

ACADEMIC CRIME FOR HUMANITIES: SOME NOTES ON LOGICAL PERCEPTION OF ANTI-HADITH GROUP MOVEMENT

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Abstract

Purpose of this study: This article discusses the basic principles that must be possessed by Muslim scholars to understand knowledge and its sources. The term ‘academic crime’ generally refers to the conduct of a few university lecturers, who violate the ethics and good practices of the teaching profession through the misappropriation of powers or by making false claims. However, academic crimes can also be classified as frauds in publications. Indeed, the ability to reason is one of the things that a person possesses. Nevertheless, it is not absolute, because the Quran and hadith are on the topmost.

Methodology: This study uses the qualitative method and finds excessive rationality by the Anti-Hadith Group (AHG), leading them into a crime, i.e., rejection of the hadith as one of the sources of Islamic law.

Findings: The revelation is believed to be true even though it contains metaphysics (al-ghaibiyat) that cannot be logically explained. Furthermore, in rejecting hadith, the AHG often uses the contradictions between the hadith and the current perspective of life in modern times.

Novelty of study: It is a very serious phenomenon and needs to be dealt with appropriately. This is because arguing rationally as advocated by those who reject the hadith seems very strong and effective in giving the illusion of hadith flaws to the humanity, while it is not so in reality.

Keywords: *Academic Crimes, Anti-Hadith Group (AHG), Hadith, Logic, Perception*

INTRODUCTION

In the history of Islamic scholarship, hadiths are the pioneers of research related to Muslim scholarship ethics based on Islamic moral policies ([Rahim, 2013](#)). There are some writings that focus on this, such as the Akhlaq al-Ulama’ by Abu Bakar Muhammad ibn al-Husain bin Abdullah al-Ajurri (360 AH), al-Faqih wa al-Mutafaqih and al-Jami’ li Akhlak al-Rawi wa Adab al-Sami by Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (463 AH) and Jami’ Bayani al-‘Ilm wa al-Fadliḥ by Ibn ‘Abd al-Bar al-Qurtubi (463 AH) among others. Islamic ethics are closely related to the quality and the truth of knowledge. In fact, especially in the field of hadith, the Muslim scholars are particularly concerned about ethical and moral importance in assessing a hadith and its narrators ([Hallaq, 1999](#)). This is evident in the emergence of a special science in the hadith knowledge known as al-Jarh wa al-Ta’dil ([Basir & Alias, 2012](#)). It is an illustration of how Islam emphasizes on morals, ethics, procedures, and discipline, especially in criticizing a narrator.

Such ethics and practices are inherent because Islam has put great importance to the knowledge and glorification of scholars ([Hashim, 1999](#); [Rosenthal, 2007](#)). However, it is worth remembering that anyone who wish to claim to be a Muslim scholar must base his knowledge with clear faith and understanding of the Quran and al-Sunnah. They must be pious, have a high level of Islamic piety (taqwa) and sincere intentions, humble to the knowledge they possess, open to dissent if it does not contradict with unambiguous (qat’i) arguments, immediately return to truth in case of making mistakes, avoid useless debate, and must be fastidious in holding on to the right way and methodology in understanding knowledge ([Alatas, 2006](#)).

Glorifying excessive rationale and logics by Muslim scholars leads to the rejection of the two main sources (al-Quran and al-Sunnah), because both contain many metaphysics elements that cannot be explained with just reason and logic. If one is still insisting on the greatness of reasoning, it produces entities, such as the Anti-Hadith group (AHG), which use rationale and logical reasoning to reject hadith ([Zarif, 2016](#)).

The Position of Reason or Rationale in Islam

Reason is an advantage that Allah has given to humans, an ability that distinguishes humans from animals and other creatures ([Khan & Sheikh, 2012](#)). Reason is often associated with rationality. Rationality is any opinion that can be

accepted by reason as a source of knowledge or justification. Logic is something that is reasonable. Therefore, something rational is that a given knowledge or justification must be accepted by reason. Thus, it can be observed that rationale or logic ultimately reverts to reason. This is the Western definition of reason. The reason in Islam is also a light in the heart that is useful for knowing truth and falsehood (Al Seini, 1986), organizing, and controlling the body. Therefore, reason not only has the power of thinking rationally but the reason has the spiritual side and controls the rational thinking power and determines the highest level that can be achieved (Hassan, 2016). It is therefore understandable that reason is not the highest source of knowledge in Islam, since the Quran is the main reference of Muslims in every thought and action (Alrabiah, et al., 2014). Al-Sunnah is the second source, either as a reference in understanding the Quran or a reference alone in solving certain cases (Hasan, 2000). Both are revelations of the notification of a matter from Allah to His prophets either through true dreams, direct conversations behind the hijab, coming like a bell or bee flock or an angel, who resembles man (al-Qattan, 2000).

As a text, the Quran requires the creative effort of the human mind to reveal (al-kashf), explaining (al-idah) and elucidating (al-ibanah) the meaning hidden behind the Arabic alphabet so as to fit what Allah the Almighty wants in the scope of human capacity (Hodri, 2013). Therefore, Islam is a religion that does not reject the use of reason as one of the factors of knowledge enrichment (Tober & Budiani, 2007). The science of Islam is in integrated form, i.e. individual duty (fardu ain) knowledge such as faith, worship, ethics, spreading Islamic mission, and others. Additionally, the communal responsibility (fardu kifayah) knowledge are such as science, literature, mathematics, technology, communication, medicine, construction and others that use reason as its main source. Islam is a religion of nature that values the mind (Surah al-Nahl verse 67). However, human beings have limited knowledge and limited senses (Surah al-Isra' verse 85).

As a result, Islam never rejects the logic or reason and even considers health and perfection of reason in the definition of Islamic law. The reason is also celebrated when its function is used by Islamic Jurists, which is the use of reason in the study of law, which is not clear in al-Quran and al-Sunnah. In fact, more than that, reason is also used in the recitation of analogical deduction (qiyas), consensus (ijma'), juristic preference (istihsan), benefit (maslahah), and others.

Reason and Rationale as a Source of Knowledge in Islam

Basically, the logic or rationale in Islam is part of its knowledge based on two types of arguments, namely, revelation (naqli) and reason (aqli) (Niyozov & Memon, 2011). It is then used by Islamic scholars to develop or disseminate Islamic knowledge. This reason-based discussion has long existed in every branch of Islamic knowledge, i.e., faith (aqidah), Islamic law (fiqh), or interpretation (tafsir). This clearly shows that in Islam, any argument about knowledge is required to refer to revelation even though the role of senses and thoughts is also acknowledged. This means that any discussion on matters, such as belief in Allah or in the Prophets, is always done by rationalization based on revelation, i.e., the Quran and al-Sunnah before focusing on the reason/mind. In the discussion of Islamic law, the writings of Islamic scholars are also based on logic. Therefore, the field of Islamic law has always begun with the explanation of concepts, applications on principles, mandatory requirements, and legal wisdom (Hassan, 2017).

'Ulum al-Hadith is one of the Islamic sciences that celebrate logical reasoning in several matters, such as in determining continuous and consecutive hadith (mutawatir), the approval criteria of the hadith narrative from hadith narrator (rawi), and others. It is a knowledge of high virtue because it distinguishes Muslims from other communities and is important for human civilization (Karim & Hazmi, 2005), because it is a science characterized by accuracy in certain matters and emphasizes on originality and authenticity as well as it moves with time. It is not a knowledge developed on the basis of one's faith of the supernatural or on the basis of good assumptions, but rather it is a stipulation based on reason, accurate historical information, comparisons between narrations (comparative studies), and others, which all goes back to the nature of human reason. For example, there are hadiths that have a broken chain of narrative (sanad), requiring a vigorous sense of thought (reasoning) to induce a sense of suspicion or a sense of rejection (not accepting the hadiths' narration because of the broken chain of the hadith's narrator). If there is no narrator who conveys the news from the original source due to broken sanad, then how can we accept the hadith? Likewise, with the rejection of untrustworthy and dishonest narrators or those who have reputations for their dubious personal characters or had narrated hadiths which contain many errors, then it is natural for human reason to reject such hadiths (Abu al-Layth, 2003, 14).

In fact, over 90% of hadith evaluation knowledge is based on logical reasoning. This is because the Islamic scholars who study hadith consider many logical factors in accepting the authenticity of a hadith (Baraka & Dalloul, 2014). Then, the rational procedure and methodology were developed as a guide in assessing the sanad and texts of the hadith along with the narrators of the hadith itself. The Quran itself emphasizes on the credibility aspect of the person in bringing news

(Surah al-Hujurat verse 6). If there are people who say Islam does not support the role of reason, then it is a mistake. 'Ulum al-Hadith is a proof of the blunder because whoever studies this knowledge in depth will understand that it really supports the role of reason in the development of its proposals, fundamentals, terms, and conditions. This is similar in other Islamic sciences such as tafsir, fiqh, Sufism (tasawuf) and others.

The issue arises when there is a clash between reason and revelation; then automatically, the priorities and roles of reason will change. This is a fact that will not change because the most important source of Islamic knowledge is revelation, followed by reason, instinct, senses and inspiration. Therefore, if the reason does not clash with revelation, then it remains an important tool for understanding Islam (Amin, Yusoff & Amri, 2018). Thus, this is where the role of reason differs between Islam and the West. The West sees that any religious factor will be rejected as an argument because it cannot be proved by reason, rationale, and scientific proof. It is based on the view of what exists and rejects the unseen. Therefore, the emphasis and priority are on reason, instinct, senses, and inspiration. This is totally different from Islam as mentioned earlier.

Consequently, this leads to different classifications of knowledge between the two. Islamic knowledge is based on the virtues of the Quran and al-Sunnah, while the West only sees it in terms of worldly interest (Husin, 2009). Here it shows the advantages of a more integrated and organized Islamic science in successfully merging the knowledge of revelation and logics. The aim of the knowledge of the West is to produce citizens who are beneficial for the nation. Therefore, religion has no special value and position among people. Their scientists are separated from religion and the knowledge spread is solely based from reason, and learning institutions are built to generate good citizens for the state. In Islamic civilization, the value and position of religion are different. Religion is at the highest and the most special position, which is unquestionable and portrayed through everyday practices in the form of worship. It also covers all aspects of life, such as politics, economy, law, and education (Yassin, 2014).

It is understandable that there is a significant difference between the aim and direction of knowledge and the role of religion between Islamic and Western civilizations. Significant differences can also be seen in their ethics, values, philosophy, and methodology. It is therefore wrong to use the Western methodology to understand the source of knowledge in Islam, or force others to accept the methodology. Unfortunately, this is what AHG practices to confuse Muslims about the role and position of hadiths as the second source in Islam after the Quran.

Use of Reason and Rationale: Academic Crime by AHG

The belief of Muslim scholars or scientists that rationally generated submissions are the most potent and critical is a mistake as it still relies on the framework of thought and method adopted in a tradition of specialized knowledge practices like the Islamic studies. If contradictory and not parallel, the impact will be controversial and misunderstood, and even reversed. Excessive use of reason or rational in understanding the Quran and al-Sunnah will develop into rationalism, which is a logical understanding (Saeed, 1999). This term is used for some connotations, such as the understanding that all that exists has a cause of its existence; that science must be based on logical principles; reason is something that must exist in doing any experiment; absolute conviction of intellect and its ability to seek the truth; as well as human beliefs must be in accordance with the law of reason (Hasbi, 2013).

The mistakes in understanding the Qur'an and al-Sunnah wrongly have been done by AHG for so long. AHG's actions in understanding Quran and al-Sunnah (which have al-ghaibiyat characteristics) and in using only rationale are completely irrational. It can be regarded as an academic crime that needs immediate correction. The first academic crime committed by AHG is in placing reason at the highest place, i.e., when something goes against reason, then it will be rejected. Islam teaches its followers to reject anything illogical to the human mind. But the teachings of Islam never tell us Muslims to idolize the use of reason more than the Quran and hadith. Similarly, misusing the reason by thinking and assessing something unseen is prohibited. Similarly, not all things or matters that are strange in reason, they must be rejected. Is it not in the Quran that there are many strange things in reason; for example, the story of the Prophet John AS being swallowed by a fish and still lives in it (Surah al-Anbiya' verse 87), the story of Ashab al-Kahfi who sleeps for 300 years (Surah al-Kahfi verse 25), the actual pattern of the journey of the Isra' and Mikraj (Surah al-Isra' verse 1), and so forth.

AHG also calls to focus on thought or rational interpretation of the Quran. There is no doubt that the rational use of reason in interpreting the text of the Quran has become the official practice of commentators. However, it is not an excuse for commentators to use rationality according to personal and reckless tendencies. Instead, the commentators have mastered every branch of rational knowledge required in interpreting the Quran. The Quran and its style of language cannot be explained and understood completely by its meaning through translation alone. This is because the Quran has its own meaning and arrangement. In fact, it also has a second meaning, which can be understood through its

beautiful style arrangement ([Abbas, 2010](#)). Using the rationale of reason only in the interpretation of the Quran without reference to the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad will certainly deviate from the true meaning. This is because there are so many facts and unseen things that cannot be understood by the human mind, such as the events of Ashab al-Kahfi, the Day of Judgment, the history of the past societies, and the like. There are even Quranic verses in the form of hints and stories and can only be understood through the words of the Prophet Muhammad SAW himself (Surah al-A'raf verse 54). Anything that comes from the Prophet is the truth because the hadith is not like a normal human conversation, which contains mistakes, slip-ups, or inaccuracies. He is also a person who cannot be compared with another human, as his words are virtuous. Comparing him with other humans means rejecting the verses of the Quran (Surah Ali 'Imran verse 14).

The other mistake of AGH is during the considering of hadith as anti-intellect, because there is a text on hadith prohibiting the interpretation of the Quran by using logical reasoning ([Wazir, Usman, Syopiyan & Nasir, 2017](#)). The hadith that forbids interpreting the Quran using logical reasoning is as follows:

“And whoever says (something) about the Quran with his mind alone, then let him take his seat from the fire of hell”. [Al-Tirmidhi, Sunan al-Tirmidhi, Kitab Tafsir al-Quran ‘An Rasulillah, Bab Ma Ja’a Fi Allazi Yufassir al-Quran bi Ra’yih, no. 2952]

The Prophet Muhammad prohibitions were directed to those who interpreted the Quran based on their own views. This is because, in order to interpret the Quran, one must master some knowledge disciplines to avoid making mistakes in understanding the Quranic message. In fact, the above hadiths did not contain any restrictions on using reason as they were meant to be “without knowledge”. The Prophet Muhammad never prohibited the use of reason. This is because the Prophet really understands the potential of reason in building knowledge discipline, which started with his companions. Among them are:

“Think about God’s creations and do not think about Allah, you will perish”. [Abu Abd Al-Rahman al-Salmi, Ahadith fi al-Zam al-Kalam wa Ahlihi, Bab fi Darb al-Badanah wa Khatmiha wa Zimamiha, no 1]

Similarly, the Prophet acknowledged intellectuals’ ability of organizing and managing their daily lives. This is evidenced in the story of fertilization of palm trees, as narrated by Anas bin Malik RA:

“The Prophet happened to pass by the people who had been busy in grafting the palm trees. Thereupon he said: ‘If you were not to do it, it might be good for you. (Hence, they abandoned this practice) and there was a decline in the yield. He (the Holy Prophet) happened to pass by them (and said): What has gone wrong with your palm trees? They said: You said so and so. Thereupon he said: You have better knowledge (of a technical skill) in the affairs of the world” [Muslim, Sahih Muslim Kitab al-Fadhail, Wujub Imtithal Ma Qalahu Syar’an chapter, no 4365]

Hence, there is no issue of hadith as being anti-intellectual, where there are many hadiths that encourage Muslims to think and explore various branches of knowledge ([Jouili & Amir-Moazami, 2008](#)) to strengthen their belief in Allah.

Other crimes and mistakes of AHG are the slogans that are often applauded in their writings and their provocations, which are the predominance of the hadith which is said to be “contradictory” to the verses of the Quran and being “lame” in the argument, which ultimately causes the hadith to be rejected by its own self. The allegations are reinforced with certain passages of the Quranic verses and Islamic and Western scientific sources. It is “rationally” discussed to give a strong implication and impact on the reader as if the hadith was against the modern human way of life and should be rejected ([Zarif, 2016](#)).

In fact, their arguments are lame, disorganized, and even contradicting with the verses of the Quran itself ([Usman, Wazir & Ismail, 2017](#)). For example, the AHG denunciation of the fact that the Prophet Jesus did not die, but was elevated to the sky is stated in the hadith of the Prophet. For them, this is a statement contrary to their logic of reason. Thus, what is their reaction to the Quranic verses as in Surah Ali Imran verse 55 and al-Nisa’ verse 158?

Inadvertently, AHG’s eagerness in rejecting hadiths on the grounds that it is contrary to reason is clearly a rejection of the Quranic verse itself. Thus, where is the position of reason in this? If AHG still puts reason as their main rationale, then this means that AGH not only rejects hadiths, but also rejects the Quran ([Wazir, Usman, Sudi & Rahman, 2018](#)). The next example is the rejection of AHG on the forthcoming of Dajjal and Imam Mahdi, which are specified in the hadiths of the Prophet on the grounds that it is a myth and makes no sense. Consequently, the hadith must be rejected because it conflicts with reason. It is true that the fact of the Dajjal and Imam Mahdi is not stated in the Quranic verses, but if the “myth” or “unreasonable” reason is used to reject the hadith, then how does the Quranic verse refer to more

incidences of “myths” that make no sense? and among them is the arrival of Yakjuj and Makjuj (al-Anbiya verse 96). Similarly, the story of al-Kahfi youth who slept without eating and drinking for 300 years in a cave is clearly contradicting to the logic and rationale of human reason (surah al-Kahfi verse 25).

CONCLUSION

The academic crimes committed by the AHG are contrary to the principles, policies, ethics, and methodologies of Islamic science. It is impossible that they can understand the Quran and al-Sunnah in the right way if they are using other approaches, especially with the Western approach, which turns out to be contradictory. By putting knowledge, rationality, and logic before understanding the legal and Islamic law resources, AGH not only fails to accurately understand the hadith, but also directly rejects the Quran, which is supposed to be their main mission. This unhealthy academic development is to some extent damaging the world’s perceptions of scholars’ integrity in Malaysia. Even if one has a very impressive idea, if it contradicts even with one of the absolute sources of law in Islam, then our academic community will not be in the international arena. Interestingly, these academic crimes against humanity are not an offense that can be charged according to the national law. Hence, increasing violations of academic ethics can be witnessed in various forms.

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