

## **The Ḥadīth of the Seven Earth Layers: A Scientific and Validity-Based Reappraisal**

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### **Abstract**

This study examines the hadith concerning the seven layers of the earth through a scientific lens. Its primary objective is to rigorously evaluate the hadith's validity, encompassing both its chain of transmission (*sanad*) and textual content (*matn*). Employing a descriptive-analytical methodology with a critical hadith approach, this research addresses a salient aspect of contemporary hadith scholarship: the verification of prophetic traditions through modern scientific discoveries. The analysis assesses the reliability of the *sanad*, scrutinizes the *matn*, and investigates its congruence with current scientific knowledge. Findings indicate that the hadith attains a high degree of authenticity based on narrator verification and textual analysis. Scientifically, the concept of seven terrestrial layers referenced in the hadith demonstrates significant alignment with geological stratification models, ranging from the crust to the inner core. Consequently, this tradition is not only authenticated within the framework of hadith sciences but also proves consistent with modern scientific understanding, revealing embedded scientific insights empirically verified in the contemporary era.

**Keywords:** Seven layers of the Earth, Science, Validity, Scientific Inimitability

### **Abstrak**

Penelitian ini mengkaji hadis tentang tujuh lapisan bumi melalui pendekatan ilmiah. Tujuan utamanya adalah mengevaluasi secara ketat validitas hadis tersebut, baik dari segi mata rantai perwayatan (*sanad*) maupun kandungan teks (*matn*). Dengan menggunakan metodologi deskriptif-analitis dan pendekatan kritis ilmu hadis, penelitian ini membahas aspek penting dalam kajian hadis kontemporer: verifikasi tradisi kenabian melalui temuan ilmiah modern. Analisis mencakup penilaian keandalan *sanad*, pemeriksaan mendalam terhadap *matn*, serta penyelarasan kandungannya dengan pengetahuan ilmiah terkini. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa hadis tersebut memiliki tingkat keaslian yang tinggi berdasarkan verifikasi perawi dan analisis teks. Secara ilmiah, konsep tujuh lapisan bumi dalam hadis menunjukkan kesesuaian signifikan dengan model stratifikasi geologis, mulai dari kerak bumi hingga inti dalam. Dengan demikian, tradisi ini tidak hanya terautentikasi dalam kerangka ilmu hadis, tetapi juga konsisten dengan pemahaman ilmiah modern, mengungkap wawasan ilmiah yang terkandung di dalamnya dan telah terverifikasi secara empirik di era kontemporer.

**Kata Kunci:** Tujuh lapisan bumi, Sains, Validitas, Kemukjizatan ilmiah

## INTRODUCTION

The dynamics of hadith studies continue to evolve alongside advancements in time and knowledge. The hadiths (traditions) of Prophet Muhammad can be understood textually and contextually, and subsequently contextualized within contemporary life. Whether acknowledged or not, numerous hadiths are considered difficult to comprehend using classical approaches (*musykeil* hadith). Over time, hadiths have been examined through diverse methods and approaches. Hadith scholarship has developed into various specialized fields, such as economic hadith, educational hadith, scientific hadith, sectarian hadith, environmental hadith, psychological hadith, gender hadith, maritime hadith, health hadith, socio-cultural hadith, political hadith, *da'wah* (proselytizing) hadith, *ahkam* (legal rulings) hadith, entrepreneurship hadith, information technology hadith, and others. Among the hadiths that require examination through modern scientific approaches is the one concerning the seven layers of the earth.

Although the Prophet never explicitly mentioned “seven layers of the earth,” he did refer to “seven earths.” The Earth serves as the dwelling place for humans, plants, and various kinds of animals. Humanity is commanded to manage the earth responsibly for the common good (*maslahah*). Islam strictly forbids the unrestrained exploitation of the earth according to human whims, as such actions endanger life. The objective is to ensure the Earth's proper preservation and prevent environmental degradation. One of the earth's resources that significantly benefits human life is petroleum and natural gas. These materials are located within the Earth's interior, constituting part of the Earth's layers as alluded to in the hadith.

Certain Prophetic hadiths require interpretation through modern scientific lenses, such as those concerning eclipses, earthquakes, fire, water, wind, fruits, plants, and others. The hadith about the seven layers of the earth is one such example. How valid is this hadith? And what is the correlation between the hadith about the seven earths and modern scientific discoveries? These two questions need to be addressed in this writing to achieve a comprehensive understanding. The scientific approach to hadith is a relatively recent development, emerging as scientific knowledge has flourished, particularly in the modern era.

One researcher who has examined science-related hadiths is Muhammad Aly Mahmudi. In his article “*A Study of Nizar Ali's Hadith Thought: Hadith Versus Science*”, he discusses hadiths considered difficult to comprehend or seemingly irrational. Nizar Ali conducted scientific verification of such hadiths by analyzing problematic (*musykeil*) traditions and concluded that some hadiths

contradict science and must be rejected due to a lack of scientific evidence.<sup>1</sup> Rohmat Romdoni, in his article “*Cosmological Hadiths: A Scientific Review in the Nine Canonical Collections*”, explores unique phenomena in hadiths that can be verified by science. Among the facts he elucidates are rain as a form of mercy, interrelation between body parts, the sun rising from the west, the folding of the heavens, the sphericity of the earth, the miracle of the coccyx, and solar/lunar eclipses. Romdoni employs classical hadith methodologies to assess authenticity while also interpreting hadiths through a modern scientific lens.<sup>2</sup> Helmi Basri, in “*The Relevance Between Hadith and Science: Principles and Applications within the Framework of Scientific Inimitability*”, discusses the correlation and compatibility between Prophetic hadiths and scientific facts, framing this within the concept of *i’jaz ‘ilmi* (scientific inimitability). Examples of *i’jaz ‘ilmi* can be observed in fields such as health, medicine, and the natural sciences.

Within this framework, many Prophetic hadiths align with modern scientific principles—for instance, those concerning black seed (*habbatus sauda*), the prohibition against blowing on hot food or drink, human genetics, and the 360 joints in the human body.<sup>3</sup> Faizin, in “*Understanding Scientific Hadith: Testing Hadith Validity with Scientific Truth*”, argues that certain hadiths can be verified and align with modern science. Empirical scientific discoveries, he states, have significantly enriched Islamic studies, particularly hadith scholarship, as scientific findings in the development of science have reinforced the authenticity of hadiths themselves. Similarly, Benny Afwadzi, in “*Integration of Natural and Social Sciences with the Understanding of the Prophet’s Hadith: A Study of Conception, Application, and Implications*”,<sup>4</sup> Muhammad Akmaluddin, in “*Empirical Proof and Alternative Validation in Contemporary Hadith Studies*”,<sup>5</sup> and Ananda Prayogi, in “*Discourse on the Scientific Approach in Fiqh al-Hadith Studies: Application of Hegelian Dialectics*” all contribute to this growing field.<sup>6</sup> These writings demonstrate that many Prophetic hadiths can be explored using scientific and interdisciplinary approaches developed in the modern era. In addition to the scholars mentioned above, a prominent modern Muslim scholar renowned for studying the marvels related to the heavens and the earth is Zaghūl

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<sup>1</sup> Muhammad Aly Mahmudi, “Studi Pemikiran Hadis Nizal Ali: Hadist Versus Sains,” *Al Furqon: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Quran Dan Tafsir* 04, no. 02 (2021): 234–54.

<sup>2</sup> Rohmat Romdoni, “Hadis-Hadis Kosmologis: Tinjauan Sains Dalam Kutub Al-Tis’ah,” *Forum Ilmiah* 18, no. 03 (2021): 356–68.

<sup>3</sup> Helmi Basri, “Relevansi Antara Hadits Dan Sains: Kaedah Dan Aplikasinya Dalam Bingkai P’jaz Ilm,” *Al-Fikra: Jurnal Ilmiah Keislaman* 17, no. 01 (2018): 130–46.

<sup>4</sup> Benny Afwadzi, “Integrasi Ilmu-Ilmu Alam Dan Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial Dengan Pemahaman Hadis Nabi: Telaah Atas Konsepsi, Aplikasi, Dan Implikasi,” *Jurnal Theologia*, 28, no. 2 (2021): 351–390.

<sup>5</sup> Muhammad Akmaluddin, “Pembuktian Empiris Dan Validasi Alternatif Dalam Kajian Hadis Kontemporer,” *Mutawatir: Jurnal Keilmuan Tafsir Hadith* 2, no. 2 (2021): 231–252.

<sup>6</sup> Ananda Prayogi, “Diskursus Pendekatan Saintifik Dalam Kajian Fiqh Al-Hadis: Aplikasi Dialketika Hegel,” *Nabawi: Journal of Hadith Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (2022): 98–121.

al-Najjār. An Egyptian scientist, his expertise in the field of science is widely recognized, even among Western scholars. Among his notable works are *Min Āyāt I'jāz al-'Ilmī: al-Ard̄ fī al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* (*On the Signs of Scientific Inimitability: The Earth in the Noble Qur'an*) and *Tafsīr al-Āyāt al-Kawnīyah fī al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* (*Exegesis of the Cosmic Verses in the Noble Qur'an*).<sup>7</sup> In the Indonesian context, Nizar Ali, as previously mentioned, is a key scholar in the intersection of hadith and science.

## METHODS

This study employs classical hadith methodology, specifically utilizing *sanad* (chain of transmission) and *matn* (textual content) criticism. *Sanad* criticism involves examining the reliability and continuity of the narrators to determine a hadith's classification as *ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic), *ḥasan* (good), or *ḍa'īf* (weak), along with their respective sub-categories. *Matn* criticism entails a rigorous textual analysis of the hadith's content. Interpretation of the hadith draws upon relevant sources in accordance with the nature of its text. The term “hadith criticism” (*naqd al-ḥadīth*) refers to the systematic examination of both *sanad* and *matn*—a dual-faceted critical approach well-established in both Arabic<sup>8</sup> and Indonesian<sup>9</sup> scholarly traditions.

The hadith concerning the earth's layers appears in meaning-based transmissions (*rivāyah bi al-ma'na*) from various Companions (*ṣaḥābah*) and narrators, resulting in variant wording. This necessitates critical investigation. In general, hadiths compiled by later scholars (*mukharrijūn*) in the canonical collections are meaning-based transmissions; verbatim transmission (*rivāyah bi al-laḥẓ*) is exceedingly rare. The study of narrators and transmission chains (*'ilm al-rijāl* or *'ilm al-sanad*) is comprehensively documented in classical hadith literature, offering established methodologies and principles developed by traditional scholars to assess hadith authenticity.

This research also engages with the broader discourse on the Islamization of science as it relates to hadith. Hanna Djumhana Bastaman outlines six conceptual frameworks for integrating science with Qur'anic and hadith studies.<sup>10</sup> First, *similarization*: Attempts to establish direct equivalence between religious concepts and scientific theories, despite the potential for conceptual

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<sup>7</sup> Zaghlul A-Najjār, *al-Ard̄ fī al-Qur'ān al-Karīm, Tafsīr al-Āyāt al-Kawnīyah fī al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1426 H./2005 M.).

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Bin Aḥmad al-Idlibī, *Manhaj Naqd Al-Matn 'inda 'Ulamā' Al-Muḥaddīsin* (Beirut: Dār Al-Āfāq Al-Jadidah, 1403 H./1983 M.). This book has been translated into Indonesian under the title *Metodologi Kritik Matan Hadis*, translated by M., n.d. (no date).

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Muhammad Zubayr Shiddiqi, “*Ulūm Al-Ḥadīth Dan Kritik Hadis*”, in Hamim Ilyas and Suryadi (Eds), *Wacana Studi Hadis Kontemporer*, Cetakan Ke-1 (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2002); Mansur Thoḥa Abdullah, *Kritik Metodologi Hadis: Tinjauan Atas*, n.d.

<sup>10</sup> Hanna Djumhana Bastaman, *Integrasi Psikologi Dengan Islam: Menuju Psikologi Islami* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, Cet-II, 1997 M), 32-33. Cited by AM Saefuddin, *Islamisasi Sains Dan Kampus* (Jakarta: PT PPA Consultants, Cet-I, 1431 H./2010 M.), 8-9, n.d.

mismatch. For example, equating the religious notion of *ruh* (spirit) with the psychological “soul,” or aligning the Islamic concepts of *nafs ammārah* (commanding self), *nafs lawwāmah* (self-reproaching self), and *nafs muṭma’innah* (contented self) onto Freudian psychoanalytic constructs (id, ego, super-ego). This approach risks reductionism, and may constitute in what Bastaman calls “pseudo-similarization.” Second, *parallelization*: Identifies thematic or conceptual parallels between religious teachings and scientific principles. Examples include drawing analogies between prophesied eschatological events (*kiyāmah*) and predictions of World War III, or comparing the Prophet’s Night Journey (*Isrā’* and *Mi’rāj*) to modern concepts of space-time travel governed by the physics equation  $S = v \times t$  (distance = velocity  $\times$  time). This framework serves as a form of scientific explanation when introducing religious ideas to certain audiences. Third, *complementarity*: Posits that religion and science operate in distinct domains, yet can offer mutually enriching insights. For example, exploring the health benefits of fasting during Ramadan through medical science, irrespective of the specific authenticity of hadiths suggesting fasting for health reasons. Fourth, *comparison*: Involves direct comparison between scientific theories or models and religious teachings drawn from the Qur’an or hadith. An example is the comparative study of psychological motivation theories with motivation-related teachings in Islamic scripture. Fifth, *inductivization*: Derives metaphysical generalizations from empirical phenomena, which are then connected to Qur’anic or hadith-based principles. Observing the universe’s intricate order and balance, for instance, leads inductively to the conclusion of a Supreme Regulator. Sixth, *verification*: Employs empirical scientific findings to corroborate the truth claims of the Qur’an and hadith. For example, contemporary research on the psychological benefits of *dhikr* (remembrance of God) in fostering inner peace provides empirical support for related prophetic traditions. Research verifying the psychological effects of *dhikr* (remembrance of God) on mental tranquility exemplifies this pattern.

This sixth framework directly informs the scientific hadith analysis in this study, underscoring the importance of verifying Prophetic statements using modern scientific advancements to address contemporary intellectual challenges.

## DISCUSSION

### *The Matn of the Hadith Concerning the Seven Earths/Layers*

The *matn* (textual content) refers to the actual wording of the Prophet’s statement and serves as the enduring object of hadith scholarship across eras, as exemplified by the hadith regarding the seven earths/layers. In both the Qur’an and hadith literature, the term *ard* typically denotes the planet Earth in its entirety. Semantically, it also includes inhabitable landmasses and the soil that overlays

terrestrial bedrock. The Prophet Muhammad frequently used the term *ard* in his statements, as recorded in canonical hadith collections. His usage aligns with both Qur’anic terminology and modern scientific understanding of the Earth’s structure.

The Qur’an explicitly mentions the earth’s sevenfold composition, as in Qur’an 65:12, “seven heavens and seven earths”

This concept is echoed in the hadith of the Prophet:

مَنْ ظَلَمَ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ شَيْئًا طَوْقَهُ مِنْ سَبْعِ أَرْضِينَ

"Whoever unjustly seizes even a handspan of land (*min al-ardi shay'an*), it will be hung around his neck [as a burden] from seven earths (*sab'i aradim*)."

This *hadith* explicitly indicates that the earth inhabited by humanity consists of seven layers or strata. It is important to note that the concept of the “seven earths” (*sab' aradim*) as a reference to terrestrial stratification is ontologically distinct from the Qur’anic notion of “seven heavens” (*sab' samawat*), which refers to celestial realms. This distinction is further substantiated by empirical scientific findings.

### ***Hadith Source Tracking (Takhrij)***

The aforementioned hadith requires source verification (*takhrij*) to identify its narrators and the compendia in which it is recorded. Conducting *takhrij* allows for a comprehensive tracing of the hadith’s provenance and transmission pathways, as well as the identification of corroborative parallel narrations (*shawahid*). The practice of hadith *takhrij* emerged in the early medieval period and remains a cornerstone of contemporary hadith scholarship. Upon completing *takhrij*, scholars can proceed with systematic classification of both the chain (*sanad*) and the text (*matn*).

Utilizing *Mamsū'at al-Hadith al-Sharif* (Encyclopedia of Noble Hadith), the various textual renditions of the “seven earths” hadith were traced to *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (No. 2272). The complete *sanad* and *matn* are as follows:

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو الْيَمَانِ أَخْبَرَنَا شُعَيْبٌ عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي طَلْحَةُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ أَنَّ عَبْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنَ عَمْرٍو بْنَ سَهْلٍ أَخْبَرَهُ أَنَّ سَعِيدَ بْنَ زَيْدٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ، سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: مَنْ ظَلَمَ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ شَيْئًا طَوْقَهُ مِنْ سَبْعِ أَرْضِينَ

Narrated to us Abū al-Yamān → Informed us Shu‘ayb → from al-Zuhrī → who said: Ṭalḥah ibn ‘Abd Allāh narrated to me → that ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Amr ibn Sahl informed him → that Sa‘īd ibn Zayd (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) say: 'Whoever unjustly seizes even a handspan of land (min al-arḍi shay'an), it will be hung around his neck [as a burden] from seven earths (sab'i arāḍin).'"

This narration serves as the primary subject of analysis in this study. Supporting narrations with synonymous meaning (*mutabi'at*), transmitted through alternative chains in the Six Canonical Collections (*al-Kutub al-Sittab*), include:

1. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Maẓālim wa al-Gaṣb*, no. 2273 dan 2274.<sup>11</sup>

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو مَعْمَرٍ حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الْوَارِثِ حَدَّثَنَا حُسَيْنٌ عَنْ يَحْيَى بْنِ أَبِي كَثِيرٍ قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ أَنَّ أَبَا سَلَمَةَ حَدَّثَهُ أَنَّهُ كَانَتْ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ أَنَسٍ حُصُومَةٌ فَذَكَرَ لِعَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا فَقَالَتْ يَا أَبَا سَلَمَةَ اجْتَنِبِ الْأَرْضَ فَإِنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: مَنْ ظَلَمَ قِيدَ شِبْرٍ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ طَوَّقَهُ مِنْ سَبْعِ أَرْضِينَ.

حَدَّثَنَا مُسْلِمٌ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ الْمُبَارَكِ حَدَّثَنَا مُوسَى بْنُ عُقْبَةَ عَنْ سَالِمٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ, قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: مَنْ أَخَذَ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ شَيْئًا بِغَيْرِ حَقِّهِ خُسِفَ بِهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِلَى سَبْعِ أَرْضِينَ.

2. *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Kitāb al-Musāqāt, Bāb Tahrim al-Zulm wa Gaṣb al-Arḍ wa Gairihā*, no. 3020-3025.<sup>12</sup>

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَبِي أُيُوبَ وَفُتَيْبَةُ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ وَعَلِيُّ بْنُ حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ وَهُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ عَنِ الْعَلَاءِ بْنِ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ عَنْ عَبَّاسِ بْنِ سَهْلِ بْنِ سَعْدِ السَّاعِدِيِّ عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ زَيْدِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو بْنِ نُفَيْلٍ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: مَنْ اقْتَطَعَ شِبْرًا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ ظُلْمًا طَوَّقَهُ اللَّهُ إِيَّاهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مِنْ سَبْعِ أَرْضِينَ

<sup>11</sup> Abū ‘Abdillāh Muḥammad bin Ismā‘īl Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī* (Kairo: al-Dār al-‘Ālamīyah, 2015), 358.

<sup>12</sup> Abū al-Ḥusayn Muslim bin Ḥajjāj bin Muslim al-Qusyayrīy Al-Naysābūrīy, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Kairo: al-Dār al-‘Ālamīyah, 2016), 489-490.

حَدَّثَنِي حَزْمَلَةُ بْنُ يَحْيَى أَخْبَرَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ وَهَبٍ حَدَّثَنِي عُمَرُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ أَنَّ أَبَاهُ حَدَّثَهُ عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ زَيْدِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو بْنِ نُفَيْلٍ أَنَّ أَرْوَى خَاصَمْتَهُ فِي بَعْضِ دَارِهِ فَقَالَ دَعُوهَا وَإِيَّاهَا فَإِنِّي سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: مَنْ أَخَذَ شِبْرًا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ حَقِّهِ طَوَّقَهُ فِي سَبْعِ أَرْضِينَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ كَانَتْ كَاذِبَةً فَأَعِمَّ بَصَرَهَا وَاجْعَلْ قَبْرَهَا فِي دَارِهَا قَالَ فَرَأَيْتُهَا عَمِيَاءَ تَلْتَمِسُ الْجُدْرَ تَقُولُ أَصَابَتْنِي دَعْوَةُ سَعِيدِ بْنِ زَيْدٍ فَبَيْنَمَا هِيَ تَمْشِي فِي الدَّارِ مَرَّتْ عَلَى بِنْرِ فِي الدَّارِ فَوَقَعَتْ فِيهَا فَكَانَتْ قَبْرَهَا.

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو الرَّبِيعِ الْعَتَكِيُّ حَدَّثَنَا حَمَادُ بْنُ زَيْدٍ عَنْ هِشَامِ بْنِ عُرْوَةَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ أَنَّ أَرْوَى بِنْتَ أُوَيْسٍ ادَّعَتْ عَلَى سَعِيدِ بْنِ زَيْدٍ أَنَّهُ أَخَذَ شَيْئًا مِنْ أَرْضِهَا فَخَاصَمْتَهُ إِلَى مَرْوَانَ بْنِ الْحَكَمِ فَقَالَ سَعِيدٌ أَنَا كُنْتُ أَخُذُ مِنْ أَرْضِهَا شَيْئًا بَعْدَ الَّذِي سَمِعْتُ مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ وَمَا سَمِعْتَ مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: مَنْ أَخَذَ شِبْرًا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ ظُلْمًا طَوَّقَهُ إِلَى سَبْعِ أَرْضِينَ فَقَالَ لَهُ مَرْوَانُ لَا أَسْأَلُكَ بَيْنَهُ بَعْدَ هَذَا فَقَالَ: اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ كَانَتْ كَاذِبَةً فَعَمَّ بَصَرَهَا وَاقْتُلْهَا فِي أَرْضِهَا قَالَ فَمَا مَاتَتْ حَتَّى ذَهَبَ بَصَرُهَا ثُمَّ بَيْنَا هِيَ تَمْشِي فِي أَرْضِهَا إِذْ وَقَعَتْ فِي حُفْرَةٍ فَمَاتَتْ.

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ زَكَرِيَاءَ بْنِ أَبِي زَائِدَةَ عَنْ هِشَامِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ زَيْدٍ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: مَنْ أَخَذَ شِبْرًا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ ظُلْمًا فَإِنَّهُ يُطَوَّقُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مِنْ سَبْعِ أَرْضِينَ

و حَدَّثَنِي زُهَيْرُ بْنُ حَرْبٍ حَدَّثَنَا جَرِيرٌ عَنْ سُهَيْلٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ, قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: لَا يَأْخُذُ أَحَدٌ شِبْرًا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ حَقِّهِ إِلَّا طَوَّقَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَى سَبْعِ أَرْضِينَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ



حَدَّثَنَا أَحْمَدُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الدُّورِيُّ حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الصَّمَدِ يَعْنِي ابْنَ عَبْدِ الْوَارِثِ حَدَّثَنَا حَرْبٌ وَهُوَ ابْنُ شَدَّادٍ حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى وَهُوَ ابْنُ أَبِي كَثِيرٍ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ أَنَّ أَبَا سَلَمَةَ حَدَّثَهُ وَكَانَ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ قَوْمِهِ خُصُومَةٌ فِي أَرْضٍ وَأَنَّهُ دَخَلَ عَلَى عَائِشَةَ فَذَكَرَ ذَلِكَ لَهَا فَقَالَتْ يَا أَبَا سَلَمَةَ اجْتَنِبِ الْأَرْضَ فَإِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: مَنْ ظَلَمَ قَيْدَ شِبْرٍ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ طَوَّفَهُ مِنْ سَبْعِ أَرْضِينَ وَحَدَّثَنِي إِسْحَاقُ بْنُ مَنْصُورٍ أَخْبَرَنَا حَبَّانُ بْنُ هِلَالٍ أَخْبَرَنَا أَبَانُ حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى أَنَّ مُحَمَّدَ بْنَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَدَّثَهُ أَنَّ أَبَا سَلَمَةَ حَدَّثَهُ أَنَّهُ دَخَلَ عَلَى عَائِشَةَ فَذَكَرَ مِثْلَهُ

3. *Sunan al-Tirmizī, Bāb mā jā'a fīman qutīla dūna mālibi fabūwa syahīd*, no. 1338.<sup>13</sup>

حَدَّثَنَا سَلَمَةُ بْنُ شَيْبٍ وَحَاتِمُ بْنُ سِيَاهِ الْمَرْوَزِيُّ وَعَبْدُ الرَّزَّاقِ عَنْ مَعْمَرِ بْنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ عَنْ طَلْحَةَ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَوْفٍ عَنْ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو بْنِ سَهْلٍ عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ زَيْدِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو بْنِ نُفَيْلٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: مَنْ قُتِلَ دُونَ مَالِهِ فَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ وَمَنْ سَرَقَ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ شِبْرًا طَوَّفَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مِنْ سَبْعِ أَرْضِينَ وَزَادَ حَاتِمُ بْنُ سِيَاهِ الْمَرْوَزِيُّ فِي هَذَا الْحَدِيثِ قَالَ مَعْمَرٌ بَلَّغَنِي عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ وَلَمْ أَسْمَعْ مِنْهُ زَادَ فِي هَذَا الْحَدِيثِ مَنْ قُتِلَ دُونَ مَالِهِ فَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ وَهَكَذَا رَوَى شُعَيْبُ بْنُ أَبِي حَمْزَةَ هَذَا الْحَدِيثَ عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ عَنْ طَلْحَةَ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَنْ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو بْنِ سَهْلٍ عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ زَيْدِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو بْنِ نُفَيْلٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَرَوَى سُفْيَانُ بْنُ عُيَيْنَةَ عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ عَنْ طَلْحَةَ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ زَيْدِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو بْنِ نُفَيْلٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَلَمْ يَذْكُرْ فِيهِ سُفْيَانُ عَنْ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو بْنِ سَهْلٍ وَهَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ صَحِيحٌ

<sup>13</sup> This data was obtained by the author from *Mawsū'at al-Ḥadīṡ al-Syarīf* and is therefore included in the hadith transmission chart; it was not found in the printed version used by the author. See Abū 'Īsā Muḥammad Bin 'Īsā Bin Sawrah al-Tirmizī, *Sunan al-Tirmizī* (Beirut: Dāral-Kutub Al-'Ilmīyah, 1440/2019), 363-364.

4. *Musnad Ahmad, Bab Musnad Sa'īd Ibn Zayd*, no. 1542, 1547, dan 1562.

حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ قَالَ هَذَا حَفِظْنَاهُ عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ عَنِ طَلْحَةَ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَوْفٍ عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ زَيْدِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو بْنِ نُفَيْلٍ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: مَنْ قُتِلَ دُونَ مَالِهِ فَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ وَمَنْ ظَلَمَ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ شِبْرًا طُوقَهُ مِنْ سَبْعِ أَرْضِينَ

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى عَنْ هِشَامٍ وَابْنُ نُمَيْرٍ حَدَّثَنَا هِشَامٌ حَدَّثَنِي أَبِي عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ زَيْدِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ ابْنُ نُمَيْرٍ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: مَنْ أَخَذَ شِبْرًا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ ظَلَمًا طُوقَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِلَى سَبْعِ أَرْضِينَ قَالَ ابْنُ نُمَيْرٍ مِنْ سَبْعِ أَرْضِينَ

حَدَّثَنَا يَزِيدُ أَخْبَرَنَا ابْنُ أَبِي ذَنْبٍ عَنِ الْحَارِثِ بْنِ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ عَنْ أَبِي سَلَمَةَ قَالَ قَالَ لَنَا مَرْوَانُ انْطَلِقُوا فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ هَذَيْنِ سَعِيدِ بْنِ زَيْدٍ وَأَرْوَى بِنْتِ أُوَيْسٍ فَأَتَيْنَا سَعِيدَ بْنَ زَيْدٍ فَقَالَ أَتْرُونَ أَبِي قَدْ اسْتَنْقَصْتُ مِنْ حَقِّهَا شَيْئًا أَشْهَدُ لَسَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: مَنْ أَخَذَ شِبْرًا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ بَغَيْرِ حَقِّهِ طُوقَهُ مِنْ سَبْعِ أَرْضِينَ وَمَنْ تَوَلَّى قَوْمًا بَغَيْرِ إِذْنِهِمْ فَعَلَيْهِ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ افْتَطَعَ مَالَ أَخِيهِ بِيَمِينِهِ فَلَا بَارَكَ اللَّهُ لَهُ فِيهِ

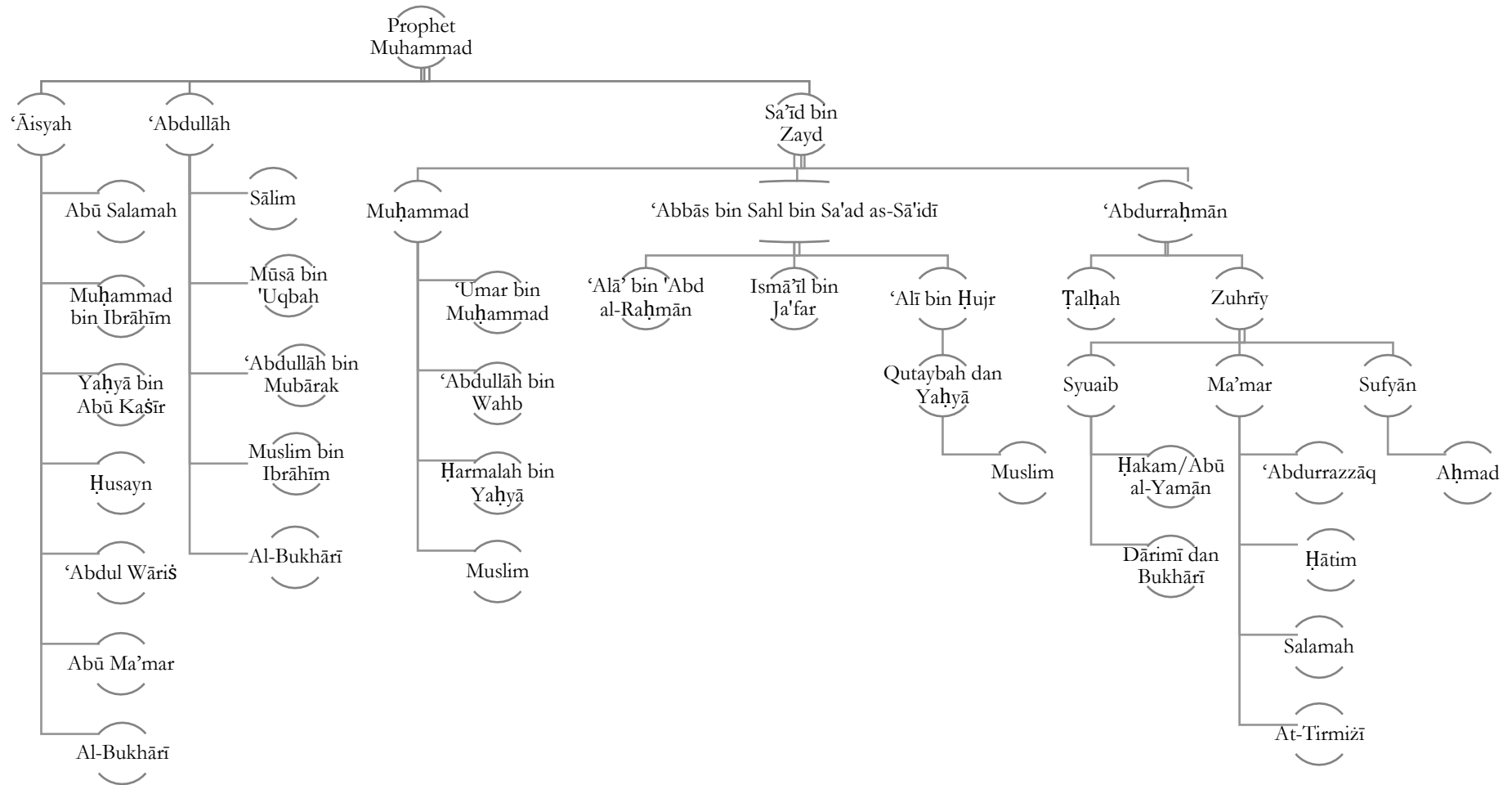
5. *Sunan al-Dārimī, Kitāb al-Buyū', Bab Man Akhaḏa Syibran min al-Ard*, no. 2492.

أَخْبَرَنَا الْحَكَمُ بْنُ نَافِعٍ عَنْ شُعَيْبٍ عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ حَدَّثَنِي طَلْحَةُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَوْفٍ أَنَّ عَبْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنَ سَهْلٍ أَخْبَرَهُ أَنَّ سَعِيدَ بْنَ زَيْدٍ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: مَنْ ظَلَمَ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ شِبْرًا فَإِنَّهُ يُطَوَّقُهُ مِنْ سَبْعِ أَرْضِينَ

The preceding analysis establishes that narrations concerning the seven earths or layers exhibit textual variation as a result of meaning-based transmission (*riwāyah bi al-ma'nā*), while preserving conceptual consistency. The critical point of convergence lies in the core terminology: “seven earths” (*sab'i arāḍin*). *Riwayah bi al-ma'nā*—the transmission of meaning rather than verbatim wording—represents the predominant mode of hadith reporting. This naturally gives rise to interpretive variations across different narrations. Such divergences in wording also result from differences in

the original sources (*aṣl*) and the unique transmission patterns of individual narrators (*riwāyah*), traceable from the Companions (*ṣaḥābah*) through successive generations.

The schematic representation of the hadith transmission examined in this study is as follows:



### ***Sanad and Matn Criticism***

The critical examination of both *sanad* (chain of transmission) and *matn* (textual content) forms an indispensable methodological foundation within hadith scholarship. As previously established, the subject tradition—narrating the concept of seven earths (*sab‘i arāḍim*)—is transmitted by al-Bukhārī through the *isnād*: Abū al-Yamān (d. 222 AH/837 CE) ← Shu‘ayb ← al-Zuhrī (d. 124 AH/742 CE) ← Ṭalḥah ibn ‘Abd Allāh ← ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Amr ibn Sahl ← Sa‘īd ibn Zayd. This study deliberately avoids an exhaustive biographical analysis of the transmitters to avoid disproportionate emphasis on *‘ilm al-rijāl* (transmitter science), as classical scholarship has already documented such analyses extensively in dedicated compendia. Instead, our hermeneutical emphasis lies in accurate textual exegesis to support practical application. Corroborative narrations (*mutabi‘at*) exist via ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar and ‘Ā’ishah.

The hadith satisfies the essential conditions for *ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic) classification: an unbroken chain (*ittiṣāl al-sanad*), the integrity of the transmitters (*‘adālat al-rumāt*)—encompassing moral probity (*murū‘a*) and religious observance—transmitter precision (*dabt al-rāwī*) in memorization and narration, and absence of hidden defects (*‘illah*) and anomalies (*shudhūdh*).<sup>14</sup> These criteria further bifurcate into specific sub-requirements: for chain continuity (*ittiṣāl*), the conditions include attribution to the Prophet (*marfū‘*), absence of anomalies (*mahfūz*), and freedom from defects; for transmitter integrity (*‘adāla*), the requirements comprise Islamic faith, adulthood, sound intellect, and ethical conduct; while precision (*dabt*) necessitates accurate retention and conveyance of the text.

Given this rigorous authentication framework, and the hadith’s inclusion in the canonical collections of al-Bukhārī (d. 256 AH/870 CE), Muslim (d. 261 AH/875 CE), al-Tirmidhī (d. 279 AH/892 CE), Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241 AH/855 CE), and al-Dārimī (d. 255 AH/869 CE)—its authenticity is epistemologically conclusive. Re-examination of the *isnād* is therefore superfluous. Scholarly focus should now shift to semantic exegesis (*sharḥ*) of the *matn*, particularly its geological implications regarding terrestrial stratification (including subsurface resources such as petroleum and natural gas), to evaluate its consonance with contemporary scientific paradigms.

Upon meticulous examination, it becomes evident that the critical analysis (*naqd*) of *ḥadīth* transmission chains (*sanad*) presents a comparatively less formidable challenge than that of their textual content (*matan*). This distinction arises primarily because *sanad* evaluation relies extensively on well-established biographical dictionaries (*kutub al-rijāl*). In contrast, *matan* criticism is inherently

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<sup>14</sup> M. Syuhudi Ismail, *Kaedah Kesabihan Sanad Hadis* (Jakarta: Bulang Bintang), 132-133, Same Author, *Hadits Nabi Menurut Pembela, Peningkar Dan Pemalsunya* (Jakarta: Gema Insani, Cet-I, 1995 M./1415 H.), 77-78.

more complex, as it requires the fulfillment of stringent criteria to ensure scholarly rigor and accountability in accordance with established methodological principles (*uṣūl*). The qualifications necessary for undertaking *matan* analysis include profound expertise and mastery in both *Ḥadīth Sciences* (*‘Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*) and *Islamic Jurisprudence* (*Fiqh*). The researcher also must demonstrate acute intellectual discernment and possess a well-developed tradition of scholarship (*tajriba ‘ilmiyya*) to attain a comprehensive understanding (*fahm shāmi*) of the *ḥadīth*.<sup>15</sup>

Syuhudi Ismail identifies several factors contributing to the heightened complexity of *matan* research: the prevalence of meaning-based transmission (*riwāya bi’l-ma‘nā*); the significant diversity of hermeneutical approaches (*manābij fahm al-ḥadīth*); the frequent difficulty in tracing the historical context or reason for a *ḥadīth*'s revelation (*sabab al-wurūd*); the occasional presence of supra-rational (*suprarasional*) elements within the text; and the relative scarcity of classical works dedicated explicitly to methodologies of *matan* analysis.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, within the contemporary academic context, *matan* analysis has become more accessible due to the proliferation of diverse methodologies, interpretive approaches, and specialized literature.

Following rigorous examination, the researcher may arrive at one of four definitive classifications for a *ḥadīth*: (1) *Sanad ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic chain) and *Matan ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic text); (2) *Sanad ḍa‘īf* (weak chain) and *Matan ḍa‘īf* (weak text); (3) *Sanad ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic chain) with *Matan ḍa‘īf* (weak text); or (4) *Sanad ḍa‘īf* (weak chain) with *Matan ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic text). Applying this typology, the corpus of *aḥādīth* concerning the seven layers of the earth can be classified under the first category: *Sanad ṣaḥīḥ* and *Matan ṣaḥīḥ*. This conclusion is substantiated by their transmission through multiple, convergent chains (*tawātur*), the collective reliability (*thiqa*) of the narrators within these chains being established. After the completion of the critical verification (*naqd*) process, the essential next stage is *matan* criticism (*naqd al-matn*), which pertains to the correct interpretation and understanding (*fahm*) of the *ḥadīth*.<sup>17</sup> It is imperative to recognize that the hermeneutical frameworks employed by scholars (*‘ulamā*) from the classical, medieval, and modern-contemporary eras inevitably differ, reflecting the evolving trajectory of intellectual discourse and scientific knowledge.

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<sup>15</sup> M. Syuhudi Ismail, *Metodologi Penelitian Hadis Nabi* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang cet-I, 1992 M/1413 H), 130.

<sup>16</sup> Ismail.

<sup>17</sup> Regarding the concept of *thiqa* and related matters, see Muhammad Anshori, *Sisipan Dalam Riwayat Hadis: Diskursus Konsep Ziyadatus Siqah* (Yogyakarta: Trussmedia Grafika, cet-I, 2023).

### ***Understanding Ḥadīth within Modern Contexts***

The methodology of ḥadīth interpretation (*manhaj fahm al-ḥadīth*) remains a perennial concern among modern and contemporary ḥadīth scholars, particularly within academic settings. While some Muslim scholars have proposed specific methodological frameworks for understanding ḥadīth, these approaches are not always universally applicable to all Prophetic traditions (*aḥādīth*). There are two principal schools of thought regarding ḥadīth interpretation. The first, often called the Textualist School, is represented by the Proponents of Ḥadīth (*Ahl al-Ḥadīth*), who emphasize the apparent (*ẓāhir*) meaning of the text, often with limited consideration of contextual factors. The second, known as the Contextualist School, is associated with the Proponents of Reason (*Ahl al-Ra'y*), who prioritize a broader contextual approach. This group goes beyond the literal wording (*laẓẓi*) of the *matn* to consider all relevant contextual dimensions that may inform a more nuanced understanding.<sup>18</sup>

Scholarly inquiry into the meanings (*ma'āni*) of Ḥadīth has a long tradition among scholars dedicated to this field, evidenced by the composition of diverse commentaries (*ḥadīth al-sharḥ*). In the contemporary era, this concern has developed into a specialized discipline known as *Ma'āni al-Ḥadīth*, which focuses on clarifying the meanings of prophetic reports. While this field engages with both the chain of transmission (*sanad*) and the textual content (*matn*), its primary concern lies in ensuring a sound and comprehensive understanding of the *matn*, with the *sanad* serving a complementary function. To interpret ḥadīth effectively in today's context, scholars must move beyond a strictly textual reading and adopt a contextual understanding (*fahm siyāqī*). This broader approach is essential not only for resolving pressing issues faced by the Muslim community (*muṣkilāt al-ummah*) but also for articulating relevant and intellectually responsible responses to the challenges of the modern age (*taḥaddiyāt al-'aṣr*).

The ḥadīth examined in this study addresses the layers of the Earth (*ṭabaqāt al-ard*), specifically relating to the terrestrial realm inhabited by humanity. Logically, deep excavation into the Earth would reveal invaluable natural resources (*mawārid ṭabī'iyah*) essential to human life. Among these, petroleum and natural gas (*al-naft wa al-ghāz al-ṭabī'i*) constitute particularly vital resources located within the Earth's subsurface. To comprehend the Earth's composition, the seven strata explicitly mentioned by the Prophet require critical examination in light of established scientific

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<sup>18</sup> Suryadi, *Metode Kontemporer Memahami Hadis Nabi: Perspektif Muhammad Al-Ghazali Dan Yusuf Al-Qaradhawi* (Yogyakarta: Teras, 2008), 73.

findings. Surah al-Ṭalāq (65:12) states: “*Allāh is He Who created seven heavens, and of the earth their like.*” This verse constitutes the only Qur’anic parallel to the ḥadīth in question. Given that consonance with the Qur’an (*muwāfaqat al-Qur’ān*) is among the criteria for ḥadīth authenticity (*ṣiḥḥa*), it is essential to analyze interpretations of this verse across classical, medieval, and modern-contemporary scholarship. This diachronic examination, while not exhaustive, elucidates evolving hermeneutical perspectives on the relationship between the verse and the ḥadīth concerning the seven terrestrial strata.

Many classical exegetes (*mufasssīrūn*) did not provide extensive commentary on the seven heavens and earths mentioned in al-Ṭalāq 65:12 (*Allāh allazī kbalaqa sab‘a samāwāt wa min al-arḍ mithlahun*). Scholars such as al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923),<sup>19</sup> al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1143),<sup>20</sup> Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1210),<sup>21</sup> and al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1273),<sup>22</sup> among others, generally acknowledged the existence of seven layers without offering detailed explanations. In contrast, many modern exegetes emphasize the direct relevance of the verse to the ḥadīth, as reflected in the contextual commentary of al-Qurṭubī and al-Ḥararī.<sup>23</sup>

Some classical and medieval scholars occasionally cited the view of Ka‘b al-Aḥbār, who attributed distinct inhabitants or features to each of the seven layers: humans on the first; a great ocean on the second; the stones of Hell (*ḥijarat jahannam*) on the third; Hell’s sulphur (*kibrit jahannam*) on the fourth; infernal serpents on the fifth; hellish scorpions on the sixth; and Iblīs on the seventh.<sup>24</sup> However, such interpretations are considered incompatible with modern scientific knowledge and are often classified as *Isrā’īlīyyāt*—narratives of Judeo-Christian origin incorporated into early Islamic tradition.

Modern scholars frequently argue that the ḥadīth concerning the seven earths functions metaphorically, particularly in the context of divine punishment for land usurpation (*ghaṣb arāḍi al-nās*) in this world. When interpreting al-Ṭalāq 65:12, Ibn ‘Āshūr (d. 1393/1973) explicitly connected the

<sup>19</sup> Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad bin Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi’ al-Bayān ‘an Ta’wīl Ay al-Qurān*, ed. ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Abd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī, j-XXIII (Kairo: Markaz al-Buḥūṣ al-‘Arabīyah wa al-Islamīyah, 1422/2001), 77.

<sup>20</sup> Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd bin ‘Umar al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kaṣṣiyāf ‘an Ḥaqā’iq Gawāmiḍ al-Tanzīl wa ‘Uyūn al-Aqāwīl fī Wujūb al-Ta’wīl*, ed. ‘Ādil Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Mawjūd dan ‘Alī Muḥammad Mu’awwad, j-VI (Riyadh: Maktabah al-‘Ubaikan, 1418/1998), 152.

<sup>21</sup> Abū ‘Abdillāh Muḥammad bin Aḥmad bin Abū Bakr al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi’ li Aḥkām al-Qurān*, ed. ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Abd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī, j-XI (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Risālah, 1427/2006), 63.

<sup>22</sup> Abū al-Faraj Jamāluddīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān bin ‘Alī bin Muḥammad al-Jawzī, *Zād al-Masīr fī ‘Ilm al-Tafsīr*, j-VIII (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1404/1984), 299.

<sup>23</sup> Muḥammad al-Amīn bin ‘Abdullāh al-Hararī, *Ḥada’iq al-Rawḥ wa al-Rayḥān fī Rawābi’ ‘Ulūm al-Qurān*, j-XXIX (Beirut: Dār al-Ṭawq al-Najāh, 1421/2001), 432-433.

<sup>24</sup> Ibn al-Jawzī, *Zād al-Masīr fī ‘Ilm al-Tafsīr*, j-VIII, 300.



verse to a geographical (*jughbrāfi*) context, though he refrained from specifying the names or features of the individual strata—unlike some modern scientists such as Zaghoul El-Naggar, who attempt more literal correlations.<sup>25</sup> Beyond the exegetical tradition (*ketub al-tafsīr*), further insights into the seven earths are found in ḥadīth commentaries (*ketub sharḥ al-ḥadīth*). Early authorities, such as al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277), in his *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, discussed the relevant ḥadīth by referencing the verse “*sab‘a samāwāt wa min al-ard mithlabun*” (Q 65:12), affirming their congruence.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, consistent with the intellectual norms of his time, al-Nawawī did not engage in naming or classifying the strata—an approach that contrasts with the specificity sought in modern scientific discourse.

In contrast to the interpretations found in classical exegetical (*tafsīr*) and ḥadīth commentary (*sharḥ*) literature, modern Earth sciences offer a detailed stratigraphic explanation of the seven layers referenced in the ḥadīth. According to contemporary geophysics, the Earth's internal structure is composed of distinct layers, each with unique characteristics and functions.

The core, identified as the seventh and deepest layer in ḥadīth nomenclature, occupies the Earth's center and consists of a solid inner nucleus. This inner core is primarily metallic, composed of approximately 90% iron (Fe), 9% nickel (Ni), and trace amounts of elements such as carbon, phosphorus, sulfur, silicon, and oxygen. Its composition is comparable to that of iron meteorites, although the Earth's core has a notably higher concentration of iron. The inner core's diameter is roughly 2,440 km (corrected from a previously erroneous 24.2 km), and its density ranges between 10 and 13.5 g/cm<sup>3</sup>, making it the densest of all the Earth's layers. This dense metallic region is hypothesized to be a source of certain deep-Earth resources.<sup>27</sup> Surrounding the inner core is the outer core, designated as the sixth layer. It is a liquid, viscous layer composed of similar elements to the inner core and has an approximate thickness of 2,275 km. The boundary between the inner and outer core is known as the Lehmann Discontinuity, and a transitional zone within the base of the outer core extends about 450 km. Together, the inner and outer cores account for approximately 31% of the Earth's total mass (about  $1.9 \times 10^{24}$  kg).<sup>28</sup> Geochemically, this zone contains materials critical to advanced industrial applications, including metallurgy and high-performance materials.

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<sup>25</sup> Muhammad Ṭāhir bi ‘Āsyūr, *al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tamwīr*, j-XXVIII (Tunisia: al-Dār al-Tunisiya li al-Nasyr, t.th.), 341.

<sup>26</sup> Abū Zakariyā Yahyā bin Syaraf Al-Nawawī, *Al-Minhāj Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ed. Muḥammad Naṣr Abū Jabal, j-V (Kairo: al-Dār al-‘Ālamīyah, 2019), 389.

<sup>27</sup> This is due to the fact that the average density of the Earth's crustal rock layers is approximately 2.8–3 grams/cm<sup>3</sup>, whereas the average density of the Earth as a whole is about 5.5 grams/cm<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>28</sup> Zaghul An-Najjar, *Sains Dalam Hadis: Mengungkap Fakta Ilmiah Dari Kemukjizatan Hadis Nabi*, Trj. Zainal Abidin, Dkk (Jakarta: Amzah, cet-I, 2011).

The lower mantle, or mesosphere, represents the fifth layer and is characterized by its rigidity under extreme pressure. This solid shell extends from a depth of roughly 670 km to 2,885 km, spanning about 2,215 km in thickness. It plays a key role in maintaining the Earth's structural integrity and surrounds the outer core. The upper boundary of this layer is marked by the Repetti Discontinuity, which separates it from the overlying transition zone.<sup>29</sup> Above the lower mantle lies the transition zone, or upper mesosphere, which forms the fourth layer. It is a highly rigid region approximately 270 km thick, bounded by the Repetti Discontinuity at the bottom (~670 km depth) and the Lehmann Discontinuity (or 400 km discontinuity) at the top (~400 km depth). Due to its extreme depth, this zone remains physically inaccessible through current excavation technologies.<sup>30</sup> The upper mantle, or asthenosphere, is the third layer. It exhibits viscoelastic or semi-fluid behavior and undergoes partial melting, with an estimated fusibility of around 1%. Despite its plasticity, it retains high cohesion and density. Often referred to as the "weak layer", the asthenosphere plays a crucial role in facilitating isostatic adjustments and enabling plate tectonic activity.<sup>31</sup>

The lower crust, designated as the second layer, forms the deeper portion of the Earth's crust. It is separated from the underlying mantle by the Mohorovičić Discontinuity (Moho) and from the upper crust by the Conrad Discontinuity. The thickness of the lower crust varies: it measures around 5–8 km beneath oceanic basins and approximately 20–30 km beneath continental regions. Previous estimates of 60–80 km or 120 km were revised for accuracy; typically, the continental lower crust is found beneath an upper crust of 30–40 km.<sup>32</sup> The upper crust represents the first and outermost layer of the Earth and constitutes the habitable surface. Its thickness ranges from about 5–8 km beneath oceans to 20–40 km beneath continents, contributing to an overall crustal thickness of 30–50 km. This layer is primarily composed of granitic rocks in continental areas and basaltic rocks in oceanic regions. It is overlain by sedimentary deposits and unconsolidated regolith. Features such as granitic batholiths and marble formations are typical of the continental upper crust, which is capped by a thin veneer of sediments and weathered material rich in lighter silicate minerals.<sup>33</sup>

The outermost layer of the Earth, the observable and inhabited terrestrial surface, constitutes the primary domain of human activity. It is from this layer that we derive essential resources for

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<sup>29</sup> An-Najjar.

<sup>30</sup> An-Najjar. 51.

<sup>31</sup> An-Najjar.

<sup>32</sup> An-Najjar.

<sup>33</sup> An-Najjar.

survival and development. Modern geoscientific models depict Earth's structure as a system of stratified layers, each with distinct geological and geochemical characteristics.

Figure 1. *Modern Earth Stratigraphy Diagram*



Within these lithospheric strata lie diverse mineralogical resources, many of which are integral to modern civilization. The seven-layered structure of the Earth, as referenced in the prophetic *ḥadīth*, reflects not only a theological worldview but also aligns in remarkable ways with modern scientific stratigraphy. This layered design contains vast mineral wealth whose sustainable management carries great implications for global prosperity. Among the most valuable of these subsurface resources are petroleum and natural gas. These hydrocarbons serve as critical foundations for industrial society, fueling transportation, powering electricity generation, and enabling the production of materials such as plastics and fertilizers. The modern understanding of their origin has evolved significantly over time. While early theories once suggested abiogenic origins, implying formation from non-biological chemical reactions within deep rock layers, the prevailing scientific consensus now attributes the majority of hydrocarbon deposits to biogenic processes. These processes begin with the accumulation of marine microorganisms, particularly foraminifera and plankton, as organic-rich sediments on ancient sea floors. Over millions of years, under conditions of high pressure and heat (geothermal gradients and lithostatic pressure), these sediments undergo chemical transformation. Through microbial activity and catagenesis, they eventually form kerogen, which in turn generates oil and gas. Extraction today typically involves drilling into sedimentary basins, reaching depths from a few hundred to several thousand meters below the surface.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Sukandarrumidi, *Geologi Minyak Dan Gas Bumi Untuk Geologist Pemula* (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 2013), 79.

Despite their value, these resources present considerable ethical challenges. Without prudent management, the exploitation of subsurface wealth can lead to significant environmental degradation. The consequences of poor resource governance are already visible in various parts of the world, ranging from land subsidence and toxic spills to ecological disasters such as the Sidoarjo mud volcano in Indonesia. These disasters serve as cautionary examples of how uncontrolled exploitation can contribute to environmental collapse, including flooding, desertification, and landslides. In a broader sense, such outcomes could precipitate civilizational instability.

Although petroleum is not explicitly mentioned in the *ḥadīth* under discussion, its presence within the Earth's strata offers a relevant point of reflection. The prophetic description of the Earth as having seven layers not only prefigures modern stratigraphic understanding but also carries a moral dimension, especially in the context of justice and accountability. The eschatological message of the *ḥadīth*, particularly regarding unjust land appropriation, resonates with today's ethical concerns around resource ownership, environmental justice, and intergenerational responsibility. In this light, sustainable use of the Earth's buried wealth should be understood as part of a broader theological imperative: to act as stewards (*ḵbulafā'*) of the Earth, as emphasized in the Qur'an.

Effective and ethical resource management, therefore, demands an interdisciplinary approach—one that integrates geosciences, engineering, environmental studies, and the ethical insights of the Islamic tradition. Rather than treating disciplines in isolation, the challenges of planetary stewardship call for a synthesized epistemology. By reading the *ḥadīth* through both geological and ethical lenses, we affirm that sacred texts can inform, complement, and even inspire scientific inquiry, especially when directed toward the common good of humanity and the Earth.

## CONCLUSION

When examining the *ḥadīth* concerning the seven terrestrial strata through the lens of religion-science discourse, it demonstrably aligns with the verification paradigm. This signifies that the *ḥadīth* not only satisfies the criteria of authenticity (*ṣiḥḥa*) but also achieves empirical corroboration through modern scientific discovery. Hermeneutical approaches to *ḥadīth* interpretation vary significantly across scholarly traditions and historical periods. The interpretive frameworks employed during the Prophetic era, the generation of the Companions (*ṣaḥāba*) and Successors (*ṭābi'ūn*), the medieval Islamic period, and the modern-contemporary age reflect distinct epistemological contexts. Technological advancement has further contributed to the evolution of *ḥadīth* exegesis in recent times. The *ḥadīth* in question also demonstrates substantial congruence with the Qur'anic

verse that references sevenfold celestial and terrestrial strata (Q 65:12). While acknowledging the ontological distinction between atmospheric layers (characterized by spatial intervals) and terrestrial layers (defined by material contiguity), the consistency of both descriptions affirms a deeper conceptual harmony between scriptural insight and geoscientific knowledge. The stratigraphic analysis presented in this study is intentional: understanding the Earth's structure is critical to comprehending the subsurface distribution of natural resources such as petroleum and natural gas. These resources reside within specific geospheric strata. The transmission chain (*sanad*) of the *ḥadīth*, recorded in authoritative compilations such as *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, *Musnad Ahmad*, and *Sunan al-Dārimī*, is universally recognized for its trustworthy narrators (*ruwāt al-thiqāt*). As such, further *sanad* critique becomes redundant; scholarly focus should now shift toward textual analysis (*naqd al-matn*).

This study remains preliminary, constrained by datasets yet to be explored, but it offers foundational insights into the concept of a septilaminar Earth. Rigorous *matn* criticism is essential to address the epistemological demands of our time. Within modern academia, *ḥadīth* studies must increasingly prioritize *matn*-centric inquiry, moving beyond the classical *sanad*-focused paradigm extensively covered in biographical literature (*ḥatīb al-rijāl*). The discipline of narrator evaluation (*‘ilm al-jarḥ wa al-ta’dīl*), while foundational, carries subjective tendencies and may, at times, be influenced by external considerations. Modern and contemporary scholars such as Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (d. 1996), Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī (d. 2022), Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Idlibī, Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Jawwābī, Syuhudi Ismail (d. 1995), Ali Mustafa Ya‘qub (d. 2016), and Muhammad Anshori (b. 1992) have pioneered this *matn*-oriented paradigm. The institutionalization of *‘Ilm Ma‘ānī al-Ḥadīth* within Islamic higher education reflects the dynamic, historically responsive evolution of the field. As with all intellectual traditions, the sciences of *ḥadīth* undergo cycles of growth and stagnation. Indonesian *ḥadīth* scholarship, in particular, requires revitalization to foster innovative methodologies and critical engagement.

Future *ḥadīth* research must adopt an interdisciplinary orientation. Isolated disciplinary approaches are no longer adequate. A comprehensive understanding of *ḥadīth* demands methodological pluralism, integrating historical, sociological, anthropological, psychological, archaeological, and geographical frameworks. STEM disciplines, including chemistry, biology, physics, and mathematics, as well as modern earth sciences, also contribute valuable tools for *ḥadīth* interpretation. This calls for an integration–interconnection paradigm, encouraging intellectual cross-pollination between disciplines rather than fragmented, siloed scholarship.

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