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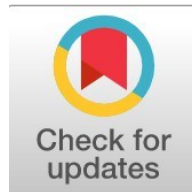
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The Validity of Imam Shafi'i, Criticism, and the Influence of Yahya Bin Ma'in's Accusations on the Weakness of Transmission in Hadith Chains

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Abstract

General Background: Imam Shafi'i is widely recognized as a leading mujtahid and a major authority in Islamic jurisprudence and hadith scholarship, whose narrations have long been referenced in classical Islamic sciences. **Specific Background:** Despite this recognition, certain criticisms—most notably attributed to Yahya bin Ma'in—questioned Imam Shafi'i's reliability as a hadith transmitter, particularly regarding sanad assessment within the tradition of jarh wa ta'dil. **Knowledge Gap:** These accusations have often been cited without systematic evaluation against broader scholarly consensus and established methodological principles of hadith criticism. **Aims:** This study aims to reassess Yahya bin Ma'in's accusations and examine their standing within jarh wa ta'dil, focusing on whether they undermine Imam Shafi'i's status as a thiqah narrator. **Results:** Based on qualitative library research and comparative analysis of classical sources, the study finds that the accusations lack substantiated grounds, are contradicted by other authenticated statements from Yahya bin Ma'in himself, and are outweighed by extensive scholarly endorsement of Imam Shafi'i's reliability. **Novelty:** The article provides a structured clarification that situates isolated criticism within the wider epistemological framework of hadith sciences, emphasizing scholarly consensus and narrator reputation. **Implications:** These findings reaffirm Imam Shafi'i's authority in hadith transmission and offer a methodological reference for addressing contested evaluations of narrators in Islamic scholarship.

Highlights:

- ♦ Accusations against Imam Shafi'i lack methodological consistency when examined through classical hadith principles.
- ♦ Scholarly consensus affirms his status as a trustworthy narrator despite isolated critiques.
- ♦ Omission from certain canonical compilations does not constitute evidence of unreliability.

Keywords: Imam Shafi'i, Hadith Transmission, Jarh wa Ta'dil, Sanad Criticism, Yahya bin Ma'in

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Introduction

Imam Shafi'i, as an absolute mujtahid, is not exempt from the assumption or accusation of being weak in the science of hadith in terms of both riwayat (narration) and dirayah (understanding) by some critics. One of these is in the book *Al-Madkhal Ila Madhhab Al-Imam Al-Shafi'i* by Akrom Yusuf Al-Qowasimiy, which mentions more than three accusations directed at Imam Shafi'i's weakness in the isnad (chain of narration) of hadith.[1] This is very interesting to study in relation to what we know about Imam al-Shafi'i, who was a scholar as well as a phenomenal mujtahid, with many followers of the Shafi'i madhhab around the world. Moreover, this madhhab is the one adopted as a guideline by the majority of Muslims in Indonesia. In other words, Imam Shafi'i is highly trusted for his expertise in religious knowledge, yet there are still naive allegations that could actually undermine his credibility.[2]

Imam Shafi'i is nicknamed the Defender of the Sunnah because of his efforts in supporting or defending the Sunnah in combating innovations that had begun to spread widely across several continents and countries, particularly in Iraq.[3] This had become very widespread among Muslims at that time, like innovations that distance one from Islam. Imam Shafi'i defended the Sunnah with his opinion that opposed or rejected the innovations that had spread and distanced people from Islam, and that opinion became a guideline with several principles to practice the Sunnah. This is because some jurists in Iraq rejected certain hadiths with different arguments; at times, the Sunnah differed from the text of the Qur'an, a basis that they had agreed upon, or other Sunnahs that differed from mutawatir hadiths. For them, they did not accept the opinions or views of scholars who prioritized reasoning that did not come from valid sources such as the Qur'an or hadith.[4] Until Imam Shafi'i came and reconciled the two groups, calming the debates. Imam Shafi'i then explained to each group from his perspective, clarifying the truth and the opinions that deviated from the Sunnah. After his explanation, many of them left their schools of thought that contradicted the Sunnah and leaned more towards following opinion over the Sunnah, and followed the school of Imam Shafi'i instead, the group that focused on prioritizing the Sunnah over various opinions. Therefore, it is not surprising that many of the Shafi'i companions became hadith experts of their time, such as Ibn Khuzaymah, al-Daraqutni, al-Dhahabi, and Ibn Hajar. Considering the achievements demonstrated by Imam Shafi'i, he rightfully deserves high credibility, yet there are still criticisms or unjust accusations directed at him.[5]

As for Imam al-Bukhari, who briefly mentioned the biography of Imam al-Shafi'i in his book *Tarikh al-Kabir*, 'He is Muhammad bin Idris, a scholar of Quraysh descent, and he passed away in the year 204 AH.' Furthermore, Imam al-Bukhari was well aware that Imam al-Shafi'i transmitted a great many hadiths. If Imam al-Shafi'i were considered weak, he would have mentioned it, just as he mentioned Imam Abu Hanifa in that chapter.[6] In the book of *manaqib* written by Imam Fakhruddin al-Razi, it is mentioned that Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal praised Imam Shafi'i for his knowledge of hadith. This is highly contradictory to the accusations found in the book *Al-Madkhal Ila Madhhab Al-Imam Al-Shafi'i* by Akrom Yusuf Al-Qowasimiy. Moreover, Imam Shafi'i was an extraordinary mujtahid mutlaq, which makes this an odd point for some scholars, as noted in the book *Manaqib al-Imam al-Shafi'i* by Imam Fakhruddin al-Razi. Perhaps many do not understand this issue, but it is very important and requires deeper explanation to prevent naive assumptions about the main madhhab imam among the Indonesian community. There are criticisms regarding the chain of narration (sanad) of hadith concerning Imam Shafi'i, and this criticism was also raised by one of the hadith scholars, Yahya bin Ma'in, who was titled Shaykh al-Hadith. This case could greatly impact his reliability. This criticism could affect the quality of the hadith transmitted by Imam Shafi'i, so this issue needs to be addressed firmly so that this criticism does not affect his narrations. As mentioned in the book *Al-Madkhal Ila Madhhab Al-Imam Al-Shafi'i* by Akrom Yusuf Al-Qowasimiy, there is a criticism from Yahya bin Ma'in stating that Imam Shafi'i is not considered reliable (thiqah), although the book already contains critiques of this claim. However, according to the principles discussed in *jarh wa ta'dil*, criticism from one person who is considered an expert in *jarh wa ta'dil* can be accepted.[7]

This study aims to prove that the accusations made by Yahya bin Ma'in, based on the wording found in the book *Al-Madkhal Ila Madhhab Al-Imam Al-Shafi'i*, cannot be justified from the perspective of *jarh wa ta'dil*, and that Imam Shafi'i remains qualified with the title of thiqah. This journal uses a qualitative method, in which the author employs documentation techniques to analyze data based on literature, as well as data collection techniques sourced from books, the works of scholars, and journals related to the science of isnad (chains of narration) of hadith and the biographies of Imam Shafi'i and Yahya bin Ma'in. This journal covers the accusations of Yahya bin Ma'in against Imam Shafi'i, the acknowledgment of hadith scholars regarding Imam Shafi'i's thiqah status, and the influence of these accusations on hadith narration.

Method

This study uses a qualitative method with a type of library research aimed at tracing classical and contemporary literary sources related to the validity of Imam Shafi'i as a hadith narrator, the criticisms directed at him by Yahya bin Ma'in, and how these criticisms affected the assessment of hadith chains. A historical approach is used to understand the context of the lives of Imam Shafi'i and Yahya bin Ma'in, including their scholarly relationship and the background of the emergence of criticisms in the tradition of *jarh wa ta'dil*. In addition, a hadith chain criticism approach is applied to evaluate Imam Shafi'i's capacity in narrating hadith based on the parameters of justice, accuracy, and memorization quality according to the perspective of hadith scholars. A content analysis approach is also employed to examine statements, comments, or evaluations of scholars regarding the integrity and narration of Imam Shafi'i in various classical texts.

The research data sources consist of primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include the biographies of narrators and works on *jarh wa ta'dil* such as *Tarikh Yahya bin Ma'in*, *al-Jarh wa al-Ta'dil* by Ibn Abi Hatim, as well as works of Imam Shafi'i such as *al-Risalah* and *al-Umm*, including hadith narrations in the *Kutub al-Sittah* whose isnads go through him. Secondary data sources include scientific journals, academic works, and modern books that support efforts to analyze the

status and criticism. Data collection techniques are carried out through documentation methods, namely tracing hadith texts, isnad narrations, and scholars' opinions related to the subject, and classifying the data according to categories: criticism, defense, and influence on the quality of the isnad.

The data obtained was analyzed by verifying the validity of sources, then analyzing the isnad of hadiths transmitted through Imam Shafi'i to determine whether they truly have weaknesses as criticized by Yahya bin Ma'in, and by comparing the assessments of other scholars to obtain an objective picture. The analysis was conducted inductively, starting from specific findings in references and then drawing conclusions about the position and validity of Imam Shafi'i as a hadith narrator. This research was carried out through access to physical and digital libraries, such as Maktabah Syamilah and academic libraries that provide classical Islamic texts and hadith literature. The results of this study are expected to contribute to a scholarly understanding of Imam Shafi'i's authority in narration, to sift through the validity of Yahya bin Ma'in's criticisms, and to clarify the impact of these criticisms on the assessment of hadith isnads.

Results and Discussion

A. Biography of Imam Shafi'i

Muhammad bin Idris, who is better known as Imam Shafi'i, has the full name that also mentions the lineage from his father: Muhammad bin Idris bin Abbas bin Uthman bin Shafi'i bin as-Sa'ib bin 'Ubaid bin 'Abd al-Yazid bin Hashim bin al-Muthalib bin 'Abd al-Manaf bin Qusay bin Kilab. Meanwhile, the nisbah al-Shafi'i is taken from the name of his grandfather, Shafi'i bin Qusay bin Kilab, who is also an ancestor of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Al-Shafi'i met the Prophet Muhammad through 'Abd al-Manaf.[8] Imam Shafi'i was born in Palestine in the year 150 AH, specifically in the Gaza region. He was born into a poor family and became an orphan under the care of his mother. From his noble lineage, he grew into a good person who always upheld noble values and virtues. From a young age, he had already gained honor from his lineage.[9]

The young Shâfi'î lived in the Gaza area before migrating to Mecca and receiving his education there. At the age of seven, Imam Shâfi'î had already memorized the Qur'an thanks to his mother's efforts. He then paid special attention to memorizing the hadiths he read from the library, and by the age of ten, he had successfully memorized the book *Al-Muwatta'* by Imam Malik.[10] Yakut mentioned a narration in the book *Mu'jam al-Hudaba*. The narration is: 'Arabi said, I heard Imam Shafi'i say, 'Once, while I was writing and listening to a teacher who was teaching children to recite the Qur'an, I immediately memorized what the teacher dictated. When it was the turn of the other children to write, I had already memorized everything the teacher dictated. Then one day, the teacher said to me, 'I do not charge you a single penny, so why do you leave my class?' I answered, 'I went out to find dried leather pottery, palm fronds, and large camel shoulder bones so that I could write hadiths on those objects. Then I went to offices to look for used papers as my writing material. Truly, I have made so many notes that even my mother's vessels, along with palm fronds, bones, and pottery, were filled with hadith notes.'

Imam Shafi'i traveled to several regions to seek knowledge, including the city of Mecca. There he settled in the village of Hudhail, where Imam Shafi'i studied language sciences; he stated that language is the key to knowledge.[11] He also deepened his knowledge of literature until he became a skilled poet, and it was in Mecca that Imâm Shâfi'î began studying the Qur'an, hadith, and fiqh. Due to his determination to master fiqh, he traveled to the city of Medina after hearing about a great scholar who was an expert in fiqh and hadith, namely Imâm Mâlik. Evidence of their closeness is that Imâm Mâlik gave the impression to Imâm Shâfi'î that he was his shadow. This shows that throughout his time with Imâm Mâlik until the latter's death, the knowledge possessed by Imâm Mâlik was fully absorbed by Imâm Shâfi'î. Not stopping there, he also continued to develop his potential as a mujtahid by continuing to study in various regions, such as learning supernatural knowledge in Yemen and studying the Hanafi madhhab in Baghdad. His remarkable journey continued until his passing.

Imam Shafi'i came to Egypt at a time when the people of Egypt followed the Hanafi and Maliki schools of thought. After he compiled his book containing his established opinions, he then taught at the 'Amr ibn al-'As Mosque. From these teachings, his school's ideas were able to develop in Egypt, especially since many of his followers came from the scholarly community, such as Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn 'Abd al-Hakam, Ismail ibn Yahya al-Buwaithi, al-Rabi', al-Jizi, Ashab ibn al-Qasim, and Ibn Mawas. They were the pioneers in spreading the Shafi'i school throughout various regions and corners of Egypt.[12] During his residence in Egypt for approximately six years, Imam Shafi'i, who had earned the title of Imam Mujtahid, devoted the rest of his life to serving at the Jami' Fustat mosque and refining all of his works. He then declared that his final ijtihad was the ijtihad in Egypt. After his long journey, he passed away on the 28th of Rajab in the year 204 AH at the age of 54.[13] Imam Shafi'i left his thoughts and contributions in the science of hadith, which is why he is called the helper of the Sunnah.

B. Biography of Yahya bin Ma'in

His full name is Abû Zakariyâ Yahya bin Ma'in bin 'Awn bin Ziyâd bin Bastâm. He was an Imam, Hâfîzh of Hadith, and a scholar of hadith. He was born in the year 158 AH and grew up in Baghdad. He traveled to Egypt when he was fifty-six years old. He passed away at the age of 75, in the year 233 AH, and was buried in Al-Baqi'. Ibn Ma'in's father was a resident of a village near Anbar, called 'Naqia'. His father was a scribe for Abdullâh bin Mâlik. His grandfather's name was Ghiyath bin Ziyâd bin 'Awn bin Bastâm Al-Ghatfanî, then Al-Marrî, their master Al-Baghdâdi, one of the prominent figures. He received a thousand dirhams from his father, but he spent it all in the pursuit of hadith until he had no shoes left to wear.

Yahya bin Ma'in seriously pursued and recorded hadith from the age of 20, then traveled to various countries such as Iraq,

Hijaz, Al-Jazirah, Syria, and Egypt, until he met and heard hadith from several scholars such as Ibn Al-Mubarak, Hashim, Isma'il bin Ayyash, Isma'il bin Mujalid bin Sa'id, Yahya bin Zakariya bin Abi Za'ida, Abu Mu'awiyah, and others. Meanwhile, among his senior students were Ahmad bin Hanbal, Muhammad bin Sa'ad, Abu Khaithama, Hanad bin Al-Sari, Al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, and others. Throughout his life, he wrote thousands of hadiths with his own hand. He often wrote the same hadith repeatedly. Elsewhere, Yahya bin Ma'in taught that the condition for strong memorization of hadith is to write it 50 times.

Due to his diligence in delving into and studying hadith, he is known as a great scholar in the field of hadith. As a result, many scholars have praised him. Ali Al-Mad'ini said, "We do not know anyone from the time of Adam who wrote hadith as Ibn Ma'in did." Imâm Al-Dhahabî referred to him as "Sayyid Al-Huffâd" (the leader of hadith experts). An-Nasâ'î said, "Yahya bin Ma'in is someone who is trustworthy and reliable, and among the experts in the field of hadith." Ahmad bin Hanbal said, "Yahya bin Ma'in is the most knowledgeable about 'ilm al-rijâl (the science of narrators)." He also said, "I heard Abu Abdullah say: The most knowledgeable person is Yahya bin Ma'in." Yahya bin Ma'in's expertise in hadith science is unquestionable, making him a great Imam, especially in hadith, and also a primary reference in the science of jarḥ wa ta'dîl (criticism and authentication of narrators).

C. The Validity of Imam Shafi'i

Imam Shafi'i was a person knowledgeable in hadith and undoubtedly loved by hadith scholars. Imam Shafi'i said,

عَلَيْكُمْ بِأَصْحَابِ الْحَدِيثِ، فَإِنَّهُمْ أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ صَوَابًا

"You should follow ashâb al-hadith because they are the people who have a lot of truth". He also said,

إِذَا رَأَيْتُ رَجُلًا مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْحَدِيثِ، فَكَأَنِّي رَأَيْتُ رَجُلًا مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، جَزَاهُ اللَّهُ خَيْرًا، هُمْ حَفِظُوا لَنَا، الْأَصْلَ، فَلَهُمْ عَلَيْنَا الْفَضْلُ

"When I see someone from the companions of hadith, it is as if I am seeing someone from the companions of the Prophet. May Allah reward them for their goodness; they have also preserved the hadith and contributed greatly to us."

From the two statements of Imam Shâfi'i above, it is evident that there is no doubt about his expertise in the field of Hadith, which is why many scholars have commented on and praised him as a figure in the field of Hadith, among them as follows: Historical scholars mention that when Imam Shâfi'i was asked to meet Caliph Hârûn ar-Râshîd, after he heard Imam Shâfi'i's words, he said,

أَكْثَرَ اللَّهُ فِي أَهْلِ مِثْلِكَ

"May Allah bless you with many descendants like you"

When Imam Shafi'i debated a certain issue with Muhammad ibn al-Hasan and left him silent with his argument, and the news reached the ears of Caliph Harun al-Rashid, he then said,

أَمَا لِمَ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْحَسَنِ، أَنَّهُ إِذَا نَظَرَ رَجُلًا مِنْ قُرَيْشٍ، أَنَّهُ يَقْطَعُهُ، سَائِلًا كَانَ أَوْ مُجِيبًا؟

"Does Muhammad bin al-Hasan not know that if Imam Shafi'i debates with someone, that person will be silenced by Imam Shafi'i's questions or answers?"

In his book entitled *Tarikh Baghdâd*, al-Khatib al-Baghdadi narrates from Abdurrahman bin Mahdi from Malik that he said,

وَمَا أَتَانِي قُرَشِي، أَفْهَمَ مِنْ هَذَا الْفَتَى، بِعَنِي الشَّافِعِي

"Not a single youth among the Quraysh understood religion better than this young man (Imâm Shâfi'i)."

Ahmad bin Hanbal said,

مَامَسَ أَحَدٌ مَحْبِرَةً إِلَّا وَالشَّافِعِي فِي رِقَبَتِهِ مَنَةً. وَقَالَ: كَانَ الْفَقْهَ قَفْلًا عَلَى أَهْلِهِ، حَتَّى فَتَحَهُ اللَّهُ بِالشَّافِعِي، وَقَالَ: مَا تَكَلَّمَ فِي الْعِلْمِ رَجُلٌ أَقْلَ خَطَاً، وَلَا أَكْثَرَ أَخْذًا بِسُنَّةِ رَسُولٍ أَوْ مِنَ الشَّافِعِي. وَسَمِعْتُ أَحْمَدَ بْنَ الشَّافِعِي

"No one delved deeply into a field of knowledge except Imam Shafi'i, who already possessed a portion of that knowledge," and he also said, "In the past, many people were ignorant of the science of jurisprudence until Allah opened their eyes to that knowledge through Imam Shafi'i," and he said, "No one had fewer mistakes and returned to the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah more than Imam Shafi'i."

He was also once asked about Imam Shafi'i, and he said,

لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا بِهِ. لَقَدْ كُنَّا تَعْلَمُنَا عِلْمَ الْقَوْمِ وَكُنَّا نَكْتُبُنَا كِتَابَهُمْ، حَتَّى قَدِمَ عَلَيْنَا الشَّافِعِي، فَلَمَّا سَمِعْنَا كَلَامَهُ عَلَيْنَا أَنَّهُ أَعْلَمُ مِنْ غَيْرِهِ

"Indeed, Allah has granted us an Imam Shafi'i. Truly, we have learned much knowledge from the scholars and also written their books. However, when Imam Shafi'i came, we sat in his assembly, listening to his words until we realized that there

was none better than him."

He/She also said,

ما أعلم أحداً أعظم منة على الإسلام في زمن الشافعي . من الشافعي وإنني لأدعو الله له في أدبار صلاتي فأقول : اللهم اغفر لي ولوالدي ولمحمد بن إدريس

"I do not know of anyone who understood fiqh more than Imam Shafi'i in his time. Indeed, I always pray for him in every prayer, saying, 'O Allah, forgive me, my parents, and Muhammad bin Idris.'"

Ishaq bin Rahawaih said,

كان أحمد بن حنبل يقول - أكثر من عشر مرات ، ونحن بمكة: تعالى حتى أريك رجلا ، ما رأيت عينك مثله . قال : فأخذ بيدي وأوقفني على الشافعي

"When we were in Mecca, Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal said more than ten times, 'Come, I will show you someone you have never seen before,' then he took my hand and stopped me in front of Imam Shafi'i."

Ahmad bin Hanbal juga pernah berkata,

لشافعي فيلسوف في أربعة أشياء في اللغة. واختلاف الناس ، والفقه، والمعاني

"Imam Shafi'i was a scholar who was an expert in four fields of knowledge, namely; language, differences of scholarly opinion, jurisprudence, and exegesis."

As for Abû Hatim al-Râzî, he said,

لولا الشافعي ، لكان أصحاب الحديث في عمى

"If it were not for Imam Shafi'i, hadith scholars would be blind to the many secrets embedded in the hadith."

The praise of scholars for Imam Shâfi'i is truly immense. Imam Shâfi'i was a scholar who had extensive knowledge and memorization of the Hadiths of the Messenger of Allah, as well as the sciences related to them. In addition, he was also skilled in debating, possessed a very eloquent tongue, and was highly intelligent in refuting the arguments of his opponents. Imam Shâfi'i was a scholar who played a significant role in defending the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah. Whenever there was an issue or question, he would always provide very clear answers, leaving other scholars unable to contest him, and enabling Hadith scholars to avoid being misled by the objections of other scholars. Therefore, many praised and honored Imam Shâfi'i. There is no doubt about his expertise in Hadith sciences, as attested by other experts.

D. Accusations Against Imam Sayfi'i Along with Their Critiques

Many hadith scholars acknowledge the reliability (thiqah) of Imam Shafi'i in hadith narration, one of them being Ibn Sholah, who stated that the highest isnad in hadith narration is Al-Shafi'i from Malik bin Anas from Nafi' from Ibn Umar, although according to some other scholars, that is not the case. However, this isnad is considered strong based on the narrators. Nevertheless, Imam Shafi'i was not free from accusations and criticisms directed at him, including:

1. The first accusation is narrated from Yahya bin Ma'in, who was one of the Imams of al-Jarh wa ta'dil in his time. When asked about the trustworthiness of Imam Shâfi'i, he replied that Imam Shâfi'i was not a reliable narrator. He argued that Imam Shâfi'i was from the Râfiḍah group, which is a sect of Shi'a, a label that according to Ibn Hazm referred to the Ithna Ashariyah group. According to Imam Mâlik, when he was asked about the Râfiḍah group, he replied, 'Do not engage in conversation with them and do not accept the hadith they narrate; indeed, they are liars. As liars, their narration cannot be accepted.'
2. The second accusation: This accusation is not one that was raised by Yahya bin Ma'in. Imam Bukhari and Muslim did not take narrations from the hadiths of Imam Shafi'i in their two Sahih books, and this indicates the unreliability of Imam Shafi'i. Therefore, it is necessary to question how Imam Shafi'i could become an Imam in the science of hadith.

The above accusations are some of the allegations leveled against Imam Shâfi'i, which could potentially undermine Imam Shâfi'i's credibility and then affect the quality of the hadiths he transmitted, as well as the chain of narration that is regarded as the most authentic. This chain of narration, going through Imam Shâfi'i, cannot be attributed to a chain in which Imam Shâfi'i is present.

E. Responses and Criticism

In this case, the scholars have already responded and provided critiques to counter these overly naive and unfounded accusations, including:

1. Response and criticism to the first accusation

- The first accusation is about the narration from Yahya bin Ma'in, which differs from what was stated by Imam al-Khatib al-Baghdadi and also Imam al-Baihaqi. He said, 'I heard from Yahya bin Ma'in saying that Imam Shafi'i is trustworthy or honest; there is no problem.' Likewise, the narration from some groups other than Hashim bin Murzat from Imam Azza Fakhroni said, 'I asked Yahya bin Ma'in about the trustworthiness of Imam Shafi'i. He replied, 'If lying in any way existed in him, the integrity of Imam Shafi'i would prevent such lying.'
- The opinions of several hadith scholars regarding the reliability of Imam Shafi'i are narrated from Abu Zahrah Razi, who said that Imam Shafi'i never transmitted a hadith in which there was a defect. Imam Abu Dawud said, 'I do not know if there is any hadith transmitted by Imam Shafi'i that is incorrect.' Imam Nasai said, 'For us, Imam Shafi'i is one of the scholars who is reliable and trustworthy.' Similarly, his reliability is narrated from Abu Hatim, Qutaibah bin Sa'id, and others. They said that Imam Shafi'i is a trustworthy person and a memorizer of hadith, and serves as a proof for Islam.
- Imam Shafi'i is not included in the Shia Rafidah group because he acknowledges the four Rightly Guided Caliphs, which is contrary to the Shia Rafidah school. In fact, Imam Shafi'i himself composed poetry to reject such accusations.

إِذَا نَحْنُ فَضَّلْنَا عَلَيَّ فَإِنَّا
رَوَافِضُ بِالْفَضِيلِ عِنْدَ ذَوِي الْجَهْلِ
وَفَضَّلُ أَبِي بَكْرٍ إِذَا مَا ذَكَرْتُهُ
رُمِيتُ بِنَصَبٍ عِنْدَ ذِكْرِي لِلْفَضْلِ
فَلَا زِلْتُ ذَا رَفِضٍ وَنَصَبٍ كِلَاهُمَا
بِحَبِيبِهِمَا حَتَّى أَوْسَدَ فِي الرَّمْلِ

If we prioritize 'Ali, then indeed we are Rāfiḍah according to foolish people. And if I mention the virtues of Abū Bakr, then I am accused of being Nāshibī when I say it. So I am always both Rāfiḍī and Nāshibī; I embrace both until I am buried in the ground.

Syair ini menunjukkan terhadap kecintaan Imām Shāfi'ī kepada ahli bait nabi dan juga khulafaur rāshidīn.

2. Response and criticism of the second accusation

- In the matter of criticisms regarding the allegations attributed to Imam Shafi'i, Imam Khatib al-Baghdadi wrote a book called *Mas'ālat al-Ihtijāj bi al-Shāfi'ī fīmā Usnida Ilayhi* to critique or refute the opinions of groups that discredited the reliability of Imam Shafi'i.
- Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim did not disparage Imam Shafi'i; in fact, both mentioned Imam Shafi'i with praise and respect. Omitting the narration of Imam Shafi'i does not indicate any criticism (al-Jarh), whereas the praise and respect indicate an acknowledgment of his reliability (al-Tadlil). Similarly, Imam Bukhari did not mention Imam Shafi'i in the book that explains weak narrators (al-Du'afa'), but he did mention Abu Hanifa in that book. If Imam Shafi'i were a weak narrator, Bukhari would have mentioned him in his book, because Shafi'i is mentioned in the book al-Tarikh al-Kabir and is not found in the book al-Du'afa'.
- Many Hadith narrators transmitted through the chain of Imam Shafi'i, such as Imam Abu Dawud in his Sunan, Abu 'Isa al-Tirmidhi, Muhammad bin Ishaq bin Husain, and Ibn Abi Hatim al-Razi. This explains that refraining from narrating does not cause someone to be classified as abandoned when their fairness ('adalah) is already clear.
- Scholars disagree on determining the highest isnad, but there is a narration that the highest or most authentic isnad is the hadith narrated from Imam Shafi'i from Imam Malik from Nafi' from Ibn 'Umar from the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him. This isnad is also known as al-Silsilah al-Dhahabiyah. If Imam Shafi'i were not a hadith scholar and could not be used as evidence, then the hadith narrated from Imam Shafi'i would not be considered the most authentic isnad. The evidence is that some of Imam Malik's students focused only on fiqh knowledge, which indicates a tendency toward valuing the most noble isnad in the world as the hadith narrated from Imam Shafi'i from Imam Malik from Nafi' from Ibn 'Umar. This shows that Imam Shafi'i held a high status in the science of hadith.
- The allegation was refuted with the response that Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim did not narrate hadith from Imam Shafi'i not because he was considered a weak narrator, but because the two Imams had never met him. If the two hadith collectors had narrated hadith from Imam Shafi'i, they would have had to narrate hadith from Shafi'i's students, whereas most of Imam Bukhari's and Muslim's teachers were students of Imam Malik. Perhaps on this basis, these two hadith Imams did not narrate hadith from Imam Shafi'i's students, as it could lower the quality of the narration. According to hadith scholars, Imam Malik's students had a higher rank compared to Imam Shafi'i's students. Moreover, simply not taking hadith narrations from Imam Shafi'i cannot be used as a reason to judge Imam Shafi'i as a weak narrator, because the assessment of the weakness or strength of hadith narration must be discussed in depth. In the chapter of Jarh wa Ta'dil, how is it possible that Imam Shafi'i is considered a weak narrator, whereas Imam Al-Bukhari himself does not include Shafi'i's name among the weak narrators as mentioned in his work Al-Kabir, while Imam Muslim acknowledges his credibility as a hadith scholar.

These accusations were directed at Imam Shāfi'ī due to a lack of understanding in the science of hadith and historical knowledge, which resulted in an accusation that was unworthy of being leveled against Imam Shāfi'ī. Furthermore, the accusation made by Yahya bin Ma'in could damage his credibility as a narrator who had the title of thiqah. This accusation is truly undeserved for Imam Shāfi'ī, considering that he was an Imam, as well as a phenomenal absolute mujtahid, followed by millions of people from the eastern to the western parts of the world. In this sense, it serves as evidence that he was credible in various fields of Islamic knowledge, including in the transmission of hadith.

F. The Influence of Accusations

The conflict between jarh and ta'dil regarding a certain figure, where some critics give negative judgment (tajrih) and others give positive judgment (ta'dil), has led scholars to divide opinions on this matter:

- a. *Al-jarh is given absolute precedence because a person who practices tajrih possesses knowledge that the penta'dil does not have.*
- b. Evaluating the reliability (men-ta'dil) is prioritized over criticizing (jarh) if those who evaluate are more numerous than those who criticize.
- c. If jarh and ta'dil contradict each other and neither can be prioritized, then there must be confirmation from one of them until it becomes clear which one is stronger between the two.
- d. Remain in dispute if no prioritization is found.

In this case, Imam Shafi'i was criticized by Yahya bin Ma'in as a trustworthy narrator, if viewed from the principles mentioned above, the contradictions in Imam Shafi'i's weakness can be categorized in the first and second points. However, the concept above is the majority scholars' concept, not an absolute one. What is more emphasized is the popularity of a narrator as a hadith scholar among other scholars, such as Imam Shafi'i, whose trustworthiness is indisputable.[14] Because there are already so many scholars, the above concept is no longer taken into account. This accusation means nothing to him because, as explained above, Imam Shâfi'î received praise from many scholars. As for the second accusation, it is still merely a supposition that could undermine his trustworthiness (thiqah), and in this case, it is necessary to study and examine the science of Jarh and Ta'dil as the main concept in judging a narrator [15].

Conclusion

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that Imam Shâfi'î was a great Imam and an expert in various fields of knowledge, especially in the fields of usul (principles of Islamic jurisprudence) and Hadith, to the extent that he wrote a special book explaining usul fiqh and Hadith. He was the first person to compile Hadith, even though some scholars had previously compiled Hadith, but they did not use a specific term or a dedicated book to explain Hadith sciences. Many scholars have praised and honored Imam Shâfi'î because he was a scholar who had deep knowledge and memorization of the Prophet's Hadith and related sciences. Moreover, he was also skilled in debate, possessed a very eloquent speech, and was highly intelligent in refuting his opponents' arguments. These qualities make the validity of Imam Shâfi'î beyond doubt. The accusation made by Yahya bin Ma'in against Imam Shafi'i in the narration of Hadith is a perception that cannot be used as a basis and is even considered rejected according to the consensus of scholars. The misunderstanding of Imam Shafi'i's statements, along with the clear evidence that Imam Shafi'i was an expert in Hadith, refutes all such accusations based on the concept in the science of jarh wa ta'dil, where a person can be regarded as trustworthy due to their popularity among Hadith scholars as a reliable narrator, even though there is a principle stating that criticism from a jarh wa ta'dil expert can be accepted. However, this principle is not absolute; it is only a concept acknowledged by the majority of scholars. Likewise, it was not transmitted by Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim through the chain of Imam Shafi'i; this is an accusation that cannot undermine his reliability. The hadiths narrated from Imam Shafi'i can be used as a basis for the tendency of Shariah laws, where most of Imam Shafi'i's hadiths are authentic (sahih), even though in other narrations the hadith may be considered weak, but according to Imam Shafi'i, the hadith is sahih. In this matter, there are still many other accusations that could undermine Imam Shafi'i, therefore researchers hope that there will be further studies to review some of the accusations directed at him from the perspective of hadith science or otherwise.

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