa Uṣūl Jadīdah li Al-Fiqh Al-Islāmī; Fiqh Al-Mar'ah*
  - 5) *Al-Sunnah Al-Rasūliyyah wa Al-Sunnah Al-Nabawīyyah: Ru'yah Jadīdah*
  - 6) *Tajfīf Manābi' Al-Tarhīb*
  - 7) *Al-Qaṣaṣ Al-Qur'āniyyah: Qirā'ah Mu'āṣirah*
  - 8) *Al-Dīn wa Al-Sulṭah - Qirā'ah Mu'āṣirah li Al-Ḥākimiyyah*
  - 9) *Umm Al-Kitāb wa Taḥṣīlulhā - Qirā'ah Mu'āṣirah fī Al-Ḥākimiyyah Al-Insāniyyah*
  - 10) *Dalīl Al-Qirā'ah Al-Mu'āṣirah li Al-Tanzīl Al-Ḥakīm - Al-Manhaj wa Al-Muṣṭalahāt*
  - 11) *Al-Islām wa Al-Insān - Min Natā'ij Al-Qirā'ah Al-Mu'āṣirah*
  - 12) *Al-Qur'ān fī Al-Fikr Al-Mu'āṣir*
- c. Muhammad Syahrur's Thoughts on the Sunnah

Etymologically the word "*Hadith*" or "*al-hadith*" means "*new thing*" or "*discussion of a matter*." The majority of hadith scholars agree that hadith and sunnah have the same meaning as they both originate from the Prophet Muhammad. They define hadith or sunnah as "anything that comes from the Prophet including his words, actions, approval, or character."<sup>15</sup>

According to Nuruddin Itr, the sunnah, as understood by hadith scholars, includes everything related to the Prophet Muhammad, especially according to some of them. However, most of the hadith scholars state that the sunnah also includes all that pertains to the companions and the tabi'in. Hence the sunnah includes everything that pertains to the Prophet Muhammad before and after he was sent.<sup>16</sup>

Muhammad Syahrur's view is different from that of the scholars of hadith. For Syahrur, the hadith is a reflection of the life of the Prophet as God's messenger in his interaction with certain events and situations. He refuses to include the hadith in the category of revelation because the Prophet and his companions did not consider it as part of revelation. He also states that there was no command from the Prophet or the Companions to collect or record hadith. He places the hadith in the context of the Prophet's daily life, while hadith scholars recognize a broader definition that includes everything that comes from the Prophet including his words, deeds, agreements, or attributes.<sup>17</sup>

Shahrur interprets the etymological concept of sunnah which is rooted in the word "sanna", meaning something that is easy or goes smoothly. Hence, sunnah is understood as easy and natural action. In his study of the sunnah, Syahrur focuses on three terms in the Qur'an related to the sunnah, especially in explaining the meaning of obedience. The three terms are al-ittibā', al-qudwah, and al-uswah, which have a strong relationship and cannot be separated from the Prophet.<sup>18</sup> The three terms are:

<sup>14</sup> Andi Rosa, *TAFSIR KONTEMPORER Metode dan Orientasi Modern dari Para Ahli dalam Menafsirkan Ayat Al-Qur'an* (Banten: A-Empat, 2021).

<sup>15</sup> Andi Rosa.

<sup>16</sup> Abdul Fatah, "Konsep Sunnah Perspektif Muhammad Syahrur," *Diroyah: Jurnal Ilmu Hadis* 4 1, no. September (2019): 27.

<sup>17</sup> Latifah Anwar, "Hermeneutika Hadis Muhammad Syahrur" 20, no. 1 (2021): 116-43.

<sup>18</sup> Abdul Fatah, "Konsep Sunnah Perspektif Muhammad Syahrur."



## 1) *Al-Ittiba'*

According to Mu'jam al-Maqāyis, *al-Ittibā'* is defined as adherence to a theme or following an action. This *al-Ittibā'* can be done in a positive context, such as following the knowledge of the prophets and the guidance of the messengers. This is in line with the Qur'anic verse in Surah *Ali Imran* [3]: 31.

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

"Say (Prophet Muhammad), "If you love Allah, follow me, and Allah will love you and forgive your sins." Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."

On the other hand, *al-Ittibā'* can also occur in a negative context, such as following in the footsteps of ancestors without thinking or doing blind taqlid. This is in accordance with what Allah says in QS. *Luqman* [31]: 21.<sup>19</sup>

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ مَا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا أَوْلَىٰ كَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ يَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَىٰ عَذَابِ السَّعِيرِ

"When it was said to them, "Follow what Allah has sent down," they said, "No. We are following the customs of our fathers. Instead, we follow the customs of our forefathers." Will they follow their forefathers when in fact the devil is calling them to the torment of a blazing fire (hell)?"

Based on these two arguments, the term *al-Ittibā'* does not always have a positive connotation. Rather, it can have both good and bad meanings. Therefore, *al-Ittibā'* is not always interpreted concretely as a form of *al-sunnah al-ḥasanah*.

## 2) *Al-Qudwah*

In Mu'jam al-Maqāyis, it is defined as the act of taking or imitating, and likening to another. The term is mentioned twice in the Qur'an, namely in Surah *Al-An'am* [6]: 90 and Surah *Al-Zukhruf* [43]: 23.<sup>20</sup>

أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَىٰ اللَّهُ فَبِهِدَاهُمُ آفَتَهُ قُلْ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرًا لِلْعَالَمِينَ

"These are they (the prophets) whom Allah has guided. So, follow their guidance. Say (Prophet Muhammad), "I ask no reward from you for conveying the Qur'an." (The Qur'an) is but a warning for all the worlds."

وَكَذَٰلِكَ مَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِّنْ نَّذِيرٍ إِلَّا قَالَ مُتْرَفُوهَا إِنَّا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا عَلَىٰ أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰ آثَرِهِمْ مُّقْتَدُونَ

"So it was when We sent a warner before you (Prophet Muhammad) to a land. Those who lived in luxury (in that land) used to say, "Verily we found our forefathers practicing a (religion) and we only followed in their footsteps."

Sometimes, *al-Qudwah* can be defined as adherence to beliefs and methods. In addition, it also includes following good actions, both in word and deed. Hence, in the context of prayer, *al-Qudwah* is an imam, while in the context of warfare, *al-Qudwah* is following a commander. However, the nature of *al-Qudwah* can vary depending on the place and conditions of the time, it can be good or bad.

A positive example of *Iqtidā'* can be found in QS. *al-An'am* [6]: 90, which explains about following the guidance brought by the prophets. On the other hand, a negative example of *Iqtidā'* can be found in QS. *al-Zukhruf* [43]: 23, which tells about following

<sup>19</sup> al-Hufaz, *al-Qur'an* (Bandung: Qur'an Qordoba, 2023).

<sup>20</sup> *Al-Qur'anul Kareem* (Surabaya: Mutiara Ilmu, 2017).

their fathers without understanding clear evidence. They follow their fathers without realizing the previous context.

In some situations, al-Qudwah can be interpreted as being obedient in beliefs and methods. It also involves following good actions, both in words and actions. Hence, in the context of prayer, al-Qudwah is an imam, while in the context of warfare, al-Qudwah is following a commander. However, the nature of al-Qudwah can vary depending on the place and conditions of the time, it can be good or bad.

A positive example of Iqtidā' can be found in QS. *al-An'ām* [6]: 90, which explains about following the guidance brought by the prophets. On the other hand, a negative example of Iqtidā' can be found in QS. *al-Zukhruf* [43]: 23, which tells about following their fathers without understanding clear evidence. They follow their fathers without realizing the previous context.

### 3) Al-Uswah

In *Mu'jam al-Maqayis*, the term "al-Uswah" is derived from the same word as the concept of healing and repair. In the Qur'an, there are three instances in the verses *Al-Mumtahanah* [60]:4, *Al-Mumtahanah* [60]:6, and *Al-Ahzab* [33]:21, where the word is repeated three times, showing its importance in the context of the verses.<sup>21</sup>

قَدْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ فِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ  
وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ

"Indeed, there is a good example for you in Abraham and those who were with him."

قَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِيهِمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ  
يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ

"Indeed, in them (Abraham and his people) there is indeed a good example for you, (i.e.) for those who hope for the reward of Allah and salvation on the Last Day."

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ  
حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ  
الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا

"Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah there is indeed a good example for you, (that is) for those who expect (the mercy of) Allah and (the coming of) the Last Day and who remember Allah much."

The word "al-Uswah" comes from the root "al-Usw" which essentially carries the meaning of healing and repair. In this context, al-Uswah plays a role similar to that of a doctor. When a person has uswah, it reflects an adherence to all the positive values that can improve his or her quality. Therefore, al-Uswah functions as an example that is modeled and emulated in various aspects, including thinking, lifestyle, communication, and behavior. As a follower, it is expected to make uswah a model worth following, both in terms of thinking, lifestyle, communication, and behavior. Based on the three verses that have been explained, Allah emphasizes that Prophet Ibrahim and Prophet Muhammad are designated as role models for Muslims. Prophet Muhammad sets the standard for the individual, while Prophet Ibrahim and his people are supposed to set the standard for the collective life.<sup>22</sup>

Ultimately, our beliefs confirm that the idea of uswah only applies within the framework of risālah, as risālah does not involve coercion. The concept of uswah is not manifested in the role of a prophet, strategic leader,

<sup>21</sup> al-Hufaz, *al-Qur'an*.

<sup>22</sup> Abdul Fatah, "Konsep Sunnah Perspektif Muhammad Syahrur."

or military leader, who utilizes power by virtue of his position as a prophet.<sup>23</sup>

When looking at the hadith or Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad, Muhammad Shahrur categorizes the Sunnah into two types, namely:

4) *Al-Sunnah Al-Rasūliyyah*

In this context, the sunnah refers to the revelations received by Muhammad (peace be upon him) and compiled in *umm al-Kitab*. This sunnah also includes symbols, legal theories, commands to do good, and prohibitions to leave evil, becoming the main focus in the concept of example, obligation, role model, and following. Issues related to law, worship, and morals fall under this category of sunnah. This sunnah treatise contains commands and prohibitions that are in line with verses in the Qur'an, so that obedience to this sunnah is expected to be in line with obedience to God.

Shahrur distinguishes obedience to the sunnah into two types, namely continued obedience and interrupted obedience. Continued obedience includes obedience that is required, either during the lifetime of the Prophet or after his death, especially in worship and things that are forbidden. The verses that emphasize the importance of obeying Allah and the Messenger ensure the absolute validity of obedience.

On the other hand, interrupted obedience is related to the sunnah which is temporal and only applies during the lifetime of the Prophet. After his death, obedience to the sunnah is no longer required. Sunnah in this category is considered a practical *ijtihad* in the role of the Prophet as a human being who may make mistakes, especially in the context of local-temporal moral

values and policies as head of state and head of family. Thus, the *rasuliyyah* sunnah is more related to the laws of God found in the Qur'an. It reflects an attitude of obedience that must be consistently maintained, but was interrupted after the death of the Prophet. This Sunnah is directly related to the laws of Allah's commands and prohibitions as expressed in the verses of the Qur'an. Therefore, neglecting to obey this sunnah can be considered a sinful act.

5) *Al-Sunnah Al-Nabawiyah*

In this context, sunnah refers to the stories of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH that are recorded in the Qur'an. They form an integral part of the Qur'ān along with the stories recorded after the event. It is a central part of the Qur'ānic teachings that Muslims are obliged to believe. In contrast, the history of the Prophet's life documented in the books of *sirah* is considered history. Therefore, believing in these books of *sirah* is not considered an obligation. In this sunnah there are also various forms of the Prophet's *ijtihad* expressed in *sahih* traditions found in the books of history and *sirah*. Such *ijtihad* must be in line with the essence of the Qur'an and must not contradict it, such as in matters of military leadership, social rules, legal decision-making, and *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*.

According to Shahrur, this category does not require obedience, but only trust. The Prophetic Sunnah is not a revelation and does not have an absolute nature. Therefore, its observance is not required at all times. In essence, it is the Prophet's *ijtihad* in applying temporal laws that remain within the limits set by the Qur'an. When faced with this category of sunnah, there is no need to compete to practice it. Only

<sup>23</sup> Azhari Andi, Luqman Hakim, dan Mutawakkil Hibatullah, "REINTERPRETASI SUNNAH (Studi Pemikiran Muhammad Syahrur terhadap Sunnah),"

*Jurnal Living Hadis* 1, no. 1 (2016): 79, <https://doi.org/10.14421/livinghadis.2016.1069>.

obedience is not required, let alone practicing it. This shows that the prophetic sunnah is only related to historical stories and ijtihad, which can change according to the times.

It is possible that this category of sunnah is only the initial interpretation given by the Prophet himself. This interpretation is the result of the Prophet's ijtihad in applying the revelation he received, reflecting his thoughts in the context of community life at that time. Understanding the sunnah of the Prophet at that time was not the only absolute option. However, the ijtihad made by the Prophet at that time was local-temporal and would end along with the changes and developments of the times. Therefore, the application of the Prophet's sunnah that was valid at that time is not necessarily relevant if applied today. Nevertheless, every Muslim still has the obligation to believe in the sunnah as an integral part of the character of the Prophet Muhammad himself.<sup>24</sup>

d. Conclusion

According to Shahrur, the classification of the sunnah consists of two parts: the sunnah of treatise, which includes laws and teachings, and the sunnah of prophethood, which contains knowledge and information. We are obliged to obey the sunnah treatise as a top priority, not the sunnah nubuwwah. The sunnah risalah is the result of the Prophet's conditional applied ijtihad, while the sunnah nubuwwah is a conditional informative ijtihad that produces knowledge that is relative.

According to Muhammad Syahrur, the sunnah of the Prophet is not a revelation

from Allah SWT. If there is a hadith that states that the Prophet received a revelation other than the Qur'an, it does not mean that his every word, action, or agreement is considered a revelation. As a Prophet, Muhammad received and conveyed revelations regarding nubuwwah or prophethood, which includes various knowledge revealed to him as proof of his prophethood. This knowledge includes news of the supernatural (*eschatology*), history, stories of the past, the universe, the theory of humanity, and other aspects. As an Apostle, the function of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. is to change the teachings that are absolute (*transcendent*) into teachings that are relative or relative, but still within the framework of hudud.<sup>25</sup>

3. Comparison of Hadith Hermeneutics of Mohammed Arkoun and Muhammad Syahrur

a. Differences

No	Mohammed Arkoun	Muhammad Syahrur
1.	Hermeneutics, as a philosophical tool, facilitates freedom in critical thinking. Muhammad Arkoun's model of thought applies a modern epistemic pattern that requires an understanding of linguistic	Syahrur chooses to use hermeneutics as a method in interpreting the Qur'an and Hadith. He is also more likely to understand legal texts linguistically, meaning that in addition to using a linguistic approach, he also considers history when the

<sup>24</sup> Abdul Fatah, "Konsep Sunnah Perspektif Muhammad Syahrur."

<sup>25</sup>M.Wahid Syafi'uddin, "Sunnah dalam Pandangan Muhammad Syahrur dan Fungsinya dalam Menafsirkan al-Qur'an: Studi Analisis

tentang Poligami," *Jurnal Manthiq* 5, no. 2 (2020): 102–17, <https://ejournal.iainbengkulu.ac.id/index.php/manthiq/article/view/4388>.

	principles, as well as considering the socio-historical context of the past and present. This approach results in a comprehensive understanding of the meaning of the text.	text is presented in the current context.
2.	Arkoun emphasizes the use of critical and scientific methods in hadith hermeneutics.	Syahrur, on the other hand, is more inclined to a rational and contextual approach.
3.	Arkoun involves an emphasis on historical and linguistic studies.	Shahrur involves an emphasis on understanding meanings that are relevant in social and historical contexts.
4.	Arkoun tends to focus more on the historical and philosophical aspects.	Syahrur focuses more on the reinterpretation of religious texts.
5.	Arkoun is more inclined to criticize hadiths that he considers do not meet critical or scientific standards.	Syahrur focuses more on interpretations that are contextual and relevant to current social realities.
6.	Arkoun has a broader approach to Islamic thought as a whole.	Syahrur is more specific, especially regarding the reinterpretation of the Qur'an in a modern context.

#### b. Similarities

No	<b>Persamaan Pemikiran Muhammad Arkoun dan Muhammad Syahrur dalam Hermeneutika Hadis</b>
1.	Arkoun and Shahrur tend to question traditional methods and emphasize the need for more contextualized interpretations.
2.	Both advocate for innovation in Islamic interpretation methods, and both may see the importance of harmonizing religious understanding with the context of their times.
3.	They seek to bridge the gap between text and context, between past and present, and between tradition and modernity by offering new alternatives in understanding the Hadith as a relevant source of Islamic teachings for their times.
4.	Arkoun and Shahrur emphasize understanding the Hadith in their respective historical, social, and cultural contexts. Contextuality becomes a key element in their hermeneutics of Hadith.
5.	They use a critical and interdisciplinary approach in interpreting the Hadith, utilizing various disciplines such as history, anthropology, semiotics, linguistics, philosophy, and sociology.

From the table above, it can be concluded that understanding the comparison of hadith hermeneutics between Mohammed Arkoun and Muhammad Syahrur, there are a number of striking differences in the approach and focus of their thoughts. Mohammed Arkoun, an Islamic thinker who applies modern epistemic patterns, emphasizes the importance of critical and scientific methods in hadith hermeneutics. In his endeavor, Arkoun utilizes linguistic principles and takes into consideration the socio-historical context of the past and present. He has a broad orientation towards Islamic thought as a whole and tends to criticize hadith that he considers not to meet critical or scientific standards.

Muhammad Syahrur, on the other hand, with his more rational and contextual approach, chooses to use hermeneutics as a

method of interpreting the Qur'an and Hadith. More than just a linguistic approach, Syahrur also considers history when the text is presented in the current context. His focus is more on reinterpreting religious texts in a modern context, with an emphasis on interpretations that are contextual and relevant to current social realities.

Arkoun and Shahrur, however, have some similarities in their views of hadith hermeneutics. Both tend to question traditional methods and advocate innovation in Islamic interpretation. They seek to bridge the gap between text and context, between past and present, by offering new alternatives in understanding hadith as a relevant source of Islamic teachings for their times. The importance of contextuality becomes a key element in their hermeneutics of hadith, and both employ a critical and interdisciplinary approach in interpreting hadith, utilizing various disciplines such as history, anthropology, semiotics, linguistics, philosophy, and sociology.

Thus, while Arkoun and Shahrur share similarities in perceiving the need for innovation and interdisciplinary approaches, the fundamental difference lies in the orientation of their methods, focus of criticism, and scope of their Islamic thought. Arkoun is more prominent in the scientific and general historical aspects of Islam, while Shahrur is more focused on reinterpreting religious texts in a modern context.

### C. Conclusion

The above article discusses the hadith hermeneutics of two figures, Mohammed Arkoun and Muhammad Syahrur, as a new alternative in understanding hadith as a source of Islamic teachings. Both use a critical and interdisciplinary approach, rejecting the traditional literalist and orthodox views and proposing the concept of multiple authorities in interpreting hadith. Arkoun emphasizes historical, anthropological, semiotic, and linguistic aspects in examining hadith, while Shahrur emphasizes universal and contextual aspects in distinguishing hadith. Their ideas offer new alternatives in understanding hadith as the source of Islamic teachings, encouraging the Muslim community to think critically, creatively, and dynamically in interpreting hadith.

The above article discusses understanding the concepts of *al-Ittibā'*, *al-Qudwah*, and *al-Uswah* in Islam, as well as categorizing the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad into two types, namely *al-Sunnah Al-Rasūliyyah* and *al-Sunnah Al-Thā'ah*. In addition, the article also explains that *Al-Ittibā'* does not always have a positive connotation, *al-Qudwah* can apply in good or bad contexts, and *al-Uswah* serves as a guide for good actions. The article also notes that the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad is divided into two types, one related to the laws of God in the Qur'ān, and the other is temporal and applicable only during the Prophet's lifetime. The unique thoughts of Muhammad Shahrur, an intellectual born in Damascus, Syria, on hadith and sunnah are also presented. He argues that hadith is not part of divine revelation and emphasizes the etymological meaning of sunnah as "*something easy and flowing*." In addition, he also discussed the concepts of *al-ittibā'*, *al-qudwah*, and *al-uswah* in the context of their relationship with the sunnah.

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