The Origin of Isnad in Orientalist Perspective: Critical Study of Michael Cook's Thought

Muhammad Ghifari*
UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta
email:
muhghifari512@gmail.com

Ulfah Zakiyah
UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta
email:
ulfahzakiyah1@gmail.com

***Corresponding Author**

Abstract : This article review Michael Cook's thoughts on the early history of the use of isnad. Michael Cook disagrees with the opinions of the hadith scholars who said that the system of isnad only exists in Islam and is not found in other religions. Michael Cook believes that Islam is not the only sole owner of the isnad system. Long before Islam came the system of isnad had been used by previous religions, that is, it had been used by Jews in transmitting Mishnah. Even Michael Cook concluded that Islam had plagiarized the Jewish isnad system. The Islamic isnad system is very closely related to the Jewish isnad system which both have similarities and similarities in many ways. Therefore, Michael Cook believes that the Islamic isnad is a plagiarism of the Jewish isnad system. In this paper, the author explores Cook's idea which generates two problems, namely what and how are the fundamental ideas (main points) of Michael Cook related to the initial use of isnad? And the second, how is the methodological foundation of Jews in carrying out criticism of isnad? In this study, the authors used a type of qualitative research, or what is known as library research. By using two data sources, namely primary data and secondary data.

Keywords: Michael Cook, Orientalist, Isnad, Hadith

INTRODUCTION

The study of isnad has never stopped. From time to time isnad studies always attract a lot of attention for scholars of hadith, both from among insider and from among outsider (orientalists). There are many tools that have been invented by hadith scholars in the critique

of the isnad, among them 'Ilmu Rijāl al-Ḥadīs, 'Ilmu Tarīkh Ar-Ruwāh, 'Ilmu Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl, and others. Meanwhile, the study of isnad among orientalists has also given many theories, including the theory of projecting back, common link, isnad family, isnad cum matn analysis, and others.

In studying hadith, orientalists are different from hadith scholars. If the scholars of hadith study the isnad more on the quality of the narrator, then the orientalists focused on the history of the origin of isnad, they highlight more when, by whom, and where the isnad is made. This is a major problem in the study of hadith among orientalists. Whether the isnad is considered to be really connected and sourced from the Prophet SAW or not just a claim. Orientalists are more focused on their studies at that point.

One of the orientalist figures that studied and questioned the isnad system was Micheal Cook. His name is not as popular with other orientalists such as Ignaz Goldziher, Joseph Schacht, Juynboll, and others. Cook is an oriental figure who has appeared lately and few still study his thought or his idea. Though Cook is an important figure in the hadith debate. His thinking is interesting enough to study because it raises a lot of debate among hadith scholars.

Like most orientalists, the study of hadith by Cook focuses on the issue of isnad. One of them is to make a sharp focus on the early history of the beginning of the use of isnad in Islam. According to Cook, Islam is not the sole owner of the isnad system. Long before Islam came the isnad system was used by the Jews, that is, used in the transmission of the Mishnah.[1] After Islam came, the tradition of this isnad was reduced and continued by Muslims, so that the Jewish tradition has little influence on the isnad of transmission in the hadith. Cook says that the Jewish and Islamic isnad systems have many similarities. Therefore, Cook conducted an in-depth study and

---

[1] Michael Cook, "The Opponents of The Writing of Traditional in Early Islam", *Jurnal Arbica XLIV*, (1997), 511.

eventually concluded that Islam had plagiarized the tradition of the Jewish isnad system.[2]

Cook's statement that the tradition of isnad existed long before Islam came is Cook's response to the statement of hadith scholars who say that the tradition of isnad only exists in Islam. Because in general, the majority of hadith scholars are of the opinion that the tradition of isnad only exists in Islam and is not found outside of Islam. 'Abdullah ibn Mubarak (181 H) for example said that *"What distinguishes us from other people (outside of Islam) is the isnad system".[3]* In addition, Muhammad ibn Hatim al-Muzaffar (331 H) also said the same thing. *"Indeed, Allah glorifies and gives advantages to this ummah with the existence of a isnad. None of the previous ummahs had a isnad system. All that is left are the sheets in their hands that are sometimes mixed between the contents of their book and their news".[4]* More straightforwardly, the existence of isnad in Islam was also mentioned by Ibn Taymiyyah (728 H). He said that *"Sanad is something that God has reserved for the people of Muhammad SAW. Allah made this as a way to reach the hadith (dirayah). As for the Ahlul Kitab, they do not have a isnad in conveying the news quoted between them".[5]*

From here there is a difference of opinion between hadith scholars and orientalists in this case Michael Cook. The majority of hadith scholars are of the view that the isnad belongs to the treasures of Islamic knowledge that are not owned by other people. While Michael Cook denied the opinion. According to him, the tradition of isnad was used by the Jews before Islam came. Differences of opinion on the origin of this isnad are certainly interesting to trace and study further.

---

[2] Michael Cook, "The Opponents of The Writing of Traditional in Early Islam", 508.

[3] Abu Husain Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj al-Qusyairi al-Naisaburi, *al-Jāmi' al-Shaḥīḥ*, 15.

[4] Muhammad Luqman al-Salafi, *Ihtimām al-Muhadditsīn bi Naqd al-Ḥadīts Sanad wa Matn,* (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Riyadh, 1984), 153; Akram Dhiya' al-'Umari, *Buḥūts fī Tarikh al-Sunnah al-Musyrafah,* cet. 4 (Beirut: Basath, 1984), 56 ; Muhammad Muhammad Abu Syuhbah, *Fī Rihab al-Sunnah al-Kutub al-Shaḥīḥ al-Sittah* (Azhar: Majma' al-Turats, 1969), 37.

[5] Muhammad Luqman al-Salafi, *Iḥtimām al-Muḥadditsīn bi Naqd al-Ḥadīts Sanad wa Matn,* 155. ; Akram Dhiya' al-'Umari, *Buḥūts fī Tarikh al-Sunnah al-Musyrafah*, cet. 4, 165.

Throughout the search, there are three studies on Michael Cook that have been conducted, namely Umm Farida's research with the title *"Polemik Penulisan Hadis: Perspektif Michael A. Cook dalam The Opponents of Writing of Tradition in Early Islam"*,[6] Imam Sahal Ramdhani in his work entitled *"Teori The Spread of Isnad: Telaah atas Pemikiran Michael Allan Cook"*,[7] and Ali Masrur wrote a paper entitled *"Neo-Skeptisisme Michael Cook dan Norman Calder Terhadap Hadis Nabi Muhammad"*.[8]

In contrast to the writings above, the emphasis of this research is on the analysis of Michael Cook's thoughts on the origin of isnad with more emphasis on a more in-depth analysis of the arguments built by Michael Cook about the origin of the isnad. Previous research did not review Michael Cook's thoughts on the origin of the isnad. Therefore, this research is important to add to the scientific treasures of hadith studies and is very essential to be discussed in a scientific paper.

Therefore, the author is interested in researching Michael Cook's thoughts. Hopefully, the results of this research can provide a clear explanation regarding the intersection of the origin of the isnad of hadith in history.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, the authors used a type of qualitative research, or what is known as library research. By using two data sources, namely primary data and secondary data. The literature that can be used as primary data in this study are the works of Michael Cook on Hadith, namely *The Opponents of the Writing of Tradition in Early Islam* (1997),

---

[6] Ummu Farida, "Polemik Penulisan Hadis: Perspektif Michael A. Cook dalam The Opponents of Writing of Tradition in Early Islam", *Riwayah: Jurnal Studi Hadis,* Vol. 1, No. 1, (2015), 19.

[7] Imam Sahal Ramdhani, "Teori The Spread of Isnad: Telaah atas Pemikiran Michael Allan Cook", *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Quran dan Hadis*, Vol. 16, No. 2, (2015)*,* 223.

[8] Ali Masrur, "Neo-Skeptisisme Michael Cook dan Norman Calder Terhadap Hadis Nabi Muhammad", *Jurnal Theologia,* Vol 28, No. 1, (2017), 1.

Early Muslim Dogma: A Source Critical Study (1981), dan *Studies in the Origins of Early Islamic Culture and Tradition* (2004). While secondary data are sourced from books, theses/dissertations, scientific magazines, journal, online articles and other data sources that are relevant and can support the completion of this research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Biography of Michael Cook

Michael Cook is one of the leading orientalist figures of this modern age. His full name is Michael Allan Cook with the nickname Cook. He was born on December 24, 1940, in England.[9] He is an English historian. Apart from being known as a British historian, he is also known as a well-known scholar of Islamic historian at Princeton University, New Jersey, England.[10] So far, England is known as a country that has produced many figures from the orientalists of hadith, besides Michael Cook, there are the names of James Robson, Joseph Schacht, Norman Calder, D.S. Margoliouth, H.A.R. Gibb, and others.[11]

Michael Cook as an orientalist began studying Middle Eastern studies and Islamic history at King's College, Cambridge from 1959 to 1963.[12] After that, Cook continued his studies at the Postgraduate Program School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), the University of London from 1936-1966. At this university Cook was tutored by Professor Bernard Lewis. Under his guidance, Cook succeeded in presenting a new study of the social and political history

---

[9] http://en:en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Cook_(hostorian), accessed on February 10, 2021.

[10] Michael Cook, *Kontroversi Hadis: Percaturan dan Pertarungan awal Islam*, terj. Ali Masrur (Bandung: Marja, 2015), 169.

[11] Edward W Said said that England is a country that has a long history of orientalism traditions. Various oriental and Islamic studies have become the object of their study, including the study of hadith, which is why it is not surprising that this country gave birth to many hadith orientalists. Edwar W. Said, *Orientalisme*, terj. Asep Hikmat (Bandung: Pustaka: 1978), 334; A. Badawi, *Ensiklopedi Tokoh Orientalis* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2003), 30.

[12] Michael Cook, *Kontroversi Hadis: Percaturan dan Pertarungan awal Islam*, terj. Ali Masrur, 169.

of the Ottoman dynasty, Turkey. The results of this study became its first monograph, Population Pressure This Rural Anatolia, 1450-1600 (1972).[13]

In the area of hadith study, Michael Cook has become known since he criticized Joseph Schacht and Juynboll's ideas regarding the common link theory in 1981, and tried to prove the accuracy of his thinking.[14] According to Cook, narrators with the status of common links cannot be used as a basis for evaluating as forgers of hadith. He said that every narrator in a isnad has the same potential to fabricate hadiths, not only for narrators who have a common link but all narrators can also fabricate hadiths.[15]

Cook's attention to hadith intensified after writing a book entitled Early Muslim Dogma: A Source Critical-Study published by Cambridge University Press in 1981. When Michael Cook finished publishing this book, since then he began to focus a lot of his attention on the study of hadith. It is proven by the birth of many of his articles that focus on the study of hadith. Among them are Eschatology and the Dating of Traditions (1992), The Heraclian Dynasty in Muslim Eschatology (1992), An Early Islamic Apocalyptic Chronicle (1993), The Opponents of The Writing Traditional in Early Islam (1997), and Ibn Qutayba and the Monkeys (1999).[16] These five works are writings that focus on the study of hadith. This also proves that Cook is an

---

[13] In searching for data about Michael Cook's life, the author faces various difficulties due to the limited number of writings that reveal his complete biography. In addition, matching data by wikipedia.org and the Princeton university website only explains more about his scientific career than his career paths. Therefore, to complete these data, the author contacted Michael Cook directly by e-mail on December 24, 2020, and received a reply two days after. Michael Cook sent his CV to the author in Microsoft Word in five pages. In the CV, Michael Cook describes his career journey starting from his academic studies, work experience, teaching, scientific publications, and the latest awards he has ever won.

[14] Michael Cook's critique of Joseph Schacht and Juynboll is written in his book Dogma of Early Muslims: *A Source Critical Study.* Michael Cook *Early Muslim Dogma: A Source Critical Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 107-108.

[15] Michael Cook *Early Muslim Dogma: A Source Critical Study,* 108.

[16] The author obtained the five works directly from Michael Cook via e-mail on December 23, 2020. The day before, the author sent an e-mail asking for some data, including some of his works that focus on the study of hadith.

orientalist who can be taken into account in terms of the study of hadith in the West.

In his daily life, Michael Cook spends a lot of his time in research, teaching, and guiding dissertations. Since 1986, Cook has developed his academic career teaching at the Postgraduate Program at Princeton University. At this university Cook received the title of Professor in Middle Eastern studies (Near Eastern Studies) and was appointed as a professor at the university. The subjects he teaches are still inseparable from Islamic studies.

Michael Cook's Thoughts on The Origin of The Isnad

Michael Cook in his work entitled The Opponents of The Writing of Traditional in Early Islam criticizes the thought of hadith scholars on the history of the origin isnad. Cook does not agree with the opinion of the hadith scholars who say that the isnad system belongs to Islam and cannot be found outside of Islam. According to Cook, the isnad system was a phenomenon that was known before Islam came. Cook refutes the statement of the hadith scholars who say that isnad only exists in Islam, the isnad system belongs to Islam and cannot be found outside of Islam. According to Cook, Islam is not the sole owner of this system, long before Islam came, isnad was already used by previous people, namely the Jews.

According to Michael Cook, the isnad system in the Jewish tradition can be found in the Mishnah (Oral Law or Oral Tradition).[17] This was also stated by Mustafa Al-'Azami in his book Dirāsat fī al-Ḥadīs al-Nabawī wa Tarīkh Tadwīnih. According to him, before Islam came, the isnad system was already used by the Jews in the Mishnah book.[18] Ali Mustafa Ya'qub is in line with Al-'Azami, he also said that the isnad system seems to have been used by the Jews in the book of

---

[17] Michael Cook, "The Opponents of The Writing of Traditional in Early Islam", 509.

[18] Muhammad Mustafa Al-'Azami, *Hadis Nabawi dan Sejarah Kodifikasinya,* Translator Ali Mustafa Ya'qub (Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus, 2000), 530.

Mishnah. However, it is not known to what extent the urgency of using the isnad in the Jewish book.[19]

The Book of Mishnah is one of the books that became the main reference for Jews in terms of legal matters.[20] Mishnah is linguistically derived from Hebrew whose origin is shanah which means "repetition" or "review".[21] This can be reflected in the practice of conveying Mishnah by means of a rote system passed down from generation to generation by the Jews for centuries before it was written down.[22] The Mishnah is the first and foremost part of all the variants of the contents of the Talmud.[23] This book is also referred to as the Second Law after the Torah which contains a collection of the oral laws of Judaism.[24] The content of Mishnah is similar to

---

[19] Ali Mustafa Ya'qub, *Kritik Hadis*, (Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus, 1995), 97.

[20] One of the main features of Jewish teaching is the dichotomy between the written Torah and the Oral Torah. The written Torah is usually called the Torah, Torah, Pentateuch, or Tanakh. In the belief of the Jewish people, the Torah is the word of God which was dictated by God directly to the Prophet Moses and then Moses wrote it on two stone tablets, and this happened when the Prophet Moses met Allah on Mount Sinai for forty days and forty nights. Meanwhile, the oral Torah is an explanation or detail of the written Torah. This oral Torah is what is commonly referred to as the Talmud. In principle, the Talmud is divided into two components, namely, Mishnah and Gemara. The Mishnah is the main part of the Talmud as the original text (Matan), while the Gemara is a complementary or complementary version of the Mishnah which contains recorded discussions by Jewish religious leaders. Philip Birnbaum, *Encyclopedia of Jewish Consepts*, Vol. V, (New York, Hebrew Publishing Company, 1948), 12; Asaf Yedidya, "Expansion of Torah Study, Halachic Renewal, and the Religious Zionist Compendium", *Modern Judaism: A Journal of Jewish Ideas and Experience*, Vol. 41, Issue 2, (2021), 249.

[21] Shlomo E.Glicksberg, "Torah and Science in the Institutions if Rav Yihye el'Qafih in Yemen", *Jewish Culture and History*, Vol. 22, Issue 2, (2021), 124. ; See Also Yeal Fisch, "The Origin of Oral Torah: A New Pauline Perspective", *Journal for the Study of Judaism*, Vol. 51, Issue 2, (2020), 43.

[22] Karen Armstrong, *Sejarah Al-Kitab*. Translator Fransiskus Borgias, (Bandung: PT Mizan Pustaka, 2013), 122. See Also Lawrence Grossman, "The Rais and The Fall of Torah U'Madda", *Modern Judaism: A Journal of Jewish Ideas and Experience*, Vol. 41, Issue 2, (2021), 71.

[23] The Talmud consists of two main parts, namely Mishnah and Gemara. The Mishnah is commonly referred to as the Jerusalem Talmud and Gemara is commonly referred to as the Babylonian Talmud. However, apart from these two books, there are other books, such as Midrasah, Haggada, Kabbalah, and others. Judith H Newman, "The Invention of Judaism: Torah and Jewish Identity fro, Deuteronomy to Paul", *The Journal of Theological Studies"*, Vol. 71, Issue 2, (2020), 837.

[24] Judaism is the name assigned to the Jewish sphere both in the religious and in the cultural sphere, which originated after the exile of the Israelites (after 538). *Ensiklopedi Perjanjian Baru*, (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1990), 25.

Jurisprudence in Islam, it discusses halal-haram, rules in worship, marriage and divorce, criminal and civil law, sacrifice, and all religious ceremonies.[25]

Michael Cook said that the history of the codification and transmission of hadiths bears some resemblance to the Jewish Mishnah.[26] Like the hadith, the history of writing Mishnah took a long time. At first, the distribution of the Mishnah verses was only oral. The materials were conveyed by the teacher orally, then memorized by the students. Thus, a system of isnad sequences was compiled which relied on Moses.[27] In line with Cook's opinion, Joseph Barcklay stated that Mishnah came from the Prophet Moses who was transmitted orally from generation to generation. This Jewish rabbi from England explained that the writing of the Mishnah was only done around the year 200 AD Before that, there was no writing about this book at all because it is forbidden to write it according to the Jewish law.[28]

Michael Cook explained that the prohibition against writing the Mishnah came from the Talmud itself. There are two sources about the prohibition of writing, namely First, in the Babylonian Talmud it says: *"You may not transmit written words orally and you may not transmit oral words in writing".[29]* Second, other sources that are used as a basis for forbidding the writing of the Mishnah are found in the book of the Palestinian Talmud, namely: *"Words which have been transmitted orally must be transmittend orally, and words which have been transmitted in writing must be transmitted in writing".[30]*

---

[25] Eugenia B Smagina, "The Old Tastament in Manichaean Tradition: The Sources in Syriac, Greek, Coptic, Middle Persian, Parthian, Sogdian, New Persian, and Arabic, with an Appendix on General References to Bible", *The Journal of Theological Studies",* Vol. 71, Issue 2, (2020), 908.

[26] Michael Cook, "The Opponents of The Writing of Traditional in Early Islam", 508.

[27] Karen Armstrong, *Sejarah Al-Kitab,* 124.

[28] Joseph Barcklay, *Hebrew Literature,* (New York,1901), 42.

[29] Talmud Babilonia, *Gittin,* f. 60b. 13 (London, 1952), 52.

[30] Talmud Palestina, *Megillah,* f. 74d. 16 (London, 1982), 142.

In addition, another reason for the prohibition of writing Mishnah is the existence of the Solomon Temple,[31] which became a school for rabbis. This temple became a center for Jewish religious education to teach religious sciences. All religious lessons delivered at that time had to be given by the oral method.

However, after centuries of the Mishnah being passed on orally from generation to generation, the situation changed drastically mainly as a result of the destruction of the Jewish community in AD 70, and the resulting upheaval of social norms and Jewish law. Besides that, the Jews have spread all over the world. It was therefore important for every Jew to have a manual that described written descriptions of the scriptures. So based on the new reality faced by the Jews, the idea emerged to write down the Mishnah. The oral method which has been running for centuries is considered untenable. Finally, it was decided to start writing the Mishnah.[32]

The Book of Mishnah was compiled around 200 AD by a rabbi named Judah Hanasi (135-220 AD),[33] about a century after Emperor Titus and the Roman legion destroyed the Temple of Solomon.[34] Rabbi Judah Hanasi then took the initiative to collect and write the Oral Torah. However, his writing of Mishnah was not finished until he died, the other rabbis then continued the writing project from one generation to the next, until it was only completed in 500 AD in the city of Thabariyah (Palestine).[35]

---

[31] Solomon Temple (Solomon Temple) is also called Solomon's Temple or Haikal Sulaiman. This place is the first holy building of Judaism in Jerusalem. Solomon Temple was built by King Sulaiman (Prophet Sulaiman) in the 8th century BC. This building was used by the Jews for worship and sacrifice which is called a sacrifice in their tradition. Philip Birnbaum, *Encyclopedia of Jewish Consepts*, 101.

[32] https://jewishcentersurabaya.wordpress.com, accessed on 9 February 2021.

[33] Philip Birnbaum, *Encyclopedia of Jewish Consepts*, 99.

[34] This temple was destroyed by the enemy of the Jews twice, namely in 589 BC by Nebuchadnezzar of the Babylonian kingdom. Solomon's Temple was rebuilt in 520 BC. And the Roman Emperor Titus with his troops destroyed it exactly on August 9, 70 AD. This date is celebrated by the Jews every year. Philip Birnbaum, *Encyclopedia of Jewish Consepts*, 111.

[35] Thariq as-Suwaidan, *Ensiklopedia Yahudi*, translator. Iman Firdaus, (Jakarta: Pustaka Imam Ays-Syafi'i, 2015), 149.

The Jewish rabbis believe that the Prophet Musa was the first source of the Mishnah received at Thur Sinai. This book was transmitted from generation to generation orally from Prophet Musa to Prophet Joshua, then Joshua delivered it to the Elders, then to the Prophets, and the Prophets delivered it to the people in the Great Assembly led by Ezra.[36] Then they pass it on from generation to generation so that there comes a time when this oral message cannot be mastered and maintained except by writing.[37]

According to Joshua Abelson, a Jewish historian at Jews College London, he said that the Mishnah narrators were very careful in carrying out Mishnah's dissemination and narration. They feel responsible for the sanctity of this book so they have to guard it properly so that the verses can be conveyed to the people as a whole. Therefore, the narrators of the Mishnah were always on high alert. To ensure the purity of the Mishnah, a commission was formed in Jerusalem, namely the Religious Court (Sanhedrin)[38] which was tasked with maintaining the purity of the written and oral Torah. Meanwhile, in small towns, there is a local Religious Court that keeps the law enforcement in place. The Religious Courts are filled with elected rabbis who are trusted for their credibility. They received a mandate as a place for confirmation and clarification of the Mishnah verses circulating among the people. In this way, the authenticity of

---

[36] The name Ezra among the Jews was one of the most famous names. He was a renowned scribe, leader of the Jews in the fifth and sixth centuries BC. Ezra was instrumental in collecting and writing the Jewish scriptures. He also managed to recover some of the writings of the Bible that were destroyed by fire. In addition, he made the "Great Zinagage". that is, a place that was used as an assembly of Jewish intellectuals for deliberation. Abujamin Roham, *Pembicaraan di sekitar Bible dan Al-Qur'an dalam Segi Isi dan Riwayat Penulisannya,* (Jakarta : PT Bulan Bintang, 1984), 44.

[37] Karen Armstrong, *Sejarah Al-Kitab*, 124.

[38] Sanhendrin in Hebrew means Supreme Court. This institution is listed in Chapter IV of the book Mishnah (Nizkin) which discusses the position of the Supreme Jewish Mahmakah, its basic principles, and the Articles of Association. This chapter is divided into 11 chapters, each of which discusses the possible authority of the Jewish Supreme Court to issue various laws and the possibility of interfering with this institution in the religious life of the Jewish nation. Yehuda Brandes, "The Canonization of the Mishnah", *Journal of Ancient Judaism,* Vol. 10, Issue 2, (2019), *145.*

the Mishnah verses transmitted orally is believed to maintain their authenticity.[39]

To prove the existence of isnad in the history of Mishnah, Michael Cook tried to convince his readers by showing examples of several isnad in the book. He wanted to say that the isnad system really existed and was used by the Jews. Cook shows an example of a series of isnad that he quoted from Joseph Horovitz in which Horovitz had carried out the research under Mishnah. Horovitz found several examples of the series of isnad which he included in his writing entitled Alter und Ursprung des Isnad. One example is the following: *"R. Zeriqa said: R. Ammi said: R. Simeon ben Laqish said: "R. Yehudah said: Rav said: "R. Abba said: R. Hiyya bar Ashi said: Rav said:…..".*[40]

According to Cook, such a isnad of isnads is found a lot in the book of Mishnah (Jerusalem Talmud), not only in the Mishnah in the book of Gemara (Babylonian Talmud) is also often found a isnad of isnads like this. However, according to Cook, more common isnads are found in the Mishnah than Gemara.[41] Apart from that, what is also interesting is the existence of a isnad of family isnads (The Isnād Family)[42] which is sometimes found in the Mishnah.[43]

Michael Cook added that although the Mishnah and hadith isnads have the same typology the two still have differences. The difference lies in the continuity of the isnad. If in Islam there are many hadiths whose isnad is connected to the Prophet SAW without

---

[39] Joshua Abelson, *The Immanence of God in Rabbinical Literature* (London: Bibliolife DBA, 1912), 110.

[40] Joseph Horovitz included this lineage of the Mishnah in his work entitled *"Alter und Ursprung des Isnad"* dalam jurnal Der Islam der Islam, (1917), 33. Horovitz quoted it from Misnah, *Berakhot,* f. 11b. 48.

[41] Michael Cook, "The Opponents of The Writing of Traditional in Early Islam", 126.

[42] The Isnād Family is an isnad that is related to blood or is a close relative of the isnad before or after, such as Nafi who is a relative of Ibn Umar and Muhammad bin Sirin is a relative of Anas bin Malik. The Family Isnad is a theory initiated by a female orientalist named Nabia Abbott. This theory is claimed to be authentic by Abbott himself but has received a lot of criticism from his Western scholars. In fact, Schacht considers that this theory only strengthens Abbott's arguments regarding the writing of hadith, namely the writing of hadiths has been started since the beginning of the Prophet's time. Nabia Abbott, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri II* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964), 65-72.

[43] Michael Cook, "The Opponents of The Writing of Traditional in Early Islam", 126.

interruption, then it is different from the isnad that is in the book of Mishnah. The narrations of the Mishnah with the isnad of isnads that reached Musa uninterrupted are rare, but such a series is still to be found and really exists.[44] One example is as follows: *R Joshua Sid: I have received (as a tradition) from Rabban Johanan b. Zakkai, who heard from his teacher, and his teacher from his teac, as a Halakah (given) to Moses from Sinai, that Elijah will not come to declare unclean or clean….".*[45]

According to Cook, this isnad continued all the way to Prophet Musa without a break. The continuous Sanad is rarely found in the Mishnah. However, isnad which "muttasil" like this can still be found even though the number is not many. Cook's statement which says that the isnad above is isnad that is continued to the Prophet Musa without any breakdown needs to be criticized. The location of the problem is because Cook did not explain how he knew the isnad to be continued, he did not explain what method he used to find out the continuity of the Mishnah isnad. So that Cook's statement above is still an assumption.

Analysis of Michael Cook's Thought

Michael Cook's statement that isnad was used by Jews before Islam is a statement that can be justified. But on the other hand, criticism must also be made, despite the facts that show that the isnad system has been used by the Jews. However, their existing isnad system is quite different from the isnad used by Islam. This difference is visible in terms of the urgency and importance of its use. The Jewish system of narration did not consider the quality of the narrators as important. They do not have the nature of criticality and an assessment of the credibility of the nurses. That way, they are not concerned with being honest with the truth of the stories they tell.

An apathetic attitude towards investigating the condition of the narrators can be seen from the absence of a methodological system

---

[44] Michael Cook, "The Opponents of The Writing of Traditional in Early Islam", 510.
[45] The Misnah, *'Eduyot*, 8:7 (oxford, 1933), 436.

used in verifying a history. They do not have complete tools, such as assessments and filters of what they are narrating. Finally, they did not investigate the circumstances of the narrators and the suitability of the stories to the truth and the truth.[46] Criticism of narrators is very important to do so that the history that is carried is maintained its purity. However, this did not apply to the Jewish narrators, so that the truth of what is in them is doubtful.

The urgency and importance of using the new isnad system appeared and was considered important during the Islamic era. Islam makes isnad a part of religion. The narrative in Islam has special features and features that will distinguish it from Jewish narrations. This feature is seen from two aspects,[47] namely: first, the attention of Muslims to the aspect of narration; second, there is an element of continuation of isnad to the Prophet. Meanwhile, the narrative of the Jews was limited to the delivery of news or news without paying attention to the person who delivered it and the truth of the news.

Apart from not having complete ranks in practicing isnad criticism, most of their isnad also disconnected. Many of their histories have the status of mursal or mu'dhal. Their narrations are cut off at the beginning, middle, and end of the narrator. This is as expressed by Ibn Hazm, in his statement he said that one of the weaknesses of the Jewish tradition is that there is no isnad that extends to the Prophet Musa. The history of the Jews only reaches to the person between him and the Prophet Musa a distance of more than 30 generations (thabaqat). Ibn Hazm added that the isnad which was owned by the Jews only reached Syam'un or during its time, no sanad was found that reached the Prophet Musa. Thus their isnad clearly has a disconnect.[48]

---

[46] Muhammad Ali, "Kajian Sanad", *Tahdis: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Hadis,* Volume 6, no. 2, 2015, 97.

[47] Muhammad Imran, *Analisis ke-Siqah-an Perawi Hadis* (Yogyakarta: Istana Publishing, 2016), 47.

[48] Mustafa Amin Ibrahim at-Taziy, *Muhadrat fī 'Ulūm al-Ḥadīts* (Mesir: Dar al-Taf'lif bi al-Maliyyah, t.t), 3.

One of the features of narration in Islam is that there is a methodology that can be used to check the credibility of a narrator, namely this method is known as 'Ilmu al-Jarḥ wa al-Taʾdīl. This knowledge has a very important urgency in Islam, especially in the study of isnad. This knowledge serves as an instrument to maintain the purity of the hadith, its existence has at least three benefits. First, because with this knowledge the data of hadith narrators who were involved in the tradition of narrating hadith from time to time since the time of the Prophet were revealed, both in terms of biographies and in terms of the quality of his tales. Second, with this knowledge, it is also known the attitudes and views of the hadith experts who are critics (Jarihun and Mu'tadilun) towards the narrators who are transmitters of hadiths and their attitudes in maintaining the authenticity of the Prophet's traditions. Third, this is the most urgent, with this knowledge - although not directly - it can be seen the quality and authenticity of hadith.[49]

The weakness of the Jewish isnad is that they do not have knowledge such as 'Ilmu al-Jarḥ wa al-Taʾdīl so that the identity of the narrators who are the transmitters of their lineage is unknown. Meanwhile, Islam has made special rules to regulate carefully and thoroughly the narrative and all its aspects which have never had a similar method before, both among Jews, pre-Islamic Arab Christians, and the people of the whole world.

In addition to 'Ilmu al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl, Islam also requires the continuation of the sanad, starting from narrators who are relied on by mukharrij to narrators at the level of companions who receive the hadith in question from the Prophet Saw, all of which must be accepted from narrators who 'ādil and dhābit. Meanwhile, as mentioned above, that the existing narration among the Jews was limited as a narration, namely receiving and delivering the news without any binding conditions. The continuous isnad tradition is a

---

[49] Suryadi, *Metodologi Ilmu Rijal Hadis* (Yogyakarta: Madani Pustaka Hikmah, 2003), 6.

special system in Islam that is not shared by other religious traditions. So that the forgery that occurred against their books was due to the absence of a strong system in maintaining the transmission, both in the form of narrations and in writing. Attention to isnad is a scientific tradition that has existed in Islam since the early Islamic period. Namely by looking at the efforts of the companions, tabi'in, tabi'u-tabiin, and subsequent scholars in criticizing each narrator who narrated the hadith by looking at it from a religious, intelligent point of view, even its continuity and disconnection from the previous narrators.

The narrations in Islam have special features and characteristics that will distinguish them from the narrations that exist in the Jews. They do not emphasize the continuity of isnad, there are no criteria that require the narrator to be tsiqah (fair and dhabit) and they also do not criticize content (matan).

The specialty of Islam in the use of the isnad system has been recognized for its accuracy by many parties, this recognition is not only from Muslims themselves but also comes from non-Muslims, for example by Aloys Sprenger (1813-1893 AD), one of the famous orientalists who came from Germany. He said : *None of the previous nations and also the present nations have produced works such as 'Ilmu Asma 'Rijal (Science containing biographies of hadith narrators) as compiled by Muslims in this great science. This knowledge contains information and matters about 500,000 hadith narrators*.[50]

In addition to Aloys Sprenger, other historians also came from a Lebanese Christian historian named Asad Gabriel Rustum (1897-1965 AD). When he wrote his work entitled Mushthalah At-Tarīkh, he gave an acknowledgment of the greatness of the methodology of quoting historical news in the Islamic tradition: *How does the Muslim ummah sort out which reporters are trusted and which are not truly*

---

[50] As quoted by 'Abdul Halim Mahmud, *Al-Sunnah fī Makānatihaā wa fī Tārikhihā* (Kairo: Dar al-Kutub al-'Arabi, 1996), 69.

extraordinary. Which is fair and which is trustworthy. So he also took some historical news from Islamic historians".[51]

CONCLUTION

After describing various explanations and analysis of Michael Cook's thoughts about the origin of the use of isnad, the researchers came to the following conclusions:

First, according to Cook, the isnad system was a phenomenon known before Islam came. Cook believes that Islam is not the sole owner of the isnad system, long before Islam came, isnad was used by previous people, that is, used by Jews. The isnad system in Jewish can be found in the Mishnah book. Michael Cook says that the history of the codification and transmission of hadith has many similarities to the Jewish Mishnah. Like the hadith, the history of writing Mishnah took a long time. At first, the distribution of Mishnah materials was only oral. The materials were conveyed by the teacher orally, then memorized by the students. Thus, a system of isnad sequences was compiled which relied on Moses.

Second, the Jewish isnad system is quite different from the isnad used by Islam. This difference is visible in terms of the urgency and importance of its use. The Jewish system of narration did not consider the quality of the narrators as important. They do not have the nature of criticality and an assessment of the credibility of the nurses. They do not have complete tools, such as assessment and screening of what is being narrated, as is owned in the Islamic narrative system. Finally, they did not investigate the circumstances of the narrators and the suitability of the stories to the truth and the truth. Previous narrations apart from not having a specific methodology in fi ltering a narrative, most them also disconnected their isnad. Many of their histories have the status of mursal or

---

[51] Asad Gabriel Rustum, *Mushtalah at-Tarikh: Wa huwa Baḥs fī Naqd al-Usūl* (Beirut: Al-Maktabah al-'Asyriyah, 2012), 116.

mu'dhal (types of history that have been interrupted). Their narrations are cut off at the beginning, middle, and end of the narrator. It is different from the Islamic isnad which requires a isnad connection.

REFERENCES

Abbott, Nabia. *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri II: Qur'anic Commentary and Tradition*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967.

Abelson, Joshua. *The Immanence of God in Rabbinical Literature,* London: Bibliolife DBA, 1912.

Al-'Azami, Muhammad Mustafa. *Hadis Nabawi dan Sejarah Kodifikasinya,* Penerjemah Ali Mustafa Ya'qub, Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus, 2000.

------------. *Sejarah Teks Al-Qura'an dari Wahyu sampai Kompilasi* , Penerjemah Sohirin Solihin dkk. Depok: Gema Insani Press, 2014.

Al-'Umari, Akram Dhiya'. *Buḥūts fī Tarīkh al-Sunnah al-Musyrafah*, Beirūt: Basath, 1984.

Ali, Muhammad. "Kajian Sanad", dalam *Tahdis: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Hadis*, Volume 6, no. 2, 2015.

Al-Salafi, Muhammad Luqman. *Iḥtimām al-Muḥadditsīn bi Naqd al-Hadīts Sanad wa Matn*, Riyadh: Maktabah al-Riyadh, 1984.

Al-Suyuthi, Jalal al-Din. *Tadrīb al-Rawi syarḥ Taqriīb al-Nawawi,* Dar al-Fikr, 1998.

Armstrong, Karen. *Sejarah Al-Kitab,* terj. Fransiskus Borgias, Bandung: PT Mizan Pustaka, 2013.

As-Suwaidan, Thariq. *Ensiklopedia Yahudi,* Penerjemah Iman Firdaus, Jakarta: Pustaka Imam Ays-Syafi'i, 2015.

At-Taziy, Mustafa Amin Ibrahim. *Muhadrat fī 'Ulūm al-Hadīts,* Juz,I, cet. IV, Mesir: Dar al-Taf'lif bi al-Maliyyah, t.t.

Badawi, A. *Ensiklopedi Tokoh Orientalis*, Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2003.

Barcklay, Joseph. *Hebrew Literature,* New York, 1901.

Berg, Herbert. *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam,* Curzon, 2000.

Birnbaum, Philip. *Encyclopedia of Jewish Consepts,* vol. V, New York, Hebrew Publishing Company, 1948.

Brandes, Yehuda. "The Canonization of the Mishnah", *Journal of Ancient Judaism,* Vol. 10, Issue 2, 2019.

Broyde, Michael J. dan Ira Bedzow. *The Codification of Jewish Law and an Introduction to the Jurisprudence of The Mishnah Berura,* t.t: Academic Studies Press, 2014.

Cook, Michael. "The Opponents of The Writing of Traditional in Early Islam", dalam *Jurnal Arbica XLIV,* 1997.

----------. *Early Muslim Dogma: A Source Critical Study,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

----------. *Studies in the Origins of Early Islamic Culture and Tradition,* Burlngton: Asghate Variorum, 2004.

----------. *Kontroversi Hadis: Percaturan dan Pertarungan awal Islam,* terj. Ali Masrur, Bandung: Marja, 2015.

Danby, Herbert. *The Misnah, Introduction,* Oxford University Press, 1993.

Dimont, Max Isaac. *Yahudi, Tuhan, dan Sejarah,* Penerjemah Joko S. Kahar, Yogyakarta: Ircisod, 2018 .

Ensiklopedi Perjanjian Baru, Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1990.

Fabian, A. *The Babylonian Talmud,* Universjty of Queensland, 1963.

Fisch, Yeal. "The Origin of Oral Torah: A New Pauline Perspective", *Journal for the Study of Judaism,* Vol. 51, Issue 2, 2020.

Glicksberg, Shlomo E. "Torah and Science in the Institutions if Rav Yihye el'Qafih in Yemen", Jewish Culture and History, Vol. 22, Issue 2, 2021.

Grossman, Lawrence. "The Rais and The Fall of Torah U'Madda", *Modern Judaism: A Journal of Jewish Ideas and Experience,* Vol. 41, Issue 2, 2021.

Horovits, Joseph. *"Alter und Ursprung des Isnād"* dalam jurnal Der Islam der Islam, 1917.

Imran, Muhammad. *Analisis ke-Siqah-an Perawi Hadis,* Yogyakarta: Istana Publishing, 2016.

Juynboll, G.H.A. (ed.), *Early Islamic Society as Reflected in Its Use Of Isnads,* vol. 107, Lemosion, 1994.

Kraus, Samuel. *The Mishnah Treatise Sanhedrin,* Leiden: Semitic Studies Serie, 1909.

Mahmud, 'Abdul Halim. *Al-Sunnah fī Makānatihā wa fī Tārikhiha,* Kairo: Dar al-Kutub al-'Arabi, 1996.

Motzki, Harald. *The Origin of Islamic Jurisprudence Meccan Fikih before the Clasiccal Schools,* Leiden: Brill, 2002.

Newman, Judith H. "The Invention of Judaism: Torah and Jewish Identity fro, Deuteronomy to Paul", *The Journal of Theological Studies",* Vol. 71, Issue 2, 2020.

Pavlovitch, Pavel. *Juynboll, al-Zuhri, and al-Kitab: About the Historicity of Transmission below the Common Link Level*, Leiden: Brill, 2020.

Razavi, Sayyed Muhammad. "The Story of the Torah from the Perspective of the Qur'an and History", *International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligous Understanding,* Vol. 7, Issue 7, 2020 .

Reynaldi, Christian. "Exploring Jewish Literature of the Second Temple Priode: A Guide to New Tastement Studies", *Pneumata: Jurnal Teologi,* Vol. 1, No. 1, 2020.

Roham, Abujamin. *Pembicaraan Di sekitar Bible dan Al-Qur'an Dalam Segi Isi dan Riwayat Penulisannya,* Jakarta : PT Bulan Bintang, 1984.

Rustum, Asad Gabriel. *Mushtalaḥ at-Tarīkh: Wa huwa Baḥs fī Naqd al-Usūl*, Beirut: Al-Maktabah al-'Asyriyah, 2012.

Said, Edwar W. *Orientalisme,* terj. Asep Hikmat, Bandung: Pustaka: 1978.

Schach, Joseph. *An Introduction to Islamic Law*, Oxford: Clarendom Press, 1964.

Strack, Hermann L. *Introduction to The Talmud and Midrash,* Pihladelphia: Varda Books, 1931.

Suryadi, *Metodologi Ilmu Rijal Hadis*, Yogyakarta: Madani Pustaka Hikmah, 2003.

The Talmud, Inggirs: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

Ya'qub, Ali Mustafa. *Kritik Hadis*, Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus, 1995.

Yedidya, Asaf. "Expansion of Torah Study, Halachic Renewal, and the Religious Zionist Compendium", *Modern Judaism: A Journal of Jewish Ideas and Experience,* Vol. 41, Issue 2, 2021.