

<b><a href="https://doi.org/10.24035/ijit.26.2024.308">https://doi.org/10.24035/ijit.26.2024.308</a></b>			
Received:	14 Feb. 2024	Accepted:	21 August 2024
Revised:	2 July 2024	Published:	15 December 2024
Volume:	26 (Dec.)	Pages:	136-145
<b>To cite:</b> Sevdenu Alhattab & Khairil Husaini Jamil. 2024. Exploring the impact of scientific advancements on hadith commentaries. <i>International Journal of Islamic Thought</i> . Vol. 26 (Dec.): 136-145.			

## Exploring the Impact of Scientific Advancements on Hadith Commentaries

SEVDENUR ALHATTAB & KHAIRIL HUSAINI JAMIL<sup>1</sup>

### ABSTRACT

*This article examines the complex relationship between scientific advances and the interpretation/commentary of hadith, or the sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad in Islam. The historical context of hadith commentaries is investigated, with a focus on the evolution of interpretive traditions from simple explanations to comprehensive works. The research ultimately focuses on the paradigm shift in hadith commentary influenced by early modern reformist orientations that sought to reconcile Islamic teachings with contemporary scientific knowledge. A case study examines the emergence of scientific interpretation by analysing a hadith from Sahih Muslim in light of modern scientific understanding. The article discusses the difficulties and controversies surrounding the integration of scientific data into hadith commentaries, emphasizing the dynamic nature of science as well as the distinct epistemological origins of hadith and science. It concludes by proposing a dynamic approach to the study of hadith and its commentaries, allowing for the re-evaluation of approaches in light of evolving scientific knowledge.*

**Keywords:** *Contemporary hadith interpretation, hadith, hadith commentaries, modern science, scientific advance.*

The interpretation and explanation of the sayings, deeds, and endorsements of Prophet Muhammad, known as hadith, is known as hadith commentary (*sharh al-hadith*). It entails delving into the text, chain of narration (*isnad*), context, linguistic nuances, and legal implications of a hadith. Some argue that hadith commentaries assist in clarifying the meanings of the hadith (-Hadith is used in both the singular and the plural, as is English convention) because the language used in the Prophet's sayings may require further elaboration or interpretation due to the language is a phenomenon that develops and transforms over time. Additionally, some argue that hadith commentaries are required not only to clarify the meanings of the Prophet's sayings but also to address potential contradictions between hadith and madhhab, or variations in practices. They are written works that seek to provide a more in-depth understanding of the hadith literature, its meaning, and its application in various aspects of Islamic law, ethics, and

<sup>1</sup>**Sevdenu Alhattab\*** (*Corresponding Author*), Ph. D. Research Scholar, Abdul Hamid AbuS ulayman Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia, Jln. Gombak, 53100 Kuala Lumpur, MALAYSIA. Email: s.kaya@live.iium.edu.my [ORCID iD: 0000-0002-0930-3580].

**Khairil Husaini Jamil.** Assistant Professor, AbdulHamid AbuSulayman Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia. Jln Gombak, 53100 Kuala Lumpur, MALAYSIA. Email: husaini@iium.edu.my [ORCID iD: 0000-0002-9102-7262].

spirituality. These commentaries are valuable resources for scholars, students, and general readers interested in studying and comprehending Islamic teachings. Furthermore, commentaries investigate the hadiths' legal, theological and ethical implications. They look at how the Prophet's teachings can be applied to different aspects of personal and communal life, such as worship, social interactions, family matters, business transactions, and governance. To create comprehensive frameworks for Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and derive legal rulings (*fatwas*), Islamic legal scholars consult hadith commentaries.

Expectedly, the development of modern science left a tremendous impact on hadith commentary. Scholars were forced to contend with fresh problems and issues within their interpretive frameworks as scientific knowledge increased and new discoveries were made. New insights brought about by scientific developments called for the revision and re-evaluation of some hadiths. Commentators began to give serious thought to whether the hadith was consistent with scientific discoveries, which sparked new disputes and disagreements.

For instance, changes in astronomy and cosmology spurred scholars to re-evaluate hadiths on celestial occurrences and cosmogony. They worked to bring together new scientific knowledge and conventional beliefs. Similarly, progress in medicine and biology raised questions about the application and interpretation of hadiths concerning health and the human body.

The interplay between scientific advancements and hadith commentaries demonstrates the dynamic nature of the interpretive tradition. This study emphasises how extraneous influences, such as advancements in science, can affect how hadiths are understood and reinterpreted. Scholars' commentarial viewpoints altered as a result of the intellectual difficulties posed by scientific discoveries, influencing the conversation surrounding hadith interpretation.

Recent scientific developments have had an impact on various fields, including Islamic knowledge and the study of hadith and its commentaries. These developments have stimulated the study of the hadith and its commentary from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. Scholars now draw upon diverse fields such as sociology, anthropology, psychology, history, and cognitive sciences to explore the socio-cultural context, human behaviour, and cognitive processes related to the interpretation of hadith literature.

This article examines how scientific advancements impact the interpretation of hadith, exploring how new discoveries, technology, and knowledge shape our understanding of hadith today. It looks into the effects of scientific development on hadith studies, including how it can offer fresh perspectives, and support or refute interpretations. Emphasizing the dynamic relationship between scientific advancement and hadith interpretation, the article seeks to answer the question of whether it is possible to have a full understanding of the scriptures in light of recent scientific advancement. In addition, this study addresses the impact measurement methodology by examining linguistic shifts within hadith commentaries. Specifically, it notes that the replacement or augmentation of traditional vocabulary and phrases with scientific terminology is a crucial indicator of how scientific advancements have evolved and affected hadith interpretation.

### **Historical Context of Hadith Commentaries**

Hadith commentaries, commonly known as *sharh* or *shuruh* (plural) in Arabic, reveal a rich tradition of scholarly engagement and intellectual growth. Individual hadiths or entire collections of hadiths are thoroughly explained, analysed, and discussed in the commentaries on hadith literature. Similar to how hadith compilations developed, hadith commentaries moved from straightforward explanations to more complex and thorough works as the body of hadith literature expanded.

The tradition of hadith commentary is directly related to the efforts to understand and comprehend the hadiths and has been serving the understanding of hadiths continuously since the fourth century of the Islamic calendar. Early commentaries primarily aimed to clarify the meaning and context of hadiths. They were relatively simple and focused on explaining the hadiths. Clarification remarks were included in hadith transmissions, and al-Bukhari, the compiler of *Sahih al-Bukhari*, added chapter headers. Grammarians and philologists also authored commentary to explain the names and phrases found in difficult hadiths.

The first systematic commentary on *Sahih al-Bukhari*, attributed to Hamd ibn Muhammad al-Khattabi, emerged in the fourth century (AH). This commentary defended theological and legal perspectives through theological polemics. During this time, commentaries were frequently offered orally or in writing as reference materials. In the seventh through tenth centuries (AH), Egypt and Syria became centres for hadith commentarial activity. *Sahih al-Bukhari* was recited and commented upon annually, often in the presence of the monarch and other prominent people. Interlinear and marginal annotations were provided in the commentary, while separate works examined the organisation and chain of hadiths (Blecher 2017: 6-7).

Prominent scholars throughout history have written significant commentaries on hadiths. For example, al-Nawawi (13th century AH) is renowned for his commentary on *Sahih Muslim*, known as *Sharh Sahih Muslim*. al-Qastallani (15th century AH) wrote a comprehensive commentary on *Sahih al-Bukhari* titled *Irshad al-Sari*. These commentaries explore a variety of hadith-related topics, such as linguistic analysis, the veracity of narrations, potential legal ramifications, and theological debates. They seek to offer a thorough grasp of the hadiths and how they are used in different areas of Islamic law, ethics, and spirituality.

Islamic scholars have created several rules that might be viewed as fundamentals and approaches to understanding and interpretation of hadiths. On this subject, works have been produced and methodologies have been established. One of the two important main branches (*riwayah* and *dirayah*) of hadith sciences constitutes this field. The interpretation of hadiths is based on a series of processes carried out in the text. Any rash interpretation made without conducting these procedures will be flawed and result in incorrect judgments. The following activities are briefly included in the classical books of *shuruh* as ways to comprehend hadiths:

“During the commentary (sharh) of hadiths, analysis of the chain of narrators (isnad) and the text (matn) is conducted. The narrators are presented, and the judgments of experts are expressed regarding their reliability, criticism (jarh), and endorsement (ta’dil). If there are any breaks in the line of narrators, it is indicated. The different isnads (chains of transmission) of the hadiths are typically mentioned, and attention is paid to the changes and errors the hadith narrators made. Consequently, a judgement on the authenticity (Sahih) of the hadith is made. The hadith’s position in the sources is investigated, and various narrations with diverse wording are combined. The text includes explanations for challenging words (gharib) that not everyone will be familiar with. The hadith is investigated from a literary and scholarly standpoint. Regarding hadiths that could appear contradictory, clarification is given, and agreements or preferences are reached. The context (asbab al-wurud) in which the hadith was uttered is identified. Its legal rulings (fiqh) are identified. In short, from the perspectives of gharib al-hadith (rare hadiths), ikhtilaf al-hadith (conflicting hadiths), mushkil al-hadith (difficult hadiths), and fiqh al-hadith (jurisprudence of hadith) are examined in hadith texts. Many other hadiths about the commentary of the hadith are mentioned in commentaries, in addition to the hadiths found in the primary sources.” (Yücel 2013: 108).

The commentaries (*shuruh*) books usually have a very rich bibliography. It is mentioned that Ibn Hajar used more than 1000 sources in his commentary book *Fath al-Bari*. Furthermore, in the commentary of the hadiths, when necessary, various branches of knowledge such as siyar (biographies), history, kalam (theology), geography, medicine, and astronomy have been utilized. The hadiths are evaluated within the framework of the Quran, general principles, relevant narrations, and especially the opinions of the scholars of Islamic jurisprudence (imams of madhabs) (Sakalli 2013: 27).

It is worth mentioning the method applied by Badr al-Din al-‘Ayni (d. 855/1451), one of the most important works in this field, in his book *Umdat al-Qari fi Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari*. In his work, al-‘Ayni provides explanations under about 30 headings related to understanding the hadiths. Apart from the introductory sections dedicated to the initial hadiths, chapter headings, and subtitles (*tarjama*), we can summarize the other headings as follows:

1. *Bayan Ta’allaq al-Hadith bil-Ayah* (بيان تعلق الحديث بالآية) - Explanation of the relationship between the hadith and the Quranic verses.

2. *Bayan Ta'allaq al-Hadith bit-Tarjumah* (بيان تعلق الحديث بالترجمة) - Explanation of the relationship/harmony between the hadith and the given title.
3. *Bayan Rijalihi* (بيان رجاله) - Introduction of the narrators in the chain of the hadith.
4. *Bayan Lata'ifu Isnaduh* (بيان لطائف إسناده) - Explanation of the intricacies of the chain of the hadith.
5. *Bayan man akhraja ghayruhu* (بيان من أخرجه غيره) - Verification of the authenticity of the hadith.
6. *Bayan al-Lughah* (بيان اللغة) - Explanation of the words of the hadith, especially the obscure (*gharib*) ones.
7. *Bayan al-Ma'ani* (بيان المعاني) - Examination of the meaning of the hadith in relation to its context.
8. *Bayan al-Bayan* (بيان البيان) - Explanation of the metaphorical aspects of the hadith.
9. *Bayan al-Badi'* (بيان البديع) - Examination of the literary artistic elements of the hadith.
10. *al-As'ilah wal-Ajwibah* (الأسئلة والأجوبة) - Explanation of the meaning of the hadith and its conflicts with other hadiths through questions and answers.
11. *Istimbat al-Ahkam* (استنباط الاحكام) - Determination of the jurisprudence rulings derived from the hadith.
12. *Fa'idah* (فائدة) - Explanation of the hadith's connection to various topics. (Sakallı 2013: 142-198).

These headings provide a comprehensive approach to the commentary of the hadiths in al-'Ayni's work.

There can be ambiguous and allegorical statements within the hadiths that are not directly understood. The terms "mushkil" and "mutashabih" are used to refer to challenging and confusing hadiths (Itr 1997: 337). Significant efforts have been made to accurately interpret such hadiths, resulting in considerable literature on the subject (Jamil 2017: 209-213). Notable examples are Ibn Qutaybah's (d. 276 AH / 889 CE) *Ta'wil mukhtalif al-hadith*, al-Tahawi's (d. 321/933) *Mushkil al- Athar*, and Ibn Furak's (d. 406/1015) *Mushkil al-hadith* mentioned. The established standards for comprehending such hadiths may be classed as follows: clarification, linguistic conformance, compliance to the Quran and Sunnah, caution, conformity to the essential religious principles, and the concept of significance/benefit (Bodur 2016).

al-Ghazali's treatise titled *Qanun al-Ta'wil* may be given as an example as one of the works that sets some general principles for understanding hadiths that initially seem incomprehensible or give the impression of being contrary to reason. al-Ghazali describes as a middle ground those who seek to reconcile and harmonise both reason and revelation, seeing them as two equal bases. He emphasizes the need to examine reason and revelation together and without giving preference to one over the other, emphasising the optimal technique that incorporates both parts (al-Ghazali 2000: 522-524).

It is essential to follow some key rules founded in the historical background of interpretation studies while engaging in the interpretation of a hadith. In the first place, it is essential to read traditional comments since they provide valuable insights into how to interpret hadiths in light of their historical context. The hadith must be thoroughly investigated within the context of the Quran in order to arrive at a comprehensive understanding. Afterwards, a comprehensive "textual reconstruction" and study of all hadiths on a particular issue contribute to a holistic perspective. In addition, it is crucial for accuracy to examine hadiths utilising the framework of *Mukhtalaf al-hadith* and other time-tested approaches from the area of hadith studies. The significance of context requires a study of the social, geographical, cultural, psychological, and historical circumstances in which the hadiths were composed, as well as the prevailing practises and cultural influences of the time. In the hadith, it is vital to distinguish between variable means and definite aims, and literary techniques must be carefully analysed to distinguish between metaphorical and literal interpretations. Before determining the specific meanings of the words, it is necessary to verify the authenticity of the hadith in terms of its chain of transmitters (*isnad*) and content (*matn*). Last but not least, it is essential to recall that hadiths are transmitted primarily for their intended meanings, highlighting the importance of

understanding the message they convey beyond the specific terminology (Görmez 2000: 203; al-Karadâvi 2009: 209-302; Sakallı 2013: 46).

The interpretation of hadith has seen a notable shift in contemporary times. Modern hadith interpretations frequently lack a standardized approach, in contrast to the classical commentaries which are distinguished by well-established methodologies and thorough scholarly evaluation. Numerous individuals, regardless of their intellectual qualifications, are now able to engage in the interpretation of hadiths due to the accessibility of information through various media platforms. This diversity of interpretations has thus created a substantial misunderstanding problem. In this study, the aim is to investigate the repercussions of scientific advancements on the practice of hadith interpretation. By analysing the contemporary interpretations, we intend to shed light on the evolving dynamics of hadith interpretation within the framework of today's rapidly changing information landscape.

### Paradigm Shift in Hadith Commentary

The way people understand certain hadiths has significantly impacted scientific interpretation, creating a notable distinction between traditional interpretation and this scientific approach. The emergence of scientific interpretation may be attributed to early modern reformist orientations concerning scripture and text (Jamil, 2023, 3:24:53). During this time, reformist scholars attempted to reconcile Islamic teachings with modern knowledge and principles or tested religious texts' accuracy with scientific data. In addition, they emphasised the need for a critical approach to sacred texts and the use of reason and evidence to interpret them in a manner consistent with modern thinking.

Certain reformist directions advocated for a departure from blind adherence to traditional interpretations and a call for a more dynamic and adaptable approach to interpreting religious texts. They advocated using scientific methods to extract meanings from hadiths in an effort to make them more relevant and accessible to contemporary society.

Early modern Muslim reformers emphasised the Quran and the authority of the hadith but questioned the scientific interpretation of the latter. The contact between Muslims and modernity may be traced back to the eighteenth century. Shah Wali Allah al-Dihlawi (1762) and Muhammad ibn `Abd al-Wahhab (1792) stand out in this century with regard to comprehending approaches or orientations to hadith. Some organisations and social movements adhere to the conceptual framework exemplified by these two people.

Due to the large number of early reformer-related movements, it is simply not possible to include them all in the scope of our study. While there is a vast array of individuals deserving of scrutiny, we will largely focus on two schools - the Subcontinent and Egyptian reformist schools - that developed earlier and played a crucial role in defining these discourses and fostering the discussion.

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1898), a prominent Muslim reformist of the nineteenth century, authored works on hadith and Sunnah. The first, *Jila' al Qulub bi Dhikr al Mahbub* (Polishing of the Hearts by Remembering the Beloved), is a pamphlet about the life of the Prophet, compiled in 1842. However, in 1883 he wrote in this work that he did not agree with some of the beliefs he had previously espoused. It is believed that the events of 1857 (-The Indian Rebellion of 1857, also known as the Sepoy Mutiny or the First War of Independence. This was a significant armed uprising against British colonial rule in India that began in 1857. The rebellion had a profound impact on Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and played a crucial role in shaping his subsequent views and perspectives) inspired this and caused a shift in his perspective on hadith and Sunnah in comparison to his prior works (Nizami 1974). In 1849, he published *Kalamat-ul-Haqq* (The True Discourse), a *risala* that critiqued the conventional methods of introducing new entrants into the mystic discipline (Nizami 1974: 90). He maintained that the Prophet was the only legitimate "pir," or spiritual leader. He highlighted the need for complete adherence to the Quran and Sunnah, echoing the Prophet's stance on the Sunnah. According to Khan, the Prophet was the highest authority, transcending the importance of *shuyukh* (spiritual leaders) within *tariqat* or Sufi groups. In the 1859 work *Rah-e Sunnat Dar Radde Bid'at*, written by Syed Ahmad Khan, he

condemned people who deviated from the Prophet's Sunnah (Nizami 1974: 90). He also noted in the preface how he differed from some of the earlier ideas allegedly influenced by Wahhabism.

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's biography, shed light on his religious thought. He held a significant belief that could be considered the fundamental principle of his theology. According to J.M.S. Baljon, "the axiom of his theology" can be summarised by the adage, "The Work of God (Nature and its fixed laws) is identical with the Word of God (Quran)" (Nizami 1974: 95). This notion finds resonance in the ideas put forth by Galileo Galilei, who proposed a similar perspective. Galilei suggested that the Holy Bible and natural phenomena derive from the divine Word. He viewed the Bible as the teachings inspired by the Holy Ghost and, nature as the obedient executor of God's commands (Galilei 1997: 4). This parallel between religious scripture and the natural world can also be found in the writings of earlier Sufi scholars and in contemporary times. (-One notable work that explores the combination of these two perspectives is Taha Jabir Al-Alwani's book titled *Combination Between Two Readings: Reading Revelation And Reading The Universe* (الجمع بين القراءتين- قراءة الوحي وقراءة الكون). Al-Alwani delves into the harmonious relationship between interpreting divine revelation and understanding the universe's workings, emphasising the unity of knowledge and the compatibility between religious insights and scientific observations).

Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1897) criticized Syed Ahmad Khan, accusing him of being a tool for the British and cooperating with their colonial endeavours. Al-Afghani also labelled Khan as one of the proponents of the "*Dahriyya*", associating his naturalist philosophy with ideas closely related to Darwinism. Despite these criticisms, there are notable similarities between their views. While the school of Khan can be characterized as a total adoption of Western science, al-Afghani exhibited a more reserved approach, expressing reluctance to depend on Western science entirely. However, al-Afghani shared a similar notion with Muhammad 'Abduh (1905) and Rashid Riḍa (1935) regarding integrating scientific knowledge into religious discourse. Moving beyond their differences, the Subcontinent and Egyptian reformist schools share common ground in their approach to religious identity, progress, and Reformation. These may be summarised as follows:

1. Identity: Both schools emphasize the Quran and the authority of the tradition. They advocate for a return to the Quran, its reinterpretation, and its implementation in light of a modern understanding. This approach significantly influences their perspectives on the hadith and Sunnah.
2. Progress: Both schools recognize the importance of integrating scientific knowledge. While the school of Khan fully embraces Western science, the reformist figures in Egypt, including al-Afghani, Riḍa, and 'Abduh, speak of integrating scientific knowledge without complete dependence on Western sources.
3. Reformation: Contextualization is another shared aspect. Both schools emphasize the need to understand the context of scriptural texts, including the Quran and the hadith, to engage with them meaningfully in contemporary times (Jamil 2023, 2:51:43).

These three commonalities influence the orientations toward the hadith and Sunnah in reformist schools. While not necessarily stemming directly from the words or teachings of the pioneers, offshoots and branches of these schools sometimes take specific ideas to the extreme.

The Subcontinent and Egyptian reformist schools have contributed to the emergence of Quran absolutism in India and Egypt. The idea of the "Quran alone" propagated by Muhammad Tawfiq Sidqi (1920), drawing inspiration from the emphasis on the Quran and the rejection of blind conformism advocated by Muhammad 'Abduh and his colleagues, has had a notable impact on the understanding and approaches to the hadith. The emphasis on the Quran as the sole source of guidance has influenced some offshoots and branches of these reformist schools to take a more exclusive stance towards the hadith. This approach questions the traditional authority and interpretation of the hadith, prioritizing the Quran as the primary and ultimate source of religious guidance. While the pioneers of the reformist schools may not have directly advocated for the exclusion of the hadith, the "Quran alone" has led to divergent perspectives and varying degrees of reliance on the hadith among their followers. Some have taken this idea to the extreme, diminishing the significance of the hadith in shaping religious understanding and practices.

Recognizing that these developments and interpretations are not universally embraced within the reformist movement is essential. Despite engaging in dialogue and publication with proponents of the “Quran alone” concept, figures like Rashed Riḍa did not fully endorse it (Sidqi 2011). The reformist schools are characterized by diverse opinions and approaches, with some advocating for a balanced understanding of the Quran and the hadith, considering both as valuable sources of guidance.

Another prominent figure in this subject is Tantawi Jawhari (1940), renowned for his Tafseer. Jawhari was influenced by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan’s ideas for integrating science and tradition. His commentary on the Quran included numerous scientific interpretations, making it one of the earliest attempts in the Muslim world to harmonize religious teachings with scientific knowledge.

In conclusion, both the Subcontinent and Egyptian reformist schools have propagated the integration of scientific knowledge, leading to a somewhat adoption of scientific interpretation of scriptures. This integration has given rise to the concept of scientific foreknowledge within the hadith. The idea of scientific prior knowledge may be understood as suggesting that certain hadiths contain notions and theories of science that were stated 1400 years ago but have been discovered and proven in our modern times. This concept highlights the remarkable alignment between the teachings of the hadith and scientific discoveries, presenting it as knowledge ahead of its time (Jamil 2023, 2:51:43).

The scientific foresight must be approached with critical analysis and scholarly investigation. Not every mention of scientific ideas in the hadith is conclusive evidence of foreknowledge. Interpretations and validations of scientific statements in the hadith necessitate thorough analysis and scholarly consensus.

As a result, the reformist influences have brought the scientific interpretation of Hadiths to the forefront, introducing a new perspective to the texts. This approach has enabled a more in-depth examination of the hadiths’ historical background, grammatical intricacies, and potential changes in transmission. Through the application of scientific principles and methods, scholars and researchers have re-evaluated traditional understandings, identified potential inaccuracies or misinterpretations, and gained new insights into the intended teachings of the hadiths.

### Case Study: Applying Scientific Interpretation to Hadiths

In order to comprehend the link between scientific advancements and hadith interpretation, we must examine contemporary interpretations of hadiths. In this section, we will look at a hadith that has been examined through the prism of scientific knowledge, revealing subtle links between the classical period and modern thought. This case study demonstrates the dynamic nature of interpretation by demonstrating how scientific discoveries can cause the interpretations to be re-evaluated. In this case study, centuries-old hadiths are analysed in light of cutting-edge research to examine the interplay between tradition and innovation.

The hadith that will be discussed in this case study is from *Sahih Muslim, Book of Faith (Kitab al-Iman)*, Chapter: Regarding the statement of the Prophet peace be upon him: “Indeed, Allah does not sleep.”: Narrated by Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah and Abu Kurayb, they said: Narrated by Abu Mu’awiyah, who narrated from Al-A’mash, from ‘Amr ibn Murrah, from Abu ‘Ubaydah, from Abu Musa. He said: The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) stood among us and delivered five statements. He said: “Indeed, Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, does not sleep, and it is not befitting for Him to sleep. He lowers the scales and raises them. The deeds of the night are raised up to Him before the deeds of the day, and the deeds of the day before the deeds of the night. His veil is light.” In the narration of Abu Bakr, he said: “If He were to remove His veil, the splendour of His face would burn everything that His sight reaches from His creation.” And in the narration of Abu Bakr from Al-A’mash, he did not say: “He narrated to us.” (Jami’ al-Kutub al-Tis’ah, 1:179 or 1:293, p. 111). (-An electronic application named *Jami’ al-Kutub al-Tis’ah* (جامع الكتب التسعة) was used. *Sahih Muslim*: (179); *Sunan Ibn Majah*: (195, 196); *Musnad Ahmad*: (19530, 19587, 19632).

In this hadith, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) declares the divine attribute that Allah does not sleep. The Prophet's statement highlights the singularity of Allah's nature, emphasising that He is not suited to slumber. The hadith also elaborates on the concept of divine justice, in which the scales of actions are lowered and lifted and the nighttime and daytime deeds are offered before Allah.

This hadith emphasizes Allah's eternal vigilance and His unique nature as the Creator. The reference to lowering and raising the scales of justice signifies His authority over the universe and its affairs. The mention of deeds being presented to Allah during the night and day highlights His continuous awareness and attentiveness to human actions. The concept of Allah's "veil of light" symbolizes His transcendence and the limitations of human understanding in perceiving His essence. Moreover, the imagery of His splendour capable of burning everything conveys the grandeur of His glory.

Saddam Hussein Kazim's work, in which he explores the concept of light and light in the Quran and Sunnah, was discovered while looking for a scientific explanation of this hadith, which is about *Allah's veil of light*. In the third section of his article, he focuses on the physical and optical aspects of light mentioned in the hadith. The discussion includes the concept of veiling (*hijab*) associated with light, emphasising that veiling refers to a covering or obstruction preventing perception or recognition. The author suggests that the concept of light as a veil may be related to light's physical features, such as its density, reflection, wave-particle duality, and hazardous emissions.

The third section of the article begins with an explanation from the Islamic tradition, which the author attributed to al-Maziri (1061 – 1141 CE), wherein the idea that Allah conceals Himself from human perception (Kazem 2020: 111-112). Al-Maziri explains that the term "hijab" (veil) in the context of Allah's qualities does not refer to a physical barrier because Allah is not a physical creature. Instead, he proposes that the "hijab" should be interpreted as a metaphor for a curtain that divides human comprehension from the true nature of Allah's characteristics. In other words, Al-Maziri is underlining that when we speak of Allah's "veil," we are referring to a mental or conceptual barrier, not a physical one. This veil is what hinders humanity from comprehending or visualising Allah's essence in its entirety, as His essence transcends human capacity.

Kazem finds Al-Maziri's interpretation aligns with the notion that Allah's attributes and essence are beyond human comprehension, and any attempt to anthropomorphize or attribute physical characteristics to Allah is a misinterpretation. Instead, he emphasises the significance of realising the limitations of human comprehension when it comes to Divine concerns. Additionally, he emphasises that the "veil" referenced in the hadith must be evaluated intellectually. The reason for this is because light, as defined by him as sensory veils, a physical, sensory entity that retains its actual essence. In this context, the veil relates to creation and not the Creator (Kazem 2020: 112-113).

In the framework of modern physics, the author addresses the idea of light as particles. He emphasises that current physics, particularly Albert Einstein's theory of relativity, has demonstrated that light, also known as photons, possesses both wave and particle qualities. These photons are basic particles that make up light and display both wave and particle characteristics (Kazem 2020: 118). This understanding shows the difference with the traditional theological interpretation of light as a curtain of Allah metaphorically, as discussed in the text. The discussion, on the other hand, reveals how theological and metaphysical notions meet with scientific understandings, particularly in the context of light and its qualities. It emphasizes the significance of reconciling religious beliefs with scientific discoveries and the need for interpretation and adaptation to evolving knowledge.

The author then examines the properties of different particles, the composition of light, and their behaviour in a variety of situations, including refraction, interference, and diffraction. His study covers the electromagnetic spectrum, the properties of visible light, and the formation of colours. Kazem continues to investigate the concept of light as a veil. In the article, several explanations for how light can become a "veil" are discussed, including the density of light particles, the reflective properties causing poor visibility, quantum behaviour allowing light to



act as a dense particle, colour variations forming a veil, the harmful effects of electromagnetic radiation, and the intense power of light obscuring vision. The main theme is an investigation of the nature of light and its capacity to function as a veil, taking into account both scientific hypotheses and speculative possibilities.

### Challenges and Controversies

There have been disagreements regarding the inclusion of scientific advancements into hadith commentaries. Regarding the propriety and legality of employing scientific facts to understand hadith, scholarly opinion has diverged. According to contemporary academician Salahattin Polat, the primary issue is the dynamic and ever-changing nature of science (Polat 2017). This significantly complicates the process of comprehending, explaining, and applying scientific findings to criticize hadith.

The rapid growth of scientific knowledge raises a critical concern: information that was once regarded as true can now be disproven due to fresh scientific findings (Wheeler 1923). Similar difficulties exist when attempting to reconcile Quranic texts with scientific knowledge. Polat also highlights the distinction between understanding hadith sources and science as a concern. Prophets, particularly The Prophet, the source of hadith, convey information on subjects that go beyond conventional reasoning and knowledge. It is unrealistic to expect Muslims to examine subjects of revelation in the context of modern science, which focuses on sensory sense and disregards revelation. This stems from the divergence between the divine origin of revelation and the human origin of positive science. Therefore, criticizing different epistemological grounds seems unnecessary and could divert the discussion from its intended focus. Over time, current science may demonstrate that certain hadith that were once considered illogical contain scientific miracles.

The use of scientific facts in hadith analysis appears fundamentally misguided. Understanding the relationship between hadith and the Prophet, identifying the source of the Prophet's knowledge, and defining the extent of hadith and scientific data are the key issues. In conjunction with the various epistemological roots of hadith and science, the dynamic and analytic nature of science creates commentary-related difficulties. This intricacy has resulted in diverse perspectives on how to approach these issues.

In another approach, studies of hadith and its commentaries should embrace a dynamic framework. Numerous hadith that pertain to the realm of science must be reconsidered and evaluated as frequently as possible at all ages. This is due to the continual evolution and advancement of science, which enables a deeper understanding and interpretation of specific hadiths that were before inadequately clarified. In this regard, Oruçhan's research led him to the following conclusion: "It is erroneous to outrightly dismiss hadith texts containing insights into positive sciences solely because they deviate from scientific data, or to attribute them to the Prophet solely because they align with such data. Instead, these hadiths should be subjected to rigorous analysis, and each should be evaluated separately. The bulk of hadith holding information problematic to the principles of positive sciences appear to be problematic, both in terms of their chain of transmission (*isnad*) and their content (text), according to our investigations and analyses." (Oruçhan 2011: 473).

To conclude, there are various landscapes at the junction of scientific discoveries and hadith interpretation. The historical trajectory of hadith commentaries, defined by rigorous intellectual inspection and methodological foundations, paved the way for a rich legacy of comprehending and interpreting the words of the Prophet Muhammad.

The paradigm shift introduced by scientific interpretation represents a considerable departure from traditional approaches. Scholars, influenced by early modern reformist perspectives, attempted to reconcile Islamic teachings with modern understanding. Reformist orientations, especially prevalent in Subcontinental and Egyptian schools, pushed for a departure from blind loyalty to tradition and a more flexible and dynamic approach to interpreting religious texts.

The case study exploring the hadith regarding the light in Allah's veil serves as a microcosm of the larger discourse. Traditional views emphasise supernatural characteristics and transcendence, whereas scientific interpretations, as exemplified by Saddam Hussein Kazim's research, focus on the physical and optical properties of light. This case study prompts the dynamic nature of interpretation, in which new scientific findings need a re-evaluation of previously held beliefs.

With the inclusion of scientific data into hadith commentary, however, arise challenges and debates. The dynamic and ever-changing character of science presents a formidable obstacle, as what is regarded as valid today may be disproven tomorrow. The differing epistemological foundations of divine revelation and scientific knowledge add another layer of complication, resulting in divergent perspectives regarding the legitimacy of employing scientific facts to understand hadith.

As the discussion proceeds, it is crucial to manage these obstacles with delicacy and a critical eye. The demand for a dynamic structure in hadith studies, which permits reconsideration and appraisal throughout time, shows an understanding of the continuous evolution of religious and scientific knowledge. In order to shed light on each hadith's intended meaning, interpretations must include its linguistic, historical, and cultural contexts in addition to scientific data.

### References

- Blecher, J. 2017. *Said the Prophet of God: Hadith Commentary across a Millennium*. Oakland: University of California Press.
- Bodur, O. 2016. *Müteşabih Hadislerin Yorumu*. Istanbul: Rağbet Yayınları.
- Galilei, Galileo. 1997. Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina of Tuscany, in Internet Modern History Sourcebook. <https://web.stanford.edu/~jsabol/certainty/readings/Galileo-LetterDuchessChristina.pdf>. [Retrieved: 1st June 2023].
- Al-Gazâlî, E. H. M. b. M. 2000. Kanûnu't-Te'vîl. *Journal of Islamic Research* 13 (3-4): 522-524.
- Görmez, M. 2000. *Sünnet ve Hadisin Anlaşılması ve Yorumlanmasında Metodoloji Sorunu*. Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları.
- Itr, N. 1997. *Menhecû'n-nakd fî ulumi'l-hadis*. Damascus: Daru'l-Fikr.
- Jamil, K. H. B. 2017. *Traditional Sunni Epistemology in the Scholarship of al-Hafîz al-Khatib al-Baghdadi*. Doctoral Dissertation. School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.
- Jamil, K. H. B. 2013. *Trends in the studies of Sunnah (Ittijahat fi dirasah al-Sunnah)*. [YouTube video]. IIIT Online Classes: CQS4: Al-Quran and Sunnah Studies. [Retrieved: May 17, 2023].
- Jami' al-Kutub al-Tis'ah. n. d. Sahih Muslim. <https://onelink.to/9books> [Retrieved: November 21, 2023].
- al-Karadâvî, Y. 2009. *Sünneti Anlamada Yöntem*. Nida Yayıncılık.
- Kazem, S. H. 2020. Physical and Optical Investigations in the Holy Quran and the Sunnah. *Journal of Alsalam University* 3(1): 111-125.
- Nizami, K. A. 1974. *Sayyid Ahmad Khan*. New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India.
- Oruçhan, O. 2011. *Hadis ve Bilim (Hadiste Metin Tenkidi İlkesi Olarak Pozitif Bilimlere Aykırılık)*. Ankara: TDV Yayınları.
- Polat, S. 2017. *Hadis Araştırmaları: Tarih, Usûl, Tenkîd, Yorum*. (6th Ed.). Kayseri: Kimlik Yayınları.
- Sakallı, T. 2013. *Aynî ve Hadis Yorum/Şerh Yöntemi*. Ankara: Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık.
- Sidqi, M. T., Riða, R., & Al-Bashri, T. 2011. *Dialogue about: Islam is the Quran Alone (حوار حول : الاسلام هو القرآن وحده)*. H. Abdulaziz (Ed.). Cairo: Majallat al-Manar.
- Wheeler, R. H. 1923. *The Static and the Dynamic in the Logic of Science*. *The Monist* 33(4): 556-557. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27900965>.
- Yücel, A. 2013. *Temel Hadis Kaynakları Üzerine Yapılan Çalışmalar*. In *Hadis Tarihi ve Usulü (3rd edition)*. Salahattin Polat (ed). Eskisehir: Anadolu Üniversitesi Açık Öğretim Fakültesi Yayını.