

Rationality in Hadith Textual Criticism According to Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn al-Qayyim: Classifying *Muḥālāt* and *Muḥārāt al-ʿUqūl*

Rasionalitas dalam Kritik Matan Hadis Menurut Ibn Taymiyyah dan Ibn al-Qayyim: Klasifikasi Muḥālāt dan Muḥārāt al-ʿUqūl

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Abstract

Contemporary hadith studies have increasingly emphasized textual criticism, particularly when reports deemed authentic in transmission raise questions at the content level. Although the role of reason is recognized in hadith criticism, existing scholarship has yet to develop a systematic framework that explains how rational considerations apply to *matn* evaluation. Furthermore, limited attention to distinguishing between *muḥālāt al-ʿuqūl* (rational impossibilities) and *muḥārāt al-ʿuqūl* (matters perplexing to reason) creates methodological ambiguity. Therefore, this study aims to examine the concept of *al-ʿaql al-ṣarīḥ* (sound rationality) and formulate an operational framework for evaluating hadith texts. Employing a qualitative design, this study utilizes textual and comparative analysis of classical and contemporary sources, focusing on the epistemological relationship between revelation and reason. The findings reveal that the proposed framework consists of three principal stages: identifying apparent contradictions, verifying interpretations, and classifying textual issues into *muḥālāt* and *muḥārāt al-ʿuqūl*. These stages are operationalized through indicators such as general rational judgment, human experience, conformity with *sharīʿah* principles, and a balance between rational consideration and revelatory authority. Applying this framework to selected hadith reports demonstrates its effectiveness in distinguishing genuine contradictions from limitations in human understanding. This study contributes to hadith textual criticism by providing a systematic, operational model that maintains the epistemological primacy of revelation within contemporary scholarship.

Keywords: hadith; textual criticism; rationality; *muḥālāt*; *muḥārāt*

Abstrak

Studi hadis kontemporer semakin memberikan perhatian terhadap kritik matan, khususnya ketika hadis yang dinilai sahih secara sanad menimbulkan persoalan pada tingkat kandungan teks. Meskipun peran akal telah lama diakui dalam tradisi kritik hadis, studi terdahulu belum merumuskan kerangka analisis sistematis yang menjelaskan penerapan pertimbangan rasional dalam evaluasi matan. Selain itu, keterbatasan kajian dalam membedakan secara jelas antara *muḥālāt al-ʿuqūl* (mustahil menurut akal) dan *muḥārāt al-ʿuqūl* (membingungkan akal) memicu ambiguitas metodologis. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan mengkaji konsep *al-ʿaql al-ṣarīḥ* (rasionalitas murni) serta merumuskan kerangka analisis operasional untuk mengevaluasi matan hadis. Melalui pendekatan kualitatif dengan analisis tekstual dan komparatif terhadap sumber



klasik dan kontemporer, penelitian ini berfokus pada hubungan epistemologis antara wahyu dan akal. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kerangka yang dikembangkan mencakup tiga tahapan utama: identifikasi pertentangan lahiriah, verifikasi interpretasi dan klasifikasi persoalan ke dalam kategori *muḥālāt* dan *muḥārāt al-‘uqūl*. Tahapan ini dioperasionalkan melalui indikator analitis seperti pertimbangan rasional umum, pengalaman manusia, kesesuaian prinsip syariat, serta keseimbangan antara rasionalitas dan otoritas wahyu. Penerapan kerangka ini pada hadis terpilih terbukti efektif membedakan pertentangan nyata dari keterbatasan pemahaman manusia. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pengembangan kritik matan dengan menyediakan model analisis yang sistematis dan operasional tanpa mengabaikan otoritas wahyu dalam epistemologi Islam.

Kata Kunci: hadis; kritik matan; rasionalitas; muḥālāt; muḥārāt

Introduction

Contemporary hadith studies have witnessed a growing emphasis on textual criticism, referring specifically to the critical evaluation of hadith content, particularly in cases where reports deemed sound in terms of transmission raise critical questions regarding their content¹. This development highlights the need to reassess existing approaches to textual criticism to ensure their responsiveness to contemporary intellectual and methodological challenges.

Although the study of hadith textual criticism has received considerable attention among contemporary hadith scholars, most existing studies have primarily focused on identifying the general principles employed in the evaluation of hadith texts rather than developing a systematic analytical framework for operationalizing these principles in contemporary contexts. For instance, al-Idlibī examines the methodologies of *matn* criticism employed by hadith scholars, while Brown explores the development of hadith criticism within both classical and modern Islamic traditions². Similarly, al-A‘zamī provides a comprehensive account of the historical development and methodological foundations of hadith textual evaluation³. Nevertheless, these studies have not devoted specific attention to constructing an analytical framework grounded in rational considerations that can be applied consistently in the critical assessment of hadith texts. This reveals a methodological gap that warrants further scholarly investigation.

Classical hadith scholars such as al-Shāfi‘ī, Muslim, Ibn Abī Ḥatīm, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, Ibn Taymiyyah, and Ibn al-Qayyim did not neglect the examination of the *matn* when evaluating transmitted reports. Rather, they established several

1 Muhammad Ṭāhir Al-Jawābī, *Jubūd Al-Muḥaddithin fī Naqd Al-Matn Al-Hadīth Al-Nabawī Al-Sharīf* (Riyadh: Mu‘assasāt ‘Abd al-Karīm bin ‘Abdullāh, 1986), 94.

2 Jonathan A.C. Brown, “How We Know Early Hadīth Critics Did Matn Criticism and Why It’s So Hard to Find,” *Islamic Law and Society* 15, no. 2 (2008): 143–184; Aḥmad Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Al-Idlibī, *Manhaj Naqd Al-Matn ‘ind ‘ulamā’ Al-Hadīth Al-Nabawī* (Cairo: Mu‘assasah Iqra’ al-Khayriyah, 2013), 247–365.

3 Mustafā Al-A‘zamī, “Manhaj Al-Naqd ‘ind Al-Muḥaddithīn” (Maktabah al-Kawthar, 1990), 10–22.

foundational principles for assessing hadith texts, including conformity with the Qur'an, consistency with more authentic narrations, and the absence of *shādh* (irregularity) and *ʿilal* (hidden defects) affecting both wording and meaning. These principles were later systematically elaborated by contemporary scholars, such as al-Idlibī, in their studies of hadith textual criticism⁴. Likewise, contradiction with *al-ʿaql al-ṣarīḥ* (sound reason) constitutes an important criterion for determining whether a given *matn* is problematic⁵. For the purpose of this study, reason refers to the human intellectual faculty (*al-ʿaql*), rationality denotes its disciplined exercise in accordance with sound epistemological principles, and logic (*manṭiq*) refers to the formal rules of valid reasoning.

This lack of conceptual clarity has resulted in different intellectual traditions employing reason in fundamentally different ways when evaluating hadith texts. Some approaches treat reason as an independent authority capable of determining the acceptability of a hadith, whereas others regard it primarily as an interpretive tool operating within the epistemological boundaries established by revelation. Consequently, the absence of a clearly defined framework has allowed rational judgment to be applied according to differing methodological assumptions rather than consistent evaluative principles. As a result, the application of rational judgment in textual criticism has become largely dependent on individual understanding, thereby creating scope for inconsistency in critical evaluation.

This issue becomes more pronounced when certain groups, such as Liberal Muslims, employ reason in a largely unrestricted manner without a clearly defined methodological framework, while others, particularly proponents of literalist approaches, tend to minimize or even reject the role of reason in the interpretation of hadith texts⁶. Consequently, the evaluation of hadith reports concerning extraordinary phenomena, miracles, and unseen matters often leads to divergent conclusions despite being based on the same transmitted reports. This suggests that the central issue is not whether reason should be employed in hadith criticism, but rather how it should be utilized within a framework that remains consistent with the methodological principles of hadith scholarship.

4 Al-Idlibī, *Manhaj Naqd Al-Matn ʿind ʿulamāʾ Al-Ḥadīth Al-Nabawī*, 259-365; Nur Muhammad Anas Mohd Razak, Mohd Arif Nazri, and Latifah Abdul Majid, "Textual Criticism of Hadith in Contemporary Islamic Thought: A Comparative Analysis of Salafi and Sufi Approaches," *Al-Bayan: Journal of Qur'an and Hadith Studies* 23, no. 3 (December 5, 2025): 578-601, https://brill.com/view/journals/jqhs/23/3/article-p578_9.xml.

5 ʿAbd al-Raḥmān bin Abū Bakar Al-Suyūṭī, *Tadrib Al-Rāwī fī Sharḥ Taqrīb Al-Nawawī* (Riyadh: Dār Taybah, 2004), 5:327; Ibn Hajar Al-ʿAsqalānī, *Nuzḥah Al-Nazar fī Tarwīḍ Nukḥbah Al-Fīkr fī Muṣṭalah Abl Al-Athar* (Damascus: Maṭbaʿah al-Ṣabāḥ, 2000), 90.

6 Husaen Pinang, "Metode Pemahaman Hadis Jaringan Islam Liberal," *Jurnal Ilmiah Tarbiyah Umat* 7, no. 2 (2017): 113-138, <https://ejournals.ddipolman.ac.id/index.php/jitu/article/view/37>.

In the context of hadith textual criticism, reason does not function as an autonomous authority capable of accepting or rejecting hadith independently of revelation. Rather, it serves as an interpretive instrument for understanding, reconciling, and evaluating hadith texts within the broader epistemological framework of Islam. Its application must therefore remain guided by established principles of hadith criticism, including conformity with the Qur'an, authentic Sunnah, linguistic analysis, historical context, and other recognized criteria of *matn* criticism. This highlights the need for a more systematic articulation of the role of reason in hadith textual criticism, which forms the basis of the analytical framework proposed in this study through the concept of *al-ʿaql al-ṣarīḥ*.

In contemporary discourse, the use of reason in understanding hadith reflects two contrasting tendencies. One approach tends to restrict the role of reason, leading to overly literal interpretations that inadequately consider the rational dimension of the text⁷. Conversely, another approach accords excessive authority to reason, elevating it as the primary determinant in accepting or rejecting hadith. From a historical perspective, such tendencies are not new; they can be traced to intellectual traditions such as the Muʿtazilah, which upheld reason as a principal source in determining the validity of revealed texts⁸.

The Muʿtazilah occupy a significant position in the history of Islamic thought, as they were among the earliest theological schools to develop a rationalist approach to the interpretation and critical evaluation of religious texts. Indeed, they generally accorded greater authority to rational considerations than to solitary reports (*aḥād* traditions) in matters of theological argumentation⁹. While the Ḥanafī legal tradition also recognized an important role for rational inquiry, particularly through juristic reasoning such as *qiyās* and *istiḥsān*, the present discussion focuses on the Muʿtazilah because of their distinctive theological emphasis on the authority of reason in evaluating revealed texts. In many of their intellectual discussions, reason functioned as the primary criterion for determining the acceptance and interpretation of scriptural texts. This approach was subsequently challenged by Ahl al-Sunnah scholars, who maintained that no genuine contradiction can exist between revelation and sound reason, since both originate from the same divine source. This divergence reflects a longstanding intellectual debate concerning the limits, authority, and

7 Martin Van Bruinessen and Julia Day Howell, *Sufism and the "Modern" in Islam* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2007), 119.

8 Brown, "How We Know Early Ḥadīth Critics Did Matn Criticism and Why It's So Hard to Find," 164.

9 Abdul Matin Bin Salman, Yusuf Baihaqi, and Kusnadi, "Redefining Khabar Al-Aḥad Based on Rashid Rida's Rational Approach in Al-Manar," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu al-Qur'an dan Hadis* 23, no. 2 (July 30, 2022): 219–236, <https://ejournal.uin-suka.ac.id/ushuluddin/alquran/article/view/2812>.

function of reason in the interpretation of religious texts.

Although the relationship between *al-‘aql* (reason) and *wahy* (revelation) has been extensively discussed within Islamic intellectual discourse, scholarly attention to the concepts of *muḥālāt al-‘uqūl* and *muḥārāt al-‘uqūl* remains relatively limited. *Muḥālāt al-‘uqūl* refers to matters that are deemed rationally impossible and categorically incompatible with sound reason, whereas *muḥārāt al-‘uqūl* denotes matters that appear perplexing or difficult for the human intellect to comprehend without necessarily being rationally impossible¹⁰. Failure to distinguish between these two categories has led some critics of hadith to regard all phenomena that fall outside ordinary human experience as rationally impossible. Such a conflation contributes to methodological inaccuracies in hadith textual criticism and may result in the unwarranted rejection of reports whose content merely exceeds the limits of ordinary human understanding rather than contradicting sound reason itself.

These divergent orientations raise a fundamental question regarding the need for a framework capable of balancing the relationship between reason and revelation in the evaluation of hadith texts.

The concept of *al-‘aql al-ṣarīḥ*, as employed in this study, provides an important foundation for addressing this issue. It refers to sound rationality that operates in harmony with human nature and does not contradict the principles of revelation. Within this framework, reason does not function as an authority that overrides textual sources; rather, it serves as an interpretive instrument that facilitates a more precise understanding and critical evaluation of hadith texts¹¹. Nevertheless, this concept has yet to be systematically formulated as a coherent analytical framework within the discipline of textual criticism, particularly in the context of contemporary hadith studies.

Although Ibn Taymiyyah does not explicitly define *al-‘aql al-ṣarīḥ*, he consistently employs the term to describe reason that operates in harmony with authentic revelation, *fiṭrah* (sound human nature), and valid epistemological principles. According to him, any apparent contradiction between reason and scriptural texts arises not from an inherent conflict between the two, but rather from deficiencies in human understanding or flaws in the process of interpretation¹². Consequently, authentic revelation and sound reason are regarded as mutually reinforcing sources

10 Aḥmad bin ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm Ibn Taymiyyah, *Minhāj Al-Sunnah Al-Nabawiyyah* (Riyadh: Jāmi‘ah al-Imām Muḥammad bin Sa‘ūd al-Islāmiyah, 1986), 2:569.

11 Aḥmad Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Al-Idlibī, *Manhaj Naqd Al-Matn ‘ind ‘ulamā’ Al-Ḥadīth Al-Nabawī* (Cairo: Mu‘assasah Iqra’ al-Khayriyah, 2013), 317.

12 Aḥmad bin ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū‘ Al-Fatāwā* (Madinah al-Munawwarah: Mujaḥma‘ al-Malik Fahd, 1995), 6:580.

of knowledge that ultimately originate from the same divine source. Although this concept occupies a central position in Islamic epistemological discourse, it has yet to be systematically formulated as a coherent analytical framework within the discipline of textual criticism, particularly in the context of contemporary hadith studies.

Accordingly, this study aims to examine the concept of *al-‘aql al-ṣarīḥ* (sound rationality) within the context of hadith textual criticism and to propose a more systematic and practical analytical framework based on it. The study further applies this framework to selected hadith reports in order to assess its effectiveness in addressing issues of apparent contradiction between hadith texts and rational considerations. Through this approach, the study not only clarifies the role of reason in textual criticism but also offers a more practical articulation of a method that has long been employed by hadith scholars. In doing so, it seeks to contribute to the development of a more balanced and contextually relevant discourse in contemporary hadith studies.

Research Method

This study adopts a qualitative approach grounded in textual analysis to examine the principle of *al-‘aql al-ṣarīḥ* in hadith textual criticism and its application in contemporary hadith studies. The research design is conceptual in nature, focusing on the elaboration of key principles, the construction of an analytical framework and the evaluation of its application through the critical analysis of selected hadith. This approach is deemed appropriate as the subject under investigation involves theoretical discourse, conceptual clarification and textual interpretation, all of which require in-depth engagement with both classical and contemporary sources.

Data are collected through documentary research, drawing upon relevant primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include the works of hadith scholars and prominent Muslim thinkers who have addressed the relationship between reason and revelation, as well as principles underlying textual criticism. Among the primary sources underpinning this conceptualization are the works of Ibn Taymiyyah, particularly *Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā*¹³, *Minhāj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*¹⁴ and *Dar’ Ta‘arūḍ al-‘Aql wa al-Naql*¹⁵, as well as the writings of Ibn al-Qayyim, notably *al-*

13 Ibid.

14 Ibn Taymiyyah, *Minhāj Al-Sunnah Al-Nabawiyyah*.

15 Aḥmad bin ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm Ibn Taymiyyah, *Dar’ Ta‘arūḍ al-‘Aql wa al-Naql* (Riyadh: Jāmi‘ah Imām Muḥammad bin Sa‘ūd, 1991).

*Manār al-Munīf*¹⁶ and *al-Rūḥ*¹⁷. These works provide important discussions on the relationship between reason and revelation, the epistemological foundations of sound rationality and the role of rational inquiry in evaluating religious texts. Secondary sources comprise contemporary studies in the form of books, journal articles, and other academic publications that examine the principle of *al-‘aql al-ṣarīḥ* within textual criticism. Sources are selected based on their relevance to the research focus and the strength of their scholarly arguments.

For analytical purposes, this study employs content analysis to identify, classify and synthesize principles related to *al-‘aql al-ṣarīḥ*. This process involves extracting key themes such as the role of reason, categories of rational evaluation based on *al-‘aql al-ṣarīḥ* and the methodological approaches employed in textual criticism. In addition, a comparative analysis is undertaken to examine the use of reason within the classical hadith tradition in contrast to approaches developed in contemporary discourse. This enables the study to identify points of convergence, divergence and their implications for determining the status of hadith texts.

Furthermore, the study incorporates an application-based analysis by selecting relevant hadith examples to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed framework. The analysis is conducted in stages, following a structured procedure that begins with the identification of issues, proceeds to the reassessment of interpretation and culminates in the classification of forms of apparent contradiction. This approach ensures that the proposed framework is not merely theoretical but also practical and applicable within contemporary contexts.

Conceptualizing *al-‘Aql al-Ṣarīḥ* in Hadith Textual Criticism

The discussion of *al-‘aql al-ṣarīḥ* in Ibn Taymiyyah’s thought should begin with an examination of his conception of *al-‘aql*, as this concept constitutes the foundation of his broader epistemological framework. Although the term *al-‘aql* appears extensively throughout his writings, Ibn Taymiyyah does not provide an explicit technical definition of *al-‘aql al-ṣarīḥ*. Rather, he characterizes *al-‘aql* as the intellectual faculty bestowed by Allah upon human beings to comprehend and interpret divine revelation.

16 Muḥammad bin Abī Bakr Ibn al-Qayyim, *Al-Manār Al-Munīfī Al-Ṣaḥīḥ wa Al-Ḍa‘īf* (Aleppo: Maktabah Maṭbū‘at Islāmiyyah, 1970).

17 Muḥammad bin Abī Bakr Ibn al-Qayyim, *Al-Rūḥ fī al-Kalām ‘alā Arwāḥ al-Amwāt wa al-Aḥyā’ bi al-Dalā’il min al-Kitāb wa al-Sunnah* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1982).

Within this epistemological framework, reason and revelation constitute two complementary sources of knowledge that originate from the same divine source. Consequently, no genuine contradiction can exist between them¹⁸. Based on Ibn Taymiyyah's broader discussions of the relationship between reason and revelation, the term *al-ʿaql al-ṣarīḥ* is consistently employed to denote reason that operates in harmony with authentic revelation, sound human nature (*fiṭrah*), and valid epistemological principles¹⁹.

Nevertheless, this concept does not refer to the human capacity for reasoning in an absolute sense. Rather, it denotes a mode of reasoning that accords with sound *fiṭrah* and remains free from doubt, personal desires, and intellectual misconceptions²⁰. This conceptualization is particularly significant because it establishes the form of reasoning that may legitimately serve as the basis for *naqd al-mutūn* (hadith textual criticism). Conversely, reasoning that departs from these principles is characterized as *al-ʿaql ḡhayr al-ṣarīḥ*, namely reasoning influenced by speculative assumptions, ideological bias, or methodological confusion. This distinction constitutes a fundamental component of Ibn Taymiyyah's epistemology and provides the conceptual foundation for his approach to *naqd al-mutūn*.

Table 1. Ibn Taymiyyah's Conceptual Framework of Reason

Concept	Explanation	Relevance to Hadith Textual Criticism
al-ʿAql	The human intellectual faculty bestowed by Allah for understanding revelation	Instrument for understanding and evaluating hadith
al-ʿAql al-Ṣarīḥ	Sound reason operating in harmony with revelation and <i>fiṭrah</i>	Legitimate basis for rational evaluation of <i>matn</i>
al-ʿAql ḡhayr al-Ṣarīḥ	Reason distorted by speculative assumptions, ideological bias, or methodological error	May result in erroneous interpretation and evaluation

18 Khalif Muammar A. Harris, "Sekularisasi Etika Dan Krisis Moral Masa Kini," *Jurnal Akidah & Pemikiran Islam* 23, no. 2 (December 30, 2021): 121–170, <https://ejournal.um.edu.my/index.php/afkar/article/view/34353>.

19 Carl Sharif El-Tobgui, *Ibn Taymiyya on Reason and Revelation: A Study of Dar' Ta'arud Al-ʿaql Wa-l-Naql* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 6.

20 Muḥammad bin Ibrāhīm Al-Hamd, *Muṣṭalahāt fī Kutub Al-ʿAqā'id* (Riyadh: Dār Ibn Khuzaymah, 2006), 131; Birgit Krawietz and Georges Tamer, *Islamic Theology, Philosophy and Law: Debating Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110285406_52.

Ibn Taymiyyah further elaborates the relationship between reason and revelation by asserting that the consensus (*ijmāʿ*) of the early Muslim scholars (*al-salaf*) can never contradict *al-ʿaql al-ṣarīḥ*. According to him, anything that genuinely contradicts *al-ʿaql al-ṣarīḥ* is necessarily false, whereas revelation and scholarly consensus are divinely protected from falsehood²¹.

This epistemological principle was subsequently developed by Ibn al-Qayyim through its application to the evaluation of problematic hadith texts²². Rather than viewing reason and revelation as competing sources of knowledge, he maintained that sound rational inquiry serves as an instrument for uncovering the coherence, wisdom, and truth embedded within authentic revelation.

This principle is articulated more systematically in *Darʾ Taʾarūḍ al-ʿAql wa al-Naql*, in which Ibn Taymiyyah seeks to refute the claim that a genuine contradiction can exist between reason and the revelation conveyed by the Prophet²³. Contemporary scholars likewise interpret this work as an attempt to reconcile authentic revelation with sound reason by demonstrating that any apparent contradiction arises either from inauthentic textual transmission or from flaws in human reasoning, rather than from revelation itself²⁴. Ibn Taymiyyah argues that whenever an apparent conflict arises between reason and revelation, one of two possibilities must apply: either the textual evidence is not authentic, or the reasoning employed in its interpretation is flawed. Accordingly, the relationship between reason and revelation should not be understood as one of competition, but rather as a complementary relationship in which both reinforce one another in the pursuit of truth.

When ambiguity arises in textual expressions or when interpretations deviate from their intended meanings, such confusion stems from the limitations of human understanding rather than from the revealed sources themselves. Consequently, the use of reason in textual criticism should not be viewed as subordinating revelation to human logic, but rather as a means to ensure that the interpretation of hadith remains within a valid and coherent epistemic framework²⁵. More specifically, reason functions as an evaluative and interpretive instrument that enables scholars to ascertain the intended meanings of hadith texts, reconcile evidence that appears to be contradictory, and distinguish genuine textual deficiencies from the inherent

21 Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmūʿ Al-Fatāwā*.

22 Ibn al-Qayyim, *Al-Manār Al-Munīf fī Al-Ṣaḥīḥ wa Al-Ḍaʿīf*, 51.

23 Ibn Taymiyyah, *Darʾ Taʾarūḍ al-ʿAql wa al-Naql*, 2:364.

24 Adeeb Obaid Alsuhaymi and Fouad Ahmed Atallah, "Reason and Revelation in Ibn Taymiyyah's Critique of Philosophical Theology: A Contribution to Contemporary Islamic Philosophy of Religion," *Religions* 16, no. 7 (June 20, 2025): 809, <https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/16/7/809>.

25 Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmūʿ Al-Fatāwā*, 11:490.

limitations of human understanding²⁶.

This approach stands in contrast to rationalist orientations that regard reason as the primary criterion for determining the acceptance and interpretation of revealed texts. As exemplified by the Mu'tazilah, reason occupies the highest epistemological status, while revelation is interpreted in accordance with rational principles²⁷. Consequently, when confronted with an apparent conflict between reason and the literal meaning of revelation, they generally accord priority to rational judgment, arguing that the authenticity and authority of revelation are themselves established through reason.

Accordingly, the Mu'tazilah generally rejected the epistemic authority of *khbar al-āḥād* in matters of creed²⁸ and extensively employed figurative interpretation (*ta'wīl*) to reconcile scriptural descriptions of the divine attributes with their rational premises²⁹. By contrast, hadith scholars regard sound reason as an interpretive instrument that facilitates a proper understanding of revelation rather than as an autonomous epistemic authority capable of overriding revealed texts³⁰.

The relationship between reason and revelation should not be conceived as oppositional. Instead, both function in an integrative manner in determining the validity and meaning of religious texts. Sound rationality plays a critical role in identifying accurate meanings, assessing the coherence of hadith content with established principles of the *sharī'ah* and preventing deviant interpretations³¹. Within the context of textual criticism, this function extends beyond general evaluative judgments to include the determination of whether a particular hadith content falls within the category of *muḥālāt al-‘uqūl* (rational impossibilities) or *muḥārāt al-‘uqūl* (matters that are difficult for reason to comprehend without being impossible). This distinction is of considerable importance, as not everything that lies beyond the bounds of ordinary human experience should be regarded as rationally impossible. Certain hadith reports concerning miracles, unseen realities, and extraordinary events may appear perplexing to the human intellect, yet still remain within the realm of

26 Jon Hoover and Marwan Abu Ghazaleh Mahajneh, "Theology as Translation: Ibn Taymiyya's Fatwa Permitting Theology and Its Reception into His Averting the Conflict between Reason and Revealed Tradition (Dar' Ta'arūḍ al-‘Aql Wa l-Naql)," *The Muslim World* 108, no. 1 (January 1, 2018): 40–86, <https://doi.org/10.1111/muwo.12229>.

27 ‘Abd al-Laṭīf ibn Riyāḍ ibn ‘Abd al-Laṭīf Al-‘Aklūk, "Manhaj Al-Mu'tazilah fi Tawḥīd Al-Asmā' Wa Al-Ṣifāt: 'Arḍ wa Naqd" (master's thesis, Islamic University of Gaza, 2011), 67–78.

28 Ibid., 113.

29 Ibid., 72–99.

30 Misfar Ghurm Allah Al-Dumaynī, *Maqāyīs Naqd Mutūn Al-Sunnah* (Riyadh: Jāmi‘ah al-Imām Muḥammad bin al-Su‘ūd al-Islāmiyyah, 1984).

31 Ibrāhīm bin Mūsā Al-Shāṭibī, *Al-Muwāfaqāt* (Dār Ibn ‘Affan, 1997), 3:208.

possibility affirmed by revelation.

However, this role has often not been systematically articulated in the form of clearly defined principles, resulting in its application being dependent on individual interpretation or particular methodological inclinations. This creates the possibility of inconsistency in evaluation, especially when dealing with hadith whose content appears difficult to reconcile with reason at a superficial level. In such cases, a contradiction between the *matn* and *al-‘aql al-ṣarīḥ* may be regarded as a form of *‘illah* (hidden defect) affecting the acceptability of a report, comparable to other recognized defects such as *tadlis*.³²

Accordingly, the conceptualization of *al-‘aql al-ṣarīḥ* within hadith textual criticism becomes essential in establishing a more systematic approach. Within this framework, reason does not function as an absolute authority in determining the acceptance or rejection of hadith, but rather as an evaluative tool that operates within the boundaries of scholarly discipline and the principles of revelation. This approach also necessitates a clear distinction between *al-‘aql al-ṣarīḥ* and forms of reasoning influenced by prejudice, ideological bias, or methodological confusion. By establishing such a framework, the role of reason in textual criticism can be applied in a more balanced and consistent manner.

Muḥālāt and Muḥārāt al-‘Uqūl as Analytical Criteria

Within the framework of textual criticism, the application of reason cannot be exercised in a general or unrestricted manner without a clear evaluative standard. One of the key distinctions in this regard is between *muḥālāt al-‘uqūl* (rational impossibilities) and *muḥārāt al-‘uqūl* (matters that are merely difficult to comprehend or appear extraordinary). This distinction is emphasized by Ibn Taymiyyah, “who asserts that the messengers of God may convey matters that transcend ordinary human experience, but they never convey anything that is impossible according to *al-‘aql al-ṣarīḥ*”³³. This differentiation serves as a crucial basis for determining whether a hadith genuinely contradicts sound rationality or merely appears unusual at the level of initial understanding. Without such a distinction, there is a tendency to reject hadith simply because they do not conform to common human expectations, even though they remain within the realm of rational possibility.

32 Muhammad Rozaimi Ramle and Sahul Hamid Mohamed Maidin, “Ibn Hibban and The Mudallisins’ Narrations in His Book Al-Sahih: Rule, Motive and Methodology,” *Global Journal Al-Thaqafah* 6, no. 1 (July 12, 2016): 127–139, <http://www.gjat.my/gjat062016/10920160601.pdf>.

33 ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abd al-Muḥsin Al-Turkī, *Mujmal I’tiqād ‘Immah Al-Salaf* (Riyadh: Wizārat al-Shu’ūn al-Islāmiyyah wa al-Awqāf wa al-Da‘wah wa al-Irshād, 1996), 158.

Matters classified under *muḥālāt al-‘uqūl* refer to propositions that are fundamentally impossible according to *al-‘aql al-ṣarīḥ*. The Prophet does not convey anything that falls within this category. If a report is judged to be rationally impossible, the cause must lie either in the inauthenticity of the report itself or in a flawed rational judgment influenced by deviation.³⁴

In contrast, *muḥārāt al-‘uqūl* encompass matters that lie beyond ordinary human experience, such as prophetic miracles or reports concerning the unseen³⁵. Although reason may not fully comprehend these phenomena in detail, they cannot be categorized as impossible so long as they do not contradict the fundamental principles of the *sharī‘ah* or established reality.

This approach is also consistent with the position of certain hadith scholars, who exercised caution in employing reason and did not treat it as an absolute criterion. Among them is Mullā al-Qārī, who maintained that the authenticity of a hadith established through sound transmission is not invalidated merely because its content appears to conflict with rational consideration³⁶. Such an approach functions as a safeguard against the subjective rejection of hadith arising from the limitations of human reasoning or the influence of particular intellectual orientations. While the role of reason is acknowledged, it is not elevated as the ultimate authority in determining the acceptance or rejection of a hadith; rather, it remains an instrument operating within the established discipline of hadith studies. Nevertheless, this study argues that such an approach requires further structuring in order to achieve a more balanced application. At this juncture, the distinction between *muḥālāt al-‘uqūl* and *muḥārāt al-‘uqūl* becomes particularly significant. This distinction enables a more systematic evaluation by differentiating between content that is truly impossible according to *al-‘aql al-ṣarīḥ* and content that is merely difficult to comprehend.

At the same time, the position of Ibn al-Jawzī, who held that a hadith whose content clearly contradicts reason or fundamental religious principles may be deemed fabricated without requiring extensive analysis represents a more stringent approach³⁷. This view underscores that certain contradictions may reach a level of certainty that renders further examination unnecessary. Such an approach functions as an initial filtering mechanism for rejecting reports that are manifestly inconsistent

34 Ibn al-Qayyim, *Al-Rūḥ fi al-Kalām ‘alā Arwāḥ al-Amwāt wa al-Aḥyā’ bi al-Dalā’il min al-Kitāb wa al-Sunnah*, 86–87.

35 Ibid., 86–87.

36 ‘Alī bin Sulṭān Mullā al-Qārī, *Al-Asrār Al-Marfū‘ah fī Al-Akbbār Al-Mawḍū‘ah* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1986), 407.

37 ‘Abd al-Raḥmān bin ‘Alī Ibn al-Jawzī, *Al-Mawḍū‘āt* (Madinah al-Munawwarah: al-Maktabah al-Salafiyah, 1966), 1:106.

with foundational religious principles and sound rationality. However, this study finds that such strictness does not contradict the proposed classificatory framework. Rather, Ibn al-Jawzī's position corresponds to the category of *muḥālāt al-ʿuqūl*, where the contradiction reaches a definitive and undeniable level. In contrast, the distinction between *muḥālāt* and *muḥārāt* operates in cases that require careful examination prior to judgment. Accordingly, both approaches are complementary and contribute to the development of a more comprehensive evaluative mechanism in textual criticism, with the classification of *muḥālāt* and *muḥārāt al-ʿuqūl* serving as a foundational analytical tool for assessing hadith content.

Textual Analysis Based on *al-ʿAql al-Ṣarīḥ*

The application of *al-ʿaql al-ṣarīḥ* in textual criticism requires a systematic and comprehensive analytical process to ensure that the evaluation of hadith texts is not influenced by subjective preconceptions. Based on the proposed framework, this process does not occur spontaneously but proceeds through a series of interrelated stages. Its primary objective is to ensure that any claim of contradiction between the *matn* and rational judgment is thoroughly examined before any conclusion is drawn. Such a rigorous approach is not entirely new within the discipline of hadith studies, as earlier scholars had already employed integrated criticism encompassing both *isnād* and *matn*³⁸.

The first stage involves identifying elements within a hadith text that appear to conflict with reason. This approach is consistent with the view of Ibn al-Qayyim, who regarded contradiction with *al-idrāk al-ḥissī* (sensory perception) and commonly observed human experience as among the preliminary indicators of a problematic *matn*. According to him, reports that clearly negate established sensory realities or universally recognized empirical observations warrant closer scrutiny, as such characteristics may signal the presence of defects within the text³⁹. At this level, a preliminary assessment is conducted to determine whether the content genuinely contradicts reason or merely appears unusual in light of ordinary human experience. This distinction is crucial, as not all extraordinary matters constitute rational contradictions. Careful scrutiny at this stage prevents the premature rejection of hadith based solely on superficial impressions.

38 M Suryadinata, "Kritik Matan Hadis: Klasik Hingga Kontemporer," *Ushuluna: Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin* 2, no. 2 (April 12, 2020): 111–129, <http://journal.uinjkt.ac.id/index.php/una/article/view/15183>.

39 Ibn al-Qayyim, *Al-Manār Al-Munīf fī Al-Ṣaḥīḥ wa Al-Ḍaʿīf*, 51.

The second stage entails reassessing the understanding of the hadith text through a deeper interpretive approach. At this stage, potential misunderstandings related to wording, context, or intended meaning must be addressed by referring to parallel narrations, scholarly commentaries, and the general principles of the *shari'ah*. The aim is to ensure that any perceived contradiction does not stem from misinterpretation but genuinely exists within the content itself. This approach reflects the methodological rigor of hadith scholars, who did not hastily reject reports without thorough examination⁴⁰. For instance, al-Nawawī reconciled two apparently conflicting authentic hadith—“*lā ‘adwā*” (there is no contagion) and the prohibition against mixing diseased camels with healthy ones—by clarifying that diseases do not transmit independently by their own nature, but that God has made contact a causal means for transmission⁴¹. Thus, the first hadith negates pre-Islamic beliefs about inherent contagion, while the second provides practical guidance to avoid harm in accordance with divine causation.

If the apparent contradiction persists after interpretive reassessment, the next stage is to classify the form of contradiction as either *muḥālāt al-‘uqūl* or *muḥārāt al-‘uqūl*. This distinction is essential, as only what is genuinely impossible according to sound rationality can serve as a basis for rejecting a hadith⁴². The Prophet does not convey anything that is impossible according to *al-‘aql al-ṣarīḥ*⁴³. In contrast, matters that are merely difficult to comprehend should not be dismissed arbitrarily. Through this classification, the evaluation of hadith texts becomes more precise and is not reduced to the limitations of human imagination or experience.

Through this structured procedure, the method based on *al-‘aql al-ṣarīḥ* serves as a practical analytical framework that regulates the use of reason in textual criticism. It facilitates the identification of problematic hadith at the level of the *matn* while ensuring a balanced approach between preserving the authority of revelation and engaging in rational understanding. In doing so, this approach strengthens the discipline of textual criticism by providing clear methodological guidance for addressing apparent contradictions between hadith texts and rational considerations.

40 Radin Ahmad Taufik Salikin Izaddin et al., “Pendekatan Fiqh Al-Hadith Dalam Aplikasi Syariah: Satu Tinjauan Konseptual,” in *5th International Conference of Postgraduate Students & Academics in Syariah and Law 2025* (Nilai: Faculty of Syariah and Law, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, 2025), 104–114.

41 Yahyā bin Sharf Al-Nawawī, *Al-Minhāj Sharḥ ‘alā Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Beirut: Dār al-Ihyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1972), 1:35.

42 Shafiq Wingrā, “Naqd Matn Al-Ḥadīth: Tārikhhu Wa Maqāyisuhu Wa Manāhij Al-‘Ulamā’ Fīhi” (Darul Huda Islamic University, 2018), 117.

43 Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū‘ Al-Fatāwā*, 2:312.

Application of *al-‘Aql al-Ṣarīḥ* to Selected Hadith

The application of *al-‘aql al-ṣarīḥ* in textual criticism can be clearly demonstrated through the analysis of hadith that appear, on a surface reading, to conflict with rational considerations. One frequently cited example is the report concerning Prophet Sulaymān, as narrated in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī: “Tonight I will go to one hundred women, or ninety-nine.”⁴⁴ This narration reflects the Prophet’s determination to visit a large number of his wives in a single night. Taken literally, such content may raise questions regarding ordinary human capability and has led some to challenge its authenticity based solely on rational assumptions.

Following the analytical procedure outlined in this study, the first step is to identify the nature of the alleged contradiction. In this case, the perceived conflict arises from the assumption that such an act exceeds normal human physical capacity. However, this initial judgment must be temporarily suspended to allow for the next stage of analysis, namely the reassessment of the textual meaning. This step is essential to prevent premature conclusions based solely on a literal reading of the hadith.

The second step involves a deeper interpretive examination through reference to scholarly explanations and related narrations. In this regard, scholars have clarified that the extraordinary abilities attributed to prophets fall within the category of divinely granted distinctions and are not confined to ordinary human limitations. Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalānī, for instance, demonstrates through a comprehensive analysis of supporting narrations that the content of this hadith does not contradict reason but rather lies beyond the scope of common human experience⁴⁵. Accordingly, a holistic interpretation must be prioritized before any judgment of rejection is made.

If the issue is resolved at this stage, there is no need to proceed further. However, if further analysis is required, the findings indicate that the content of the hadith does not reach the level of impossibility according to *al-‘aql al-ṣarīḥ*. Instead, it falls within the category of *muḥārāt al-‘uqūl*, referring to matters that are difficult to comprehend or that lie beyond ordinary experience. As such, it cannot serve as a valid basis for rejecting the hadith. This classification underscores that the limitations of human understanding do not necessarily imply the invalidity of the content itself.

Through this application, it becomes evident that the principle of *al-‘aql al-ṣarīḥ* functions as a practical mechanism for regulating the critical evaluation of hadith texts. It enables a clear distinction between genuine contradictions and apparent tensions arising from human cognitive limitations. In doing so, this approach prevents the premature rejection of hadith and ensures that the use of

44 Muḥammad bin Ismā‘īl Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī* (Cairo: Dār al-Ta‘ṣīl, 2012), 4:60.

45 Ibn Hajar Al-‘Asqalānī, *Fath Al-Bārī bi Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma‘rifah, 1960), 6:462.

reason in textual criticism remains aligned with the principles of revelation and the established discipline of hadith studies.

The Role of *al-‘Aql al-Ṣariḥ* in Addressing *Ghaybiyyāt*

One of the central challenges in textual criticism lies in dealing with reports that address unseen realities or extraordinary phenomena that fall beyond empirical human experience. In this context, the principle of *al-‘aql al-ṣariḥ* plays a crucial role in ensuring that the limitations of human reason are not misconstrued as a basis for rejecting hadith content. Rather than denying the existence of realities beyond human perception, *al-‘aql al-ṣariḥ* affirms the presence of domains that cannot be fully grasped through ordinary observation, particularly in matters pertaining to the unseen⁴⁶. This epistemological position is consistent with Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī’s methodological framework for engaging with the Sunnah, particularly his emphasis on distinguishing between *‘ālam al-shahādah* (the observable world) and *‘ālam al-ghayb* (the unseen world)⁴⁷. According to al-Qaraḍāwī, authentic reports concerning the unseen should not be evaluated solely according to the laws of the physical world or sensory experience. Accordingly, the limitations of human reason in comprehending the modality (*kayfiyyah*) of such phenomena should not constitute a basis for rejecting the content of hadith⁴⁸. From this perspective, both frameworks recognize that sound reason, by its very nature, acknowledges its own epistemic limitations, thereby affirming the authority of revelation in matters pertaining to the unseen without falling into either speculative rationalism or uncritical textual rejection.

Unseen realities such as the intermediate realm (*barzakh*), the events of the Day of Judgment and the nature of reward and punishment in the Hereafter are among the themes in hadith that often raise questions when evaluated purely on rational grounds. In this regard, the approach of *al-‘aql al-ṣariḥ* requires a clear distinction between the inability of reason to comprehend a matter and the claim that it is inherently impossible. A phenomenon that cannot be fully conceptualized does not necessarily constitute an impossibility; rather, it may lie beyond the limited scope of human cognition. This perspective is consistent with the views of classical theologians such as al-Bāqillānī, al-Juwaynī, and al-Ghazālī, who emphasized the inherent limitations of reason, particularly in matters of the unseen, including the

46 Ibn al-Qayyim, *Al-Rūḥ fi al-Kalām ‘alā Arwāḥ al-Amwāt wa al-Aḥyā’ bi al-Dalā’il min al-Kitāb wa al-Sunnah*, 86–87.

47 Yūsuf Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Kayfā Nata’ām al-Ma’a Al-Sunnah Al-Nabawiyyah* (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 2002), 191–195.

48 Ibid., 194.

comprehension of the divine essence⁴⁹. Accordingly, hadith addressing unseen realities should not be dismissed solely on the grounds that they do not conform to rational expectations.

This approach further maintains that revelation cannot contain anything that is genuinely impossible according to sound reason (*al-‘aql al-ṣarīḥ*)⁵⁰. Rather, it may present realities that challenge habitual modes of thinking while remaining within the bounds of rational possibility as recognized by *al-‘aql al-ṣarīḥ*. By applying this principle, the analysis of hadith becomes more rigorous, particularly in distinguishing between content that requires interpretation (*ta’wīl*), contextual understanding, or acceptance as part of the unseen reality that transcends full rational comprehension.

By emphasizing the role of *al-‘aql al-ṣarīḥ* in addressing hadith related to the unseen and extraordinary phenomena, this approach preserves a critical balance between adherence to revelation and the use of reason in interpreting religious texts. It prevents the tendency to reject hadith based solely on rational considerations, while ensuring that acceptance of hadith content is grounded in sound and disciplined understanding. This methodological caution is in line with the position of Mullā al-Qārī, who asserted that a report should only be deemed problematic when it clearly contradicts the Qur’an, the Sunnah, consensus, *al-‘aql al-ṣarīḥ*, or when no plausible interpretive reconciliation remains⁵¹.

Forms of Deviation in Applying Reason

The use of reason in textual criticism, when not guided by sound principles, may lead to significant deviations in the evaluation of hadith. Such deviations occur when reason ceases to function as an instrument aligned with revelation and is instead elevated to the status of the absolute authority determining the acceptance or rejection of hadith texts. In contemporary discourse, this tendency can be observed in certain approaches that prioritize rational judgment as the primary criterion, often without adequate consideration of the broader methodological framework of hadith studies. One notable manifestation of this deviation is the inclination to evaluate hadith solely on the basis of logical reasoning, thereby leading to the rejection of reports deemed incompatible with rational expectations, as seen in some

49 Mohd Faizul Azmi and Muhammad Rashidi Wahab, “Kedudukan Akal Dalam Pendalilan Akidah,” *Jurnal Teknologi* 63, no. 1 (July 29, 2013): 31–32, <https://journals.utm.my/index.php/jurnalteknologi/article/view/1563>.

50 Muḥammad bin Abī Bakr Ibn al-Qayyim, *Al-Ṣawā‘iq Al-Mursalah fī Rad ‘alā Al-Jahmiyyah wa Al-Mu‘aṭilah* (Riyadh: Dār al-‘Āshimah, 1987), 3:829.

51 ‘Alī bin Sulṭān Mullā al-Qārī, *Sharḥ Sharḥ Nukhbah Al-Fikr fī Mustalahāt Ahl Al-Athār* (Beirut: Dār al-Arqam, 1994), 443.

strands of Liberal Islamic thought⁵². Such approaches frequently fail to distinguish between what is genuinely impossible and what merely lies beyond ordinary human experience. Consequently, hadith that should be interpreted contextually or classified as *muḥārāt al-‘uqūl* are rejected outright on the grounds of perceived irrationality.

A commonly cited example is the rejection of the hadith concerning the fly, narrated in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī: “If a fly falls into the drink of one of you, let him immerse it and then remove it.”⁵³ The rejection of this narration is often based on the assumption that its content contradicts logic or modern scientific understanding⁵⁴. Among the scholars who questioned the content of this hadith on the grounds that it conflicted with rational considerations were Rashīd Riḍā, Maḥmūd Abū Rayyah, and Tawfīq Ṣidqī⁵⁵. However, such an approach fails to consider the comprehensive framework of hadith evaluation, including the possibilities of interpretation, contextualization, and the evolving nature of scientific knowledge that may offer a more accurate understanding of the report. This type of rejection reflects the use of reason in isolation from the discipline of hadith studies and indicates an unrestrained application of rational judgment.

Deviations in the use of reason may also be identified when hadith are evaluated within rigid theological frameworks. In such cases, the *matn* tends to be dismissed prematurely on the grounds of perceived contradiction with pre-established doctrinal principles, without due consideration of alternative interpretations or the actual status of the report. Here, reason functions not as an analytical tool but as a decisive authority. An example is the rejection of a narration reported by al-Tirmidhī concerning the account of Ḥawwā’, in which Iblīs allegedly suggested naming her child ‘Abd al-Ḥārith⁵⁶. This rejection is based on the assumption that the content contradicts the doctrine of prophetic infallibility. Shi‘i scholars such as Nāṣir Makārim al-Shīrāzī have argued that the report is incompatible with sound rationality⁵⁷. In contrast, the approach of hadith scholars demonstrates greater methodological restraint, as they do not reject the report outright but reassess its meaning through

52 Pinang, “Metode Pemahaman Hadis Jaringan Islam Liberal.”

53 Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, 4:342.

54 Maḥmūd Abū Rayyah, *Aḍwā’ alā Al-Sunnah Al-Muḥammadiyyah* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1957), 196.

55 Nur Kholis, “Pemikiran Muhammad Rasyid Ridho Tentang Kritik Matan Hadis Nabi Muhammad,” *al-Afkar, Journal For Islamic Studies* 4, no. 1 (March 11, 2021): 15–30, https://www.al-afkar.com/index.php/Afkar_Journal/article/view/172; Raihan Safira Aulia, Siti Alfi Aliyah, and M. Rusli, “Metodologi Pemahaman Hadis Rejeksionis-Liberal,” *ULIL ALBAB: Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin* 1, no. 11 (2022): 4088–4095.

56 Muḥammad bin ‘Isā Al-Tirmidhī, *Al-Jāmi‘ Al-Kabīr* (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1996), 5:160.

57 Nāṣir Makārim Al-Shīrāzī, *Al-Amthal fī Tafsīr Kitāb Allāh Al-Munzal* (Beirut: Mu’assasah al-A‘lamī, 2013), 7:503.

appropriate interpretation while also examining its chain of transmission. As a result, the report is not accepted as a prophetic statement but is instead classified as *ma'wqūf*⁵⁸. This illustrates that deviation arises when reason is applied without a balanced and structured analytical framework.

This analysis demonstrates that deviations in the use of reason stem from a fundamental misunderstanding of its proper function. When reason is employed without adherence to sound principles, it not only compromises the evaluation of hadith but may also lead to conclusions that contradict established scholarly frameworks. Accordingly, the application of *al-ʿaql al-ṣarīḥ* becomes essential in ensuring that the use of reason in textual criticism remains balanced, disciplined, and free from ideological bias or methodologically unsound interpretations.

Proposed Analytical Framework Based on *al-ʿAql al-Ṣarīḥ*

Building upon the preceding discussion, this study proposes an analytical framework for textual criticism grounded in the principle of *al-ʿaql al-ṣarīḥ*, designed to offer a more practical and structured approach in contemporary contexts. This framework aims to systematize the use of reason in evaluating hadith content while maintaining a balanced relationship between the authority of revelation and the need for rational understanding. It does not seek to replace existing methodologies in textual criticism; rather, it functions as a complementary model that clarifies and refines the role of reason within the process of *matn* evaluation.

The proposed framework is structured around three interrelated components. First, the initial identification of potential contradictions within the *matn* through general rational assessment, with particular attention to whether the content genuinely violates rational principles or merely appears unusual. Second, a process of interpretive verification, which involves re-examining the hadith through reference to parallel narrations, classical commentaries, and an assessment of its coherence with broader *sharīʿah* principles. This stage ensures that any perceived contradiction is not the result of misinterpretation. Third, the classification of the identified issue into either *muḥālāt al-ʿuqūl* or *muḥārāt al-ʿuqūl*, which serves as the basis for determining whether the hadith should be rejected or accepted⁵⁹.

58 Muḥammad Naṣir al-Dīn Al-Albānī, *Silsilah Al-Aḥādīth Al-Daʿīfah wa Al-Marwūʿah* (Riyadh: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1992), 1:516; Ismāʿīl ʿUmar Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa Al-Nihāyah* (Dār Hijr, 2003), 1:225.

59 Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmūʿ Al-Fatāwā*, 2:312.

Through this structure, the *al-‘aql al-ṣarīḥ* framework serves as a practical guideline for addressing hadith that raise content-related concerns. It establishes a clear boundary between genuine contradictions and perceived tensions arising from the limitations of human understanding. This approach also helps reduce inconsistencies in evaluation and strengthens the integration between classical methodologies and contemporary analytical needs, particularly in responding to modern intellectual trends that tend to assess hadith primarily on the basis of rational criteria.

Overall, the proposed framework demonstrates that the use of reason in textual criticism can be systematically formulated and effectively applied without undermining the foundational principles of hadith scholarship. By providing a structured and consistent approach, this framework enhances the critical evaluation of hadith texts and contributes to the development of a more balanced and methodologically grounded discourse. The key findings of this study are summarized in Table 2 below for ease of reference.

Table 2. Analytical Framework for Textual Criticism Based on al-‘Aql al-Ṣarīḥ

Step	Criterion	Description	Evaluation Indicators	Purpose
1	Identification of Contradictions	Identifying preliminary issues within the hadith text that appear problematic when examined in light of reason and reality	• The text appears to contradict general rational judgment (basic logical principles) • The text appears unusual or problematic in light of ordinary human experience	To avoid the premature rejection of hadith based on initial impressions
2	Reinterpretation	Reassessing the understanding of the text in order to avoid interpretive errors	• Cross-examination of variant narrations dealing with the same subject matter. • Application of the methodologies of <i>Asbāb al-Wurūd</i> and consultation of authoritative commentaries. • Consistency with the principles of <i>Shari‘ah</i> and the <i>Maqāṣid al-Sunnah</i>	To ensure that the perceived contradiction does not arise from misinterpretation

Step	Criterion	Description	Evaluation Indicators	Purpose
3	Classification of the Type of Contradiction	Examining the degree of tension within the text in order to determine its appropriate category	• Classification as <i>muḥālāt al-‘uqūl</i> (rational impossibilities). • Classification as <i>muḥārāt al-‘uqūl</i> (authentic unseen matters that lie beyond ordinary human experience).	To determine the nature and degree of the contradiction more accurately
4	Determination of the Status of the <i>Matn</i>	Assessing whether the hadith text should be rejected, reinterpreted or accepted based on the identified category.	• Final determination of whether the <i>matn</i> is <i>maqḥūl</i>, subject to <i>ta’wīl</i>, or <i>mardūd</i>. • Systematic resolution through the methods of <i>al-jam‘</i>, <i>al-tarjīḥ</i> or <i>al-naskḥ</i>	To reach a conclusion based on the established analytical framework.
5	Assessment of Balance	Weighing the authority of revelation against rational consideration	• Maintaining the balance between revelation and reason based on the principle of <i>al-‘aql al-ṣarīḥ</i> as a means of understanding <i>al-Naql al-Ṣaḥīḥ</i>. • Free from liberal-rationalist and literalist-dogmatic tendencies	To ensure that the analytical approach remains balanced

Conclusion

Overall, this study demonstrates that the principle of *al-‘aql al-ṣarīḥ* provides a robust foundation for strengthening the approach to textual criticism. By situating reason in its proper role as an instrument aligned with revelation, the study affirms that the perceived conflict between reason and textual sources is not intrinsic but rather arises from misinterpretation or the unregulated use of rational judgment. Through the clear distinction between *muḥālāt* and *muḥārāt al-‘uqūl*, combined with the application of a structured analytical procedure, this study offers a framework capable of addressing hadith that appear to conflict with rational considerations. In addition, the analysis of deviations in the use of reason highlights the urgent need to regulate tendencies toward both excessive literalism and unrestrained rationalism in contemporary hadith studies. Accordingly, the proposed framework

not only reinforces the methodological foundations of textual criticism but also provides practical guidelines for evaluating hadith *matn* in a systematic and balanced manner. In doing so, it contributes to the development of a more responsive and methodologically grounded discourse in contemporary hadith scholarship.

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Author Contributions

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The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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