THE FABRICATED HADITH: ISLAMIC ETHICS AND GUIDELINES OF HADITH DISPERSION IN SOCIAL MEDIA

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ABSTRACT

The fabricated hadith is the least recognized hadith in Islam. The scholars are in unison in their decision to reject this hadith besides forbidding it from being narrated without stating its status. The main corruption of fabricated hadith is its false justification against the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). The falsification of hadith caused a negative effect on many aspects such as faith, religious law and acts of worship. Furthermore, the number of fabricated hadiths are increasing from day to day. This chilling reality is becoming a concern when the dispersion of such hadiths with the application of the latest technology we have today. The dispersion of fabricated hadiths through social media has become a new threat that must be seriously combatted by new-age Muslims, especially in the matters of awareness, knowledge, ethics, and moral that are possessed by all individuals. This article will stress on the history and falsification factors of the hadith as well as analysing the dispersion trends through a more sophisticated medium and suggesting several guidelines to inhibit it from spreading further.

Keywords: *Hadith, Fabricated, Social Media, Society, Islamic Ethics*

INTRODUCTION

The All Muslims have agreed that hadith is the second Islamic source after the Quran (Reinhart, 1983). It contains the words, actions, admittance, and the character traits of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), his inborn goodness and morality that become a source of explaining and justifying the contents of the Quran completely and in-depth beside all other aspects of Islamic affairs.

However, not all hadiths that are conveyed to Muslims today are recognized or categorized under the group of hadith that is well received by them. Among them, *da'if* hadith (weak) and cause the scholars who accept them to blunder. There are also hadith which is known as *mawdu'* (fabricated) or made-up and manipulated fabricated hadith which is credited to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) for specific purposes. They are the worst kind of hadith. Those who are in agreement stated that manipulation of the prophet is the most serious sin that can be committed and consequently, resulted to eternal damnation (Abdul Sukor, 2008).

The worrying concern right now is the dissemination of several fabricated hadith. The accurate numbers are yet to be determined. A few scholars are making the effort to collect and mention a number of fabricated and *da'if* hadiths in their publications. For example, in view of al-Albany, there are almost 1000 fabricated and *da'if* hadiths, while Imam al-Suyuti mentioned that there are 4000 fabricated and *da'if* hadiths (Geissinger, 2011). Thus, the study of fabricated hadith are conducted across the centuries, including today and are carried out at all Muslim populations worldwide. Furthermore, there are various studies focused on fabricated hadiths being conducted recently in Malaysia as well as in Indonesia, which act as an awareness campaigns to Muslims. Hence, this article aims to expose the fabricated hadith, its influence and its deadly effects to the minds and lives of Muslims.

THE FABRICATED HADITH: HISTORY AND DISPERSION FACTORS

The fabricated hadith can also be referred to as statements that are falsely made and made up to be related to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and this type of hadith is among the worst and most objectionable ones that have ever been narrated ('Ali Jum'ah, 2005; Kamali, 2014).

The study of fabricated hadith have been carried out and conducted by many researches especially among the Islamic religious scholars. Generally, the Science of Hadith is written to counter the widespread fabricated hadith. The uncontrollable spreading of these hadiths began during the rule of Caliph Umar Ibn Abdul Aziz. The timespan between the death of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and the publishing of hadiths gave an opportunity for certain individuals to falsify the hadiths (Bounhas et al., 2015).

The spreading of fabricated hadiths began after the murder of the third of the Great Caliphs, 'Uthman Ibn al-Affan (al-Khair Abadi, 2011). According to the religious scholars, they become widely accepted during the political dispute between the fourth caliph, 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib and Mu'awiyah Ibn Abi Suffiyan. Their respective supporters have done everything to appease them, creating fabricated hadiths included (Alamsyah, 2013).

There are many falsification efforts that are related to politics. The study proved that after the murder of 'Uthman, many groups who tried to appease their own people by making up many kinds of hadiths (Qasmi, 2009), especially among the 'Ali supporters, the Shiites, and the Khawarijs. The impact of this collision is the existence of the fabricated hadiths that continue to linger in the lives of Muslims then and continues on until today.

The factors leading to the creation of fabricated hadiths are many fold. The creation of such hadiths are due to many factors and the main one is the attack by the enemies of Islam that are always on the lookout for opportunities to corrupt the minds and principles of Muslims. During the time of the Companions and the Followers of the Companions, most of the hadiths collected are for different purposes and intentions until it becomes difficult to differentiate them as being sourced from the Prophet (pbuh) or not. Due to the fact that the narration is for different purposes, hadiths forgers can easily create many fabricated hadiths in the aim of fulfilling certain purposes until they can influence the behaviors of Muslims (Aslamiah, 2017).

The Muslim who forged the hadiths are driven by many reasons. The purpose of them falsify the hadiths must be of worldly and otherworldly reasons. Among the factors that contribute to the falsification of hadiths by Muslims are to preserve political interest, theological and legal disputes, to attract the public's sympathy, to arouse passion in worship toward the efforts of being closer to Allah, to explain the prioritization of certain verses, to find position for rulers, to obtain worldly comfort and win the hearts of the public (Usman, 2009).

There are several factors of hadith falsification identified by the religious scholars of fabricated hadiths. The study proved that the internal crisis of Muslims due to differences in political beliefs efforts of the defeated groups to denigrate the Islamic teachings, the action of Muslims to encourage more people to embrace Islam through fabricated hadiths, to gain worldly fame such as becoming a favorite or the confidante of rulers and other unavoidable factors such as blindness (Emon, 2012).

THE FABRICATED HADITH: THE DEADLY VIRUS IN THE TREASURY OF ISLAMIC KNOWLEDGE

The fabricated hadith is a part of an effort to denigrate and reduce the authority of hadiths. The dispersion of fabricated hadiths did not affect the earlier generations of Muslims but they do affect all Muslims, in general, which was the phenomenon of the time (Yahya & Hasan, 2014).

The dispersion of fabricated hadiths can affect greatly to Muslims in all aspects especially in faith, law, moral, acts of worship and others (Al-Qaradawi, 2007). Furthermore, there are many fabricated hadiths that are closely related to non-Islamic faiths. This hadith causes Muslims to be weak and remain retrogressed since they fully reject anything worldly. This weakens the status of Muslims and make them unfit to compete with followers of other faiths in all aspects of life since they are focus more on the otherworldly gains and neglect all worldly matters. Besides, it weakens the mind since they only care over matters that do not bring them any benefits or gain. Moreover, believing in such hadiths can destroy faith and weakens the content of the Quran and credible hadiths. The worst effect of fabricated hadiths is the confusion they bring to Muslims and consequently, corrupt their faith.

Hence, if these fabricated hadiths continue to be spread and accepted widely, the purity of Islam may be compromised (Reinhart, 1983). There are several methods used by hadith forgers in creating the offprint for these hadiths. The evidenced show that forgers making up the words themselves and find a connection to the sayings of the Prophet (pbuh). Besides, these forgers quoted words from scholars or others and connect it to the sayings of the Prophet (pbuh) (Kamali, 2014).

In relation to this, the connection of narrator is crucial in determining the status of the hadith. The study proved that every fabricated hadith is created and spread by false narrators (Saptu et. al., 2015; Sookhdeo, 2006). Therefore, there is contribution and a role to be played by religious scholars in order to combat the dispersion of fabricated hadiths. The study discovered the many publishing written by religious scholars that are aimed to combat the dispersion of these hadiths (Afriзал, 2013). In addition, there are a few ways to be used to inhibit the dispersion of fabricated hadiths (Aslamiah, 2017). The evidence to the efforts made in inhibiting the dispersion of these hadiths including investigating the narrator's connection to the prophet, to solidify and strengthen hadiths as a whole, investigate the thread of narrators that provide honest statement and setting general methods to be used by hadith experts to classify a hadith.

THE FABRICATED HADITH: IMMUNISATION TOWARD ITS DISPERSION IN SOCIAL MEDIA

Since a few years back, social media platforms such as *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *YouTube*, and others started to bring extraordinary influences and become an integral part of our lives. It cannot be denied that social media plays a significant role in our daily lives. The influence of social media toward mankind includes various aspects of life and can even influence legal and governmental decisions (Grim et al., 2012).

There are a few factors that drive social media to expand and among them are to help humans stay connected more efficiently, free usage, functions as a lucrative online business opportunities, tool of information, preaching tool, becomes a platform for unity, perfect for group discussions, tool for dissemination of news, easy to manage and others (Amanullah, 2015).

In reality, social media is beneficial if managed well. However, there is a negative side to it that cannot be controlled. A study showed the negative side of social media that must be made aware to all parties such as the reality that media make humans become ignorant, less sensitive, mentally disturbed and weakens the memory of users. It is also manipulative and promotes fear (Duivestein & Bloem, 2013). It cannot be denied that social media provides a good platform for the dispersion of knowledge and religious teachings (Stout, 2013) as well as hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). With a sense of awareness and responsibility, many are excited to spread the hadiths widely with the hope it can bring mutual goodness. However, in their excitement, they fail to notice that they are becoming spreading agents of fabricated hadiths. Good intentions and purpose and can turn into a nightmare if there is lack of awareness and ethics, thus causing the fabricated hadith to be spread all over the social media.

In reference to cases in Malaysia, there are a group of people that blindly accepts anything that is claimed to be hadiths. The so-called hadiths will be taken and digested. A growing concern is the existence of a variety of fabricated hadiths that can be found on the internet and chat rooms. It becomes more complicated when these hadiths become a part of the community and are always being quoted with confidence by highly qualified individuals in religious matters or preachers on TV or radio (Ariffin et al., 2016).

ISLAMIC ETHICS AND GUIDELINES OF HADITH DISPERSION IN SOCIAL MEDIA

These fabrication of hadiths that are being spread widely in social media usually have an interesting aspect that are able to attract the attention of users. They do not care of the status of such hadiths since they are more concern of justifying and fulfilling their personal and private desires. Besides, these hadiths are seen to be interesting, realistic and timely to the current hot topic discussed at the time, without precaution, it will continue to be spread and talked about.

There are several methods and guidelines that must be followed to ensure that the dispersion of such

fabricated hadith can be handled well. The first matter that must be stressed in “*don't believe in anything too quickly*”. It is not wrong to think many times before deciding to share since the negative effects of one simple mistake of sharing wrong information are clear and obvious. The fabricated hadith is not usually accompanied by a clear source, the narration and status are not mentioned, appears awkward, insensible, long winded, oppose the fundamentals of Islam and the explanation on a matter is over the top. In short, if there is even a slightest doubt, it is advisable to ignore the hadith.

The second matter is to “*make sure before sharing*”. Before clicking the *forward* or *share* or *copy and paste* button, check the status of the hadith first. Spreading false information is already seen as a serious offense, imagine the effects of spreading the fabricated hadith (Baru et. al., 2017). Ask the opinion of experts and knowledgeable individuals about the status of a hadith. If they cannot provide you with a convincing answer, ignore to talk on this hadith. In short, to ignore is better than to spread it.

The third matter is “*to admit mistake*”. If it is known that the hadith received is fabricated, it becomes a responsibility to inform the person who is spreading it. In fact, warn others not to spread it. If we are open to receive and accept advice, we will think twice before sharing a hadith blindly. Even though new media is admittedly help to convenient users, the biggest challenge that awaits its users are religious identification, integrity, internal control focus, and users' self-efficacy (Adam et. al., 2015). Hence, all social media users must be made aware of this challenge and take them seriously so the fabricated hadith will not spread easily in the community.

CONCLUSION

The fabricated hadith is a problem that has been a long-time grievance by Muslims. Its form that is similar to accepted hadiths made it harder for Muslims to differentiate them until there are individuals who believe and uphold the hadiths as well as practicing them. This is due to the lack of understanding and knowledge of these hadiths that made them easily influence the minds of Muslims. Consequently, they remained till today even though they started centuries ago. Therefore, the studies on fabricated hadiths must always be carried out by Muslims in order to preserve the purity and authority of the Prophet's hadiths as the second Islamic source to Muslims.

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