

UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF SCIENCE IN THE MODERN ERA: A TAHLILI STUDY OF HADITH ABU DAWUD NO. 3641

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the meaning and relevance of the hadith of Abu Dawud No. 3641 about the virtue of knowledgeable people in facing the challenges of education in the modern era that tends to be pragmatic and materialistic. This study is a qualitative study with the method of library study and tahlili analysis. Primary data were obtained from the book of Sunan Abu Dawud, while secondary data came from related books and articles. This study analyzed the sanad and matan of the hadith in depth to ensure its validity. The results of the study show that the sanad of this hadith is muttaṣil (connected) with most of the narrators who are considered thiqa, although there are narrators who are ḍa'if (weak) so that this hadith is classified as hasan lighairihi and can still be used as an argument. This hadith analogizes the virtue of knowledgeable people like the full moon that illuminates the stars in the sky. The meaning is that knowledgeable people have a broad impact on society compared to worshipers whose benefits are individual. This research contributes to strengthening understanding of the importance of education based on religious

values in the midst of modernization, and recommends the integration of religious knowledge and general knowledge to shape the noble morals of students.

Keywords: *Islamic Education; Modern Era; Tablīhi Hadith Study; The Virtue of Knowledge*

Introduction

The modern era, synonymous with technological advancement and industrialization, has brought fundamental changes to the objectives of education (Munajah, 2021). Formal education is often seen as the primary means of obtaining employment, with a diploma being one of the key requirements in the workplace. This perspective is influenced by Western thought, as articulated by John Dewey, who stated that the purpose of education is to guide individuals toward meaningful work and prepare them to face the challenges of the future (Mulyadi, 2023). In contrast, Islamic education prioritizes knowledge to shape individuals who are faithful, pious, and virtuous, and capable of becoming *khalīfah fi al-ardh*, or perfect human beings (*insan kāmil*) (Andriyani et al., 2024; Susdarwono, 2021). Thus, modern education, which tends to be dominated by Western theories, often neglects spiritual and moral aspects.

Modernization does not only impact general education but also Islamic education. This is marked by the emergence of the concept of modern Islamic education, one of which was proposed by Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas regarding the Islamization of knowledge obtained through the deconstruction of Western knowledge and its subsequent reconstruction into Islamic knowledge (Nuryanti & Hakim, 2020) and the use of technology that has a significant impact on learning and the lives of students (Alfi et al., 2023). During the era of the *ulama*, education was directed toward acquiring knowledge as the primary goal, not making work the ultimate goal of the educational process (Mulyadi, 2023). As a result, students became experts in their fields and great scholars. In some Islamic boarding schools, scholars

continue to empower students with life skills adapted to the times, but the primary focus remains on understanding religious knowledge and character development, ensuring that the knowledge gained brings benefits and blessings (Gustriani & Kholis, 2024). However, the current educational context tends to be oriented toward securing employment (Sukirman et al., 2023). As a result, the purpose of education and knowledge is no longer directed toward drawing closer to Allah, but rather toward worldly interests (Safaat, 2024). Such a perspective often leads to the knowledge gained losing its blessings. This is marked by a lack of understanding of the knowledge being studied, as well as a decline in the quality of worship and moral conduct. This phenomenon highlights the importance of re-examining the true nature of knowledge and the uniqueness of those who possess it as a counterbalance to the shifting educational paradigm in the modern era.

Knowledge is the light that guides humanity to distinguish between right and wrong (Oktasari Putri et al., 2024). Islam views knowledge as a means of drawing closer to Allah SWT (Musyaffa & Haris, 2022) and as guidance for humanity in living on earth as khalifah fi al-ardh (Susdarwono, 2021). Humanism in Islam also emphasizes that humans are Allah's vicegerents on earth, so humans need to be aware of Allah's existence and utilize knowledge as a means to achieve moral perfection in life. As stated by Tan & Ibrahim (2017) Islamic education aims to create God-conscious individuals who are capable of bringing positive change to society. Thus, educated people have advantages over those who are not educated. Educated people are evident in their educated attitudes and behavior, as well as having life goals oriented toward the hereafter, while those who are not educated prioritize the world for temporary happiness.

The reality of modern education, which is increasingly leaning toward utilitarianism, has shifted the function of knowledge. However, in Islam, knowledge is not merely oriented toward achieving worldly success but also serves as a means to know Allah

SWT, thus requiring efforts to restore it as emphasized in Islam—to achieve worldly goals while also serving as a means to know Allah SWT, oneself, and be beneficial to others (Irawan & Rohman, 2025). Islam holds the position of the learned in such high esteem that they are equated with the prophets in terms of intellectual heritage. Therefore, when knowledge loses its true essence and is replaced by worldly desires such as higher status or economic standing, a concerning void in values emerges. In this context, the hadith of Abu Dawud No. 3641 becomes very important to study further because it contains a profound message regarding the virtue of knowledgeable people. This hadith serves as a reminder for Muslims to reconsider the orientation of Islamic education in this era.

Various previous studies have discussed the concept of knowledge from an Islamic perspective and its relevance to the modern era. The study by Nuryanti & Hakim (2020) discusses Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas' idea of the Islamization of science, which emphasizes the alignment of modern knowledge with Islamic values. Additionally, the research by Ismail et al. (2024) examines the differences between Western and Islamic concepts of knowledge in the modern era through educational hadiths. Furthermore, Andriyani et al. (2024) discusses the purpose of education from the perspective of hadiths. All three studies address knowledge in the modern era. However, these three studies have not specifically examined the hadith on the excellence of the learned in HR. Abu Dawud no. 3641 and its challenges in the modern era.

This study provides a new perspective on the meaning of Abu Dawud no. 3641 hadith on the excellence of the learned and relates it to the challenges of modern education. To date, no research has delved into the meaning and relevance of this hadith in the context of modern education, which is increasingly pragmatic and materialistic. This study aims to examine the meaning of Abu Dawud no. 3641 hadith on the virtue of knowledgeable people through a tafsir tahlīlī

approach, particularly the analogy of the full moon with stars, and connect it with the concept of knowledge in the modern era

Method

This study employs qualitative research using a literature review method. The literature review in this study examines the hadith on the importance of seeking knowledge in Sunan Abu Dawud No. 3641. This study utilizes primary and secondary data sources. Primary data sources are derived from the book Sunan Abu Dawud. Secondary data sources include relevant books and articles on the topic under discussion, supplemented by the applications *Maktabah Syamilah* and *Jawami'ul Kalim*. Data collection techniques involve gathering various literature relevant to the research topic. Data analysis techniques employ the *tahlili* method as outlined by Amrulloh (2022).

Result and Discussion

This study will analyze the external and internal aspects of hadith. The hadith that will be examined in this study is the hadith narrated by Abu Dawud no. 3641 concerning the virtue of seeking knowledge (As-Sijistani, 1914):

حَدَّثَنَا مُسَدَّدٌ بْنُ مُسَرَّهٍ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ دَاوُدَ، قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ عَاصِمَ بْنَ رَجَاءِ بْنِ حَيْرَةَ يُحَدِّثُ، عَنْ دَاوُدَ بْنِ جَمِيلٍ، عَنْ كَثِيرِ بْنِ قَيْسٍ، قَالَ: كُنْتُ جَالِساً مَعَ أَبِي الدَّرْدَاءِ فِي مَسْجِدِ دِمَشْقَ، فَجَاءَهُ رَجُلٌ، فَقَالَ: يَا أَبَا الدَّرْدَاءِ، إِنِّي جِئْتُكَ مِنْ مَدِينَةِ الرَّسُولِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لِحَدِيثٍ بَلَّغَنِي أَنَّكَ تُحَدِّثُهُ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، مَا جِئْتُ لِحَاجَةٍ. قَالَ: فَإِنِّي سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: "مَنْ سَلَكَ طَرِيقاً يَطْلُبُ فِيهِ عِلْماً سَلَكَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ بِهِ طَرِيقاً مِنْ طُرُقِ الْجَنَّةِ، وَإِنَّ الْمَلَائِكَةَ لَتَضَعُ أَجْنَئَهَا رِضاً لَطَالِبِ الْعِلْمِ، وَإِنَّ الْعَالَمَ لَيَسْتَغْفِرُ لَهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَالْحَيَاتُ فِي جَوْفِ الْمَاءِ، وَإِنَّ فَضْلَ الْعَالَمِ عَلَى الْعَابِدِ كَفَضْلِ الْقَمَرِ لَيْلَةَ الْبَدْرِ عَلَى سَائِرِ الْكَوَاكِبِ، وَإِنَّ الْعِلْمَاءَ وَرَثَةُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ، وَإِنَّ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ لَمْ يُورَثُوا دِينَاراً وَلَا دِرْهماً، وَرَثُوا الْعِلْمَ، فَمَنْ أَخَذَهُ أَخَذَ بِحِطٍّ وَافِرٍ

Meaning: "From Katsir bin Qays, he said: I once sat with Abud Dardā' in the mosque of Damascus. Then a man came to him and said, 'O Abud Dardā', I have come to you from the city of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ (Madinah), because I heard that you narrated a hadith from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. I did not come for any other purpose.' Abud Dardā' said, 'Verily, I heard the Messenger of Allah

ﷺ say: *Whoever embarks on a journey in search of knowledge, Allah will make the path to Paradise easy for him. And indeed, the angels lower their wings out of respect for those seeking knowledge. And indeed, those who possess knowledge are forgiven by all that is in the heavens and on earth, even by the fish in the water. And the superiority of the learned over the devout is like the superiority of the full moon over all the stars. And indeed, the scholars are the heirs of the prophets. The prophets did not leave behind dinars or dirhams, but they left behind knowledge. So whoever takes it has indeed taken a great portion.*"

However, this study will focus on the discussion of the hadith in the matn hadith that reads:

فَضْلُ الْعَالِمِ عَلَى الْعَابِدِ كَفَضْلِ الْقَمَرِ لَيْلَةَ الْبَدْرِ عَلَى سَائِرِ الْكَوَاكِبِ

Meaning: *"The superiority of the learned over the devout is like the superiority of the moon on a full moon night over all the stars."*

In addition to Sunan Abu Dawud, this hadith can also be found in other al-Mashadir al-Ashliyah, such as Sunan Ibnu Majah (Majah, 2014), Sunan Tirmidzi (At-Tirmidzi, 1975), Sunan Thabrani (At-Thabrani, 1983), Musnad ad-Darimi (Ad-Darimi, 2000), and Ibnu Abi Syaibah (Syaibah, 1997).

External Analysis of Hadith (*al-Tahlil al-Khārījī*): Tracing and Evaluating Hadith: "Fadhlu 'Ālim 'alal 'Ābid Kafadhlu Qomari Lailatal Badri 'Alā Sa'iril Kawākib"

In the external analysis of hadith, the data presented are taḥrīj sanad, jarḥ wa ta'dīl of the main sanad, analysis of the main sanad, and conclusions regarding the value of the hadith. This is done in order to gain a deeper understanding of the hadith in terms of its sanad.

Tahrīj Sanad Hadith

In the takhrij sanad hadith, it should be noted that the author uses the abbreviation "b." for the word bin. The hadith "Fadhlu 'Ālim 'alal 'Ābid Kafadhlu Qomari Lailatal Badri 'Alā Sa'iril Kawākib" is found in six al-mashadir al-ashliyah.

Musnad Ibnu Abi Syaibah

Ibnu Abi Syaibah (d. 235 AH) in Musnad ad-Darimi (2000) specifically in the chapter “Mā Rawāhū Abū Dardā’,” narrated this hadith with the above wording through the chain of transmission: al-Faḍl b. Dukayn, from ‘Āṣim b. Rajā’ b. Hayyawah, from Kathīr b. Qays, from Abū Dardā’, from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

Sunan Ibnu Majah

Ibn Majah (d. 273 AH) in Sunan Ibn Majah (2014), specifically in the chapter ‘Ulama wa Ḥatthu ‘alā Ṭalib al-‘Ilm, narrates this hadith with a similar wording through the following chain of transmission: Nasr b. ‘Ali al-Jahdami, from ‘Abdullah b. Dawud al-Khuraybi, from ‘Asim b. Raja’ b. Haywah, from Dawud b. Jamil, from Kathir b. Qays, from Abu Darda’, from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

Sunan Abu Dawud

Abu Dawud (d. 275 AH) in Sunan Abu Dawud (1914) narrated this hadith through the following chain of transmission: Musaddad b. Musarhad, from ‘Abdullah b. Dawud, from ‘Asim b. Rajā’ b. Hayyah, from Dawud b. Jamil, from Kathir b. Qays, from Abu Darda’, from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

Sunan Tirmidzi

Tirmidzi (d. 279 AH) in Sunan at-Tirmidzi (1975) narrated this hadith through the following chain of transmission: Mahmud b. Khidasy al-Baghdowy, from Muhammad b. Yazid al-Wasithiy, from ‘Ashim b. Rojai b. Haiwah, from Qais b. Katsir, from Abu Darda, from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

Sunan Thabrani

Thabrani (d. 360 AH) in Musnad asy-Syamiyyin Li at-Thabrani (1983) narrated this hadith through the chain: Mu‘ādh b. al-Muthannā, from Abū Muslim al-Kashyī, from Musaddad b. Musarhad, from ‘Abdullah b. Dawud, from ‘Asim b. Raja’ b. Hayyawah, from Dawud b. Jamil, from Qays b. Kathir, from Abu Darda’, from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

Musnad ad-Darimi

Darimi (d. 255 AH) in Musnad ad-Darimi (2000) narrated this hadith through the chain: Naşr b. ‘Alī, from ‘Abdullāh b. Dāwūd, from ‘Āşim b. Rajā’ b. Ḥayyawah, from Dāwūd b. Jamīl, from Kathīr b. Qays, from Abū Dardā’ (may Allah be pleased with him), from the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), with the additional context that a man came to Abū Dardā’ in the mosque of Damascus, saying that he had come from Medina to hear the hadith of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) as narrated by Abū Dardā’.

Jarh Wa Ta’dil Main Sanad Path

The main chain of transmission for this hadith has four narrators, namely Abu Darda’, Katsir bin Qays, Ashim bin Raja’ bin Hasywah, and Dawud bin Jamil. The author will provide a biographical overview of these four narrators using the methodology of jarh wa-ta’dil. Jarh wa-ta’dil is a field of study that examines the reliability of narrators, thereby determining the quality of the hadith they transmit (Ritonga, 2022). Below is a biographical overview of the four narrators:

Abū al-Dardā’ (‘Umar b. Mālik) is known as a companion of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. He lived in Damascus after being appointed qāḍī by Mu‘āwiya on the orders of Umar bin al-Khattāb. Among his teachers were the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, and among his students were his son, Bilāl b. Abī al-Dardā’. In the context of hadith transmission, Ibn Hajar (d. 852 AH) commented: “Şahābī jaleel” (a noble companion). Ibn Hibbān (d. 354 AH) mentioned him in his book al-Thiqāt (the trustworthy narrators) (As-Sijistani, 1914). Thus, it can be concluded that Abu Darda’ was a thiqa and respected narrator.

Katsīr b. Qays (also known as Qays b. Katsīr) is known as a hadith narrator from the generation of the Ṭabī’un. Among his students were his son, Katsīr b. Katsīr b. Qays. In the context of hadith narration, Ibn Hajar (d. 852 AH) commented: “Ḍa’īf” (weak). Ibn Hibbān (d. 354

AH) recorded him in his book *al-Thiqāt* (the trustworthy narrators), but on the other hand, he is often referred to as a weak narrator by other hadith scholars such as al-Dhahabī and al-Dāraqūṭnī. Ibn Qan‘a (d. 325 AH) made a major error by considering him a Companion in his book *al-Mu‘jam al-Ṣahābah*, which was later corrected by hadith scholars (As-Sijistani, 1914). Therefore, it can be concluded that Katsīr b. Qays is a weak narrator.

Dāwūd b. Jamīl (or al-Walīd b. Jamīl) is included in the seventh *ṭabaqat* in *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* and is considered *ḍa‘īf* by Ibn Ḥajar. He is known as a narrator who narrated hadith from many sources, including from Khabīr b. Qais. In the context of hadith narration, Ibn Ḥibbān (d. 354 AH) recorded him in his book *al-Thiqāt* as a reliable narrator. However, Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr and al-Azdi referred to him as *majhūl* or unknown in other hadiths. Ibn Ḥajar criticized the doubts surrounding the *isnād* of his narrations, and al-Daraqutnī noted him as *mujmal* or unknown (As-Sijistani, 1914). Therefore, it can be concluded that Dāwūd b. Jamīl is a *ḍa‘īf* narrator.

‘Āṣim b. Rajā’ b. Ḥayyūa al-Kindī al-Filastīnī, who died between 141 AH and 150 AH, is included in the eighth *ṭabaqat* in *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb*. He was assessed by Ibn Ḥajar as *ṣadūq* who sometimes made mistakes (*yuhimm*) in his narrations. In the context of *jarḥ wa ta’dīl*, Abu Zur‘ah al-Rāzī and Ibn Ḥibbān referred to him as an acceptable narrator, with Ibn Ḥibbān including him in *al-Thiqāt*. However, Yāḥyā b. Ma‘īn commented on him, calling him a *ṣawīlah*, meaning that there were occasional weaknesses in his narrations. Cuitbah b. Sa‘īd also mentions criticism of him, while al-Mizzī says that his status depends on the level of caution in filtering his narrations (As-Sijistani, 1914). Thus, ‘Āṣim b. Rajā’ can be categorized as a *ṣadūq* narrator, but caution is needed regarding possible errors.

From these four narrators, it can be concluded that they have different statuses in the transmission of hadith. Abū al-Dardā’ (‘Umayr b. Mālik) was a respected and trustworthy companion of the Prophet.

Meanwhile, Katsīr b. Qays was a weak narrator. Dāwūd b. Jamīl has a weak status, with some criticism of his narrations, although Ibn Ḥibbān included him in his book al-Ṭhiqāt (the trustworthy narrators). As for 'Āsim b. Rajā' b. Ḥayyūa al-Kindī al-Filasṭīnī, he is considered a ṣadūq (truthful) narrator, but there are sometimes ikhtilāf (differences) in his narrations that need to be noted.

Analysis of the Main Sanad Path

Based on the data from jarḥ wa-ta'dīl, it can be concluded that all the narrators of this hadith can be used as evidence in the transmission of hadith. Additionally, between each student narrator and their teacher, there are elements of mu'āṣara (living in the same era) and liqā' (meeting), as well as a Nabawī connection that strengthens the teacher-student context in the transmission of hadith. The chain of transmission originating from Abū al-Dardā' (a companion of the Prophet) is as follows: first, Abū al-Dardā' narrated this hadith from the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. In his narration, among his teachers was the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, indicating that Abū al-Dardā' was a ṣaḥābī jāleel (noble companion). This is further supported by Ibn Ḥibbān, who recorded him in his book al-Ṭhiqāt as a reliable narrator.

Furthermore, in an analysis of the chain of narrators involved, it is known that Katsīr b. Qays (also known as Qays b. Katsīr) belonged to the generation of tabi'īn and was considered ḍa'īf (weak) by Ibn Ḥajar and several other hadith scholars. Dawud b. Jamil (or al-Walid b. Jamil), who came from the seventh ṭabaqat, was also considered ḍa'īf with some criticism of his narration, although Ibn Hibban recorded him in his book al-Ṭhiqāt. Meanwhile, 'Āsim b. Rajā' b. Ḥayyūa al-Kindī al-Filasṭīnī, who came from the eighth ṭabaqat, is recognized as ṣadūq (truthful), although there are sometimes errors in his narrations (As-Sijistani, 1914).

In the context of taḥammul wa-adā' (methods of receiving and transmitting hadith), the wording used in the hadith chain, such as

ḥaddathanā (we were told) and ‘an (from), indicates the continuity of the chain (ittiṣāl) and ensures that the hadith is not broken because there are no narrators known as mudallis (narrators who manipulate the narration) (Amrulloh, 2022). Thus, this chain of transmission can be considered valid. In conclusion, the chain of transmission of this hadith is muttaṣil (connected), and all narrators in the chain can be relied upon as evidence in the transmission of this hadith, although some narrators require closer scrutiny regarding the strength of their transmission, such as Katsīr b. Qays and Dāwūd b. Jamīl, who are rated as ḍa‘īf.

Conclusion on the Value of Hadith

The hadith “*Fadhlul ‘alim ‘alal ‘abid kafadhlil qomar lailatal badri ‘ala saairil kawaakib*” can be found in various primary sources of hadith (maṣādir aṣliyya), such as Musnad Ibn Abi Shaybah, Sunan Ibn Majah, Sunan Abu Dawud, Sunan Tirmidhi, Sunan Thabrani, and Musnad ad-Darimi. The assessment of jarḥ wa-ta‘dīl (criticism and evaluation) of the narrators of this hadith shows that all the narrators involved in its transmission are fair. Although there are a few negative assessments of the reliability of two narrators, namely Kathīr b. Qays and Dāwūd b. Jamīl, who are considered weak (ḍa‘īf).

However, based on further analysis, all narrators in this chain of transmission are acceptable and can be used as evidence in the transmission of hadith. The result of i‘tibār or analysis of the main chain of transmission confirms that the chain of transmission of this hadith is muttaṣil (connected) without any doubt in its connection. A review of the entire chain of transmission also confirms that there are no indications of shudhūd (oddities) or ‘illa (hidden flaws) that could invalidate the chain of transmission. Although there are narrators who are considered da‘īf, namely Kathīr b. Qays and Dawud b. Jamīl.

Based on the overall analysis, it can be concluded that the hadith “*Fadhlul ‘alim ‘alal ‘abid kafadhlil qomar lailatal badri ‘ala saairil kawaakib*” is a hasan lighoirihi hadith. This is because there are two

daif narrators in the tabiin chain found in each of the hadiths authenticated by the six scholars. Nevertheless, a hasan lighairihi hadith can be used as a basis for establishing definitive legal rulings that must be upheld (Mas'udi & Anwar, 2023). In the context of the superiority of the learned, this hadith can serve as a foundation for Muslims to strive even harder in seeking knowledge.

Internal Analysis of Hadith (*al-tahlil al-dakhil*):

Understanding the Meaning of Hadith “*Fadhlul ‘alim ‘ala ‘abid kafadhil qomari lailatal badri ‘ala saairil kawaakib*”

Explanation of Vocabulary and Sentences

Overall, the wording and translation of the hadith “*Fadhlul ‘alim ‘ala ‘abid kafadhil qomari lailatal badri ‘ala saairil kawaakib*” are written as follows:

فَضْلُ الْعَالِمِ عَلَى الْعَابِدِ كَفَضْلِ الْقَمَرِ لَيْلَةَ الْبَدْرِ عَلَى سَائِرِ الْكَوَاكِبِ

Meaning: “*The superiority of knowledgeable people (who practice their knowledge) over those who are skilled in worship is like the superiority of the moon on a full moon night over all other stars.*”.

The phrase “فَضْلُ الْعَالِمِ عَلَى الْعَابِدِ” means the superiority of a knowledgeable person over a devout person. In this context, the word “فَضْلٌ” means superiority, advantage, or something of greater value. The term ‘الْعَالِمِ’ derives from the root word “عَلِمَ,” which means to know or understand. Terminologically, the word ‘alim refers to someone who possesses correct religious understanding and is able to practice it, particularly religious knowledge that brings widespread benefit to many people. Meanwhile, the word “الْعَابِدِ” comes from the root word “عَبَدَ,” which means servant. In this context, the word “‘abid” is interpreted as an individual who is diligent in worship, such as prayer, fasting, remembrance of God, and so on, but without delving into its knowledge. Although these acts of worship are very noble and greatly rewarded, their benefits are limited to the individual himself. Thus, this sentence implies that a learned person has broader

benefits compared to a devout worshiper whose benefits are limited to themselves.

Furthermore, the phrase “كَفَضَلَ الْقَمَرَ لَيْلَةَ الْبَدْرِ” contains a strong and beautiful visual description of how Islam views the position of a knowledgeable person. Literally, this phrase means “like the excellence of the moon on a full moon night,” which is symbolically intended to show the difference in level between a knowledgeable person and a devout person. The word “كَفَضَلَ” means “like the virtue of,” which indicates that what follows is an analogy or comparison. The word “الْقَمَرُ” means the moon as a source of light at night and as a celestial body that reflects the sun's light at night, becoming the center of attention in the darkness of the night on earth. This meaning becomes even deeper with the phrase “lailat al-badr,” which refers to the night when the moon is in its full phase, when it shines brightest and most perfectly among its forms on other days. On that night, the moon is clearly visible, its light spreads widely and illuminates the entire night sky. This analogy aims to show that knowledgeable people are like the full moon that illuminates the night compared to other celestial bodies; they can be a source of light for those who are facing confusion or ignorance. They are like the full moon that becomes the axis in the darkness, providing direction, clarity, and calming the soul. Its light attracts the attention of many people and can inspire change, just as the moon, when shining brightly, causes people to pause in awe of its beauty. A learned person does not need to elevate themselves or seek recognition because, like the moon, they shine because of their own qualities. Understanding this sentence encourages us to appreciate knowledge and put it into practice, not just focus on our own goodness.

The last part, the phrase “عَلَى سَائِرِ الْكَوَاكِبِ,” further strengthens the meaning of the comparison by placing the moon, which in this case symbolizes knowledgeable people, in a position higher than all the stars. The word “عَلَى,” which means ‘above’ or “superior to,” indicates a clear and distinct difference in degree between the two.

This also implies superiority in terms of quality, influence, and the scope of benefits produced. The word “سَائِر” means “all” or “the rest,” and “الْكَوَاكِبُ” is the plural form of “كَوْكَبٌ,” meaning star. This describes that although stars are numerous and spread widely across the night sky, their light cannot rival the bright light of the full moon, just as the benefits of knowledge are far greater than worship without knowledge. This analogy reinforces the importance of knowledge that is put into practice as a light for one's own life and for those around them. It subtly yet strongly urges Muslims not to focus solely on the quantity of good deeds but also on the quality of knowledge that serves as their foundation.

The Relevance of Hadith to the Concept of Science in the Modern Era

The hadith narrated by Abu Dawud, No. 3641, which states, “The superiority of the learned (those who apply their knowledge) over the devout is like the superiority of the moon on a full moon night over all other stars,” holds profound meaning in the context of knowledge in the modern era. The full moon is likened to a learned person who not only illuminates themselves but also illuminates others in order to bring widespread benefit to the community around them (Ramdhani et al., 2024). This is reinforced by Allah's words in QS. Fathir: 28, which means, “Among Allah's servants, only the scholars fear Him.” This verse explains that religious knowledge will lead a person to an awareness of their responsibilities in life.

The Hadith “فُضِّلَ الْعَالِمُ عَلَى الْعَابِدِ” found in Fath al-Bari by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani tells of the difference between a knowledgeable person and a devout worshipper. In the story of a murderer who wanted to repent, the devout worshipper said that there was no way to repent because he was only focused on the magnitude of the sin of murder. On the other hand, the learned person explained that repentance is still accepted as long as it is done sincerely. This demonstrates that knowledge provides a clearer understanding of religious laws, which are essential for addressing various issues. As

explained in Fath al-Bari, the right decision often depends on broad knowledge, not merely on feelings or experience alone (Al-Asqalani, 1970). Thus, the position of the learned is superior to that of the devout.

The superiority of a scholar (scientist or teacher) over a devout person is illustrated in a hadith with a different analogy. The superiority of a scholar over a devout person is likened to the superiority of the full moon shining brightly compared to the stars in the sky (Al-Khotobi, 1932). This parable reveals that the knowledge possessed by a scholar has a much broader and more valuable impact, meaning that its benefits are not only felt by the scholar himself, but also by others. The knowledge possessed by a scholar provides guidance that can bring about positive change in society. While the worship of a devout person, although highly valued, does not have the same impact as the efforts of a knowledgeable person. Therefore, knowledge is the legacy of the prophets and scholars as the inheritors of knowledge, and it holds a very noble and respected position.

This hadith also discusses that knowledge is not merely a tool to achieve worldly goals, but also a path to paradise. As mentioned in the hadith:

عَنْ كَثِيرِ بْنِ قَيْسٍ قَالَ كُنْتُ جَالِسًا مَعَ أَبِي الدَّرْدَاءِ فِي مَسْجِدٍ بِمَشَقٍّ فَجَاءَهُ رَجُلٌ فَقَالَ يَا أَبَا الدَّرْدَاءِ إِنِّي جِئْتُكَ مِنْ مَدِينَةِ الرَّسُولِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لِحَدِيثٍ بَلَغَنِي أَنَّكَ تُحَدِّثُهُ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَا جِئْتُ لِحَاجَةٍ قَالَ فَاتْنِي سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ مَنْ سَلَكَ طَرِيقًا يَبْتَغِي فِيهِ عِلْمًا سَلَكَ اللَّهُ بِهِ طَرِيقًا إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَإِنَّ الْمَلَائِكَةَ لَتَضَعُ أَجْنِحَتَهَا رِضًا لِطَالِبِ الْعِلْمِ وَإِنَّ الْعَالَمَ لَيَسْتَغْفِرُ لَهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَتَانِ فِي جَوْفِ الْمَاءِ وَإِنَّ فَضْلَ الْعَالِمِ عَلَى الْعَابِدِ كَفَضْلِ الْقَمَرِ لَيْلَةَ الْبَدْرِ عَلَى سَائِرِ الْكَوَاكِبِ وَإِنَّ الْعُلَمَاءَ وَرَثَةُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَإِنَّ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ لَمْ يُوَرِّثُوا بَيْنَارًا وَلَا دِرْهَمًا وَرَّثُوا الْعِلْمَ فَمَنْ أَخَذَهُ أَخَذَ بِحِطِّ وَافِرٍ

Meaning: *It is narrated by Katsir bin Qais, who said, "I was sitting with Abu Darda in the mosque of Damascus, when a man came and said, 'O Abu Darda, I have come to you from the city of Medina to hear a hadith that you received from the Messenger of Allah. I have no other business.'" Abu Darda replied, "I heard the Messenger of Allah say: 'Whoever sets out on the path of seeking knowledge, Allah will open the gates of Paradise for him, and the angels will lower their wings out of respect for him, and the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth, and the fish in the sea, will seek forgiveness for him, and indeed, the superiority of the*

scholars over the worshippers is like the superiority of the beauty of the full moon over all the stars. And indeed, the scholars are the heirs of the Prophets, for the Prophets did not leave behind dinars or dirhams. They left behind knowledge. Whoever takes that knowledge will receive a perfect share.

The hadith above means that a seeker of knowledge will have his path to Paradise made easy, angels will lower their wings for those seeking knowledge, and all creatures in the heavens and on earth will seek forgiveness for them (Yulianti et al., 2024). Thus, knowledge in the modern era should be understood as a means to draw closer to Allah SWT, not merely a tool to achieve material success.

Scholars are described as the heirs of the prophets who did not bequeath dinars or dirhams, but rather knowledge (Fahmi, 2021). This is also mentioned in QS. Fatir verse 28:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ وَالنَّوَابِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَنُهُ كَذَلِكَ إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ غَفُورٌ

Meaning: *And so it is among mankind, creeping creatures, and livestock, there are various colors (and types). Indeed, those who fear Allah among His servants are only the scholars. Indeed, Allah is Almighty and Forgiving.*

Ibn Kathir explains in his commentary that indeed, among Allah's servants, only the scholars fear Allah, that is, the scholars who have knowledge of Allah (Ishaq, 2003). The knowledge referred to in this context is religious knowledge. This virtue places scholars in a strategic position in guiding Muslims amid the tide of modernization, which is often pragmatic and materialistic. Knowledge based on faith and morality serves as a counterbalance to the modern educational paradigm, which often focuses solely on material goals. Understanding religious knowledge in a modern context ideally does not view worldly matters as the primary goal, but rather its usefulness and broad impact so that those who possess knowledge can be likened to the analogy of the full moon in the hadith. People of knowledge are likened to the full moon among the stars, in that their light of usefulness extends to themselves and those around them.

Thus, this hadith can be said to be relevant to the modern educational context, which tends to be pragmatic and materialistic. In

this era, many students and members of society view knowledge as a “ticket” to a better life, namely a stable job, a good social position, and economic stability. Ultimately, this practical focus often causes the spiritual and moral dimensions to be pushed into the background (Basori et al., 2025). Learning, which originally served as a means of drawing closer to God and eliminating ignorance, has now become a tool for obtaining employment, position, and social recognition.

Ideally, the highest goal of education is to educate the soul and character, as stated by Ahid (2010) in Munawar (2022). This poses a major challenge in reviving the meaning of knowledge. Knowledge in Islam occupies a central position in civilization and is regarded as a light (nur) that guides humanity toward spiritual and social perfection. The concept of religious knowledge in the modern era should ideally balance the goal of self-benefit, namely religious devotion, while also balancing worldly needs.

The analogy of the hadith “*Fadhlul 'alim 'alal 'abid kafadhlil qomar lailatal badri 'ala saairil kawaakib*” serves as a reminder to students and the general public that knowledgeable people who apply their knowledge have a more prominent position than those who are skilled in worship. This analogy provides a broad view of the process of seeking knowledge.

Previously, it was often interpreted narrowly, as a means of obtaining employment or improving one's standard of living, but it also shapes the soul and character to be closer to Allah SWT. This research has implications for the importance of understanding religious knowledge as a means of spreading benefits to a wider audience rather than continuously worshipping or performing acts of worship without knowledge that is limited to oneself. Religious knowledge in the modern context is often used as a means to achieve worldly goals.

However, religious knowledge serves as a means to improve moral character and draw closer to Allah SWT. The knowledge of a scholar, likened to the light of a full moon, has a far-reaching impact

on society. Therefore, the integration of religious knowledge into modern education is crucial for bringing about beneficial changes for the community.

Conclusion

This study analyzes Hadith Abu Dawud no. 3641 on the superiority of knowledgeable people over those who are devout through the tahlili method. External analysis shows that the chain of transmission of this hadith is muttaṣil (connected) with narrators who are mostly considered thiqa. Based on the study of jarh wa ta'dil, this hadith is classified as hasan lighairihi and can therefore be used as evidence. Internal analysis reveals that this hadith analogizes the full moon with stars as a metaphor for learned individuals whose knowledge has a wide-reaching influence, unlike devout individuals who focus solely on themselves. The text of the hadith, when analyzed, unveils a philosophical meaning that knowledge, from an Islamic perspective, serves a broader social and spiritual function beyond mere information acquisition.

In the modern context, which tends to be utilitarian and materialistic, reflecting on the meaning of this hadith highlights the importance of returning the orientation of education to its transcendental dimension, namely as a means of forming a moral character and drawing closer to Allah SWT. The analogy of this hadith is relevant for criticizing the narrow orientation of knowledge that is merely a "social ladder" prevalent in society. Knowledge does not stop at mastering concepts but also serves as a guiding light that nurtures awareness toward divine values. Therefore, the integration of religious and general knowledge in the education system is an essential need to produce individuals who are intellectually and spiritually intelligent.

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