



Jurnal Ulunnuha
P-ISSN : 2086-3721 E-ISSN: 2865-6050
Vol. 15 No.1 / June 2026

<https://ejournal.uinib.ac.id/jurnal/index.php/ulunnuha/index>

DOI: 10.15548/ju.v13i1.12736

Reconstructing the Death of Prophet Muhammad Through Hadith Criticism and Historical Analysis

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Abstract:

This study examines the hadiths describing the final moments of the Prophet Muhammad's (SAW) life through the application of isnād (chain) and matn (text) criticism, with particular focus on the differing narrations transmitted by 'A'ishah bint Abi Bakr and 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭalīb. The research specifically aims to determine how matn criticism can be used to evaluate the historical reliability and interpretive implications of these narrations concerning the Prophet's final moments. Employing a qualitative library-based approach and descriptive-comparative analysis, the study examines narrations found in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, and Durrah an-Naṣīḥīn fi al-Wa'z wa al-Irshād, alongside theoretical perspectives from Dirāsāt fi al-Ḥadīth wa al-Tārīkh and Manhaj Kritik Matan 'A'isyah R.A. The analysis evaluates the continuity of transmission, reliability of narrators, textual consistency with the Qur'an and authentic hadiths, and the historical coherence of each narration. The findings reveal that the narration transmitted by 'A'ishah bint Abi Bakr regarding the Prophet's passing in her embrace is the strongest and most historically reliable narration, classified as ṣaḥīḥ li dhātibi. In contrast, narrations attributed to 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭalīb and Ibn 'Abbās are categorized as weak (ḍa'if) or disconnected (maqtū') due to deficiencies in transmission, although they continue to hold spiritual and moral significance. The study concludes that matn criticism plays a crucial role in distinguishing between historically authoritative reports and narrations functioning primarily as moral or devotional traditions, thereby contributing to a more objective understanding of the Prophet Muhammad's (SAW) death.

Keywords: Hadith, Isnād Criticism, Matn Criticism, Death of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

INTRODUCTION:

The death of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) represents one of the most significant events in Islamic history, marking the end of prophetic revelation and the beginning of a new phase

in the development of the Muslim community.¹ Beyond its historical importance, the Prophet's final moments continue to occupy a central place in Islamic religious discourse, serving as a source of theological reflection, spiritual guidance, and moral instruction. Narratives concerning the Prophet's death are frequently cited in sermons, educational materials, and devotional literature to illustrate his exemplary character and his concern for the Muslim community.² Consequently, the authenticity and historical reliability of these narrations are of considerable importance for both academic scholarship and contemporary Muslim understanding.

The available hadith literature preserves numerous reports describing the Prophet's final illness and death. These narrations are found in major hadith compilations such as *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, and *Musnad Aḥmad*, among others. Although these reports generally agree on the occurrence of the event, they exhibit variations in several details, including the Prophet's physical position at the time of death, the individuals present during his final moments, and the words attributed to him before his passing.³ Such variations have often generated questions regarding the relationship between different narrations and the extent to which these reports can be reconciled within a coherent historical account.

Within the discipline of hadith studies, authenticity has traditionally been assessed through two complementary approaches: *isnād* criticism and *matn* criticism.⁴ While *isnād* criticism focuses on the reliability and continuity of the chain of transmission, *matn* criticism examines the textual content of a narration by evaluating its consistency with the Qur'an, other authentic hadiths, established historical facts, and rational principles. Despite the importance of both approaches, contemporary studies frequently place greater emphasis on *isnād* analysis, whereas systematic examinations of *matn* remain relatively limited, particularly in relation to historical narrations describing major events in the Prophet's life.⁵ This manuscript analysis aims to enhance public understanding of this significant event and address the academic gap left by studies focused on *isnād*.⁶

Several previous studies have contributed to the understanding of hadith criticism and the narrations concerning the Prophet's final moments. Research on the methodology of *matn* criticism employed by 'Ā'ishah (RA) demonstrates that critical evaluation of hadith content was already practiced during the era of the Companions through principles of correspondence and coherence. Meanwhile, Murtadha al-'Askari's study on the narrations

¹ Subhani Subhani et al., "Analisis Sejarah Kepemimpinan Setelah Wafatnya Nabi Muhammad SAW," *Journal on Education* 5, no. 3 (February 16, 2023): 9460–73, <https://doi.org/10.31004/joe.v5i3.1816>.

² Budi Sujati and Reza Apriandi, "Analisis Historis Penyebab Wafatnya Nabi Muhammad: Sakit Atau Diracun," *Khulasah: Islamic Studies Journal* 6, no. 1 (June 20, 2024): 73–86, <https://doi.org/10.55656/kisj.v6i1.151>.

³ K Mukaromah, "Kajian Kitab Dira Sa T Fi Al-Hadi Th Wa Al-Tari Kh: Ah a Dith Ummul Mu'Mini N A Isyah Karya Murtad a Al- Askari," *UNIVERSUM: Jurnal Kelslaman Dan Kebudayaan*, 2019, 151–63, <https://doi.org/10.30762/universum.v12i1.1060.5>.

⁴ Fadzlan Abd Kadir and Roshimah Shamsudin, "Analisis Fakta Sirah Berkaitan Kelahiran Dan Kewafatan Nabi Saw Dalam Buku Teks Pendidikan Islam Tingkatan Satu Berdasarkan Manhaj Al-Muḥaddithīn," *Journal Of Hadith Studies*, December 1, 2024, 91–107, <https://doi.org/10.33102/johs.v9i2.317>.

⁵ Mohammad Baihaqi Bin Md Yusnan, "METHODOLOGY OF INTERACTION WITH THE HADITH ON THE DAY OF RESURRECTION (AHĀDĪTH AL-FITAN) AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN EDUCATION," *FORUM PAEDAGOGIK* 14, no. 2 (December 31, 2023): 210–19, <https://doi.org/10.24952/paedagogik.v14i2.10191>.

⁶ Thofiqur Rohman, Ulul Huda, and Hartono Hartono, "Methodology of Hadith Research: The Study of Hadith Criticism," *Journal of Hadith Studies* 2, no. 1 (June 15, 2020): 73–84, <https://doi.org/10.32506/johs.v2i1.26>.

of ‘Ā’ishah examines differing reports regarding the Prophet’s death and attempts to determine the stronger narration through the method of tarjīḥ.⁷ Other works, such as Durrah al-Nāṣiḥīn, preserve devotional accounts emphasizing the Prophet’s compassion for his community during his final moments. Although these studies provide valuable insights, they primarily focus on the methodology of criticism, comparative preference between narrations, or the spiritual significance of particular reports.⁸

Nevertheless, a specific examination of the matn of the major hadiths concerning the death of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) through the framework of classical naqd al-matn remains insufficiently explored. Existing studies have not systematically analyzed whether the textual variations found in these narrations constitute actual contradictions affecting authenticity or whether they should be understood as complementary accounts transmitted by different eyewitnesses. This issue is particularly important because the historical reconstruction of the Prophet’s final moments relies not only on the reliability of transmission chains but also on the coherence and compatibility of the textual content itself.⁹

Accordingly, this study seeks to fill this gap by conducting a critical analysis of the textual content of the principal hadiths describing the death of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Using the principles of classical matn criticism, including conformity with the Qur’an, consistency with authentic hadith literature, absence of anomalous elements (shudhūdh), and compatibility with established historical evidence, the study evaluates the authenticity and historical reliability of these narrations. This article argues that the variations found in the narrations of the Prophet’s death do not necessarily indicate contradiction but rather reflect different perspectives preserved through the process of transmission. By highlighting the significance of systematic matn criticism, this research contributes to the broader field of hadith studies and offers a more coherent understanding of one of the most pivotal events in Islamic history.¹⁰

Based on the foregoing discussion, this study addresses the following research questions: (1) To what extent do the textual variations in the hadiths concerning the death of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) conform to the established principles of hadith authenticity? and (2) How should these variations be understood within the framework of classical matn criticism? Accordingly, the objective of this study is to critically examine the matn of the principal narrations concerning the Prophet’s death and to assess their authenticity, coherence, and historical reliability through the method of naqd al-matn.¹¹

DISCUSSION:

Comparative Analysis of the Narrations Concerning the Prophet’s Death

The variations found in narrations concerning the final moments of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) have generated considerable discussion among hadith scholars and historians. While some studies regard these differences as indicators of varying levels of

⁷ Muhammad Sulaiman, Tajul Arifin, and Edy Saputra, “Analisis Kritis Terhadap Matan Hadis Sebagai Upaya Memastikan Otentisitas Dan Validitas Hadis,” *Cakrawala: Journal of Religious Studies and Global Society* 2, no. 1 (June 5, 2025): 49–56, <https://doi.org/10.63142/cakrawala.v2i1.204>.

⁸ Nur Hikmah, Satrio Anugrah Pangestu, and Nisha Luthfia, “Analisis Kriteria Kesahihan Matan Dalam Hadis: Kajian Teori Dan Metodologi,” *Journal of Hadith Studies* 6, no. 2 (December 30, 2023): 99–113, <https://doi.org/10.32506/johs.v6i2-02>.

⁹ Niki Alma Febriana Fauzi, “Manhaj Kritik Matan Ālisyah Ra,” *Muwazah* 5, no. 1 (2014), <https://doi.org/10.28918/muwazah.v5i1.341>.

¹⁰ Mukaromah, “Kajian Kitab Dira Sa T Fi Al-Hadi Th Wa Al-Tari Kh: Ah a Dith Ummul Mu’Mini N A Isyah Karya Murtad a Al- Askari.”

¹¹ Ahmad Lutfi Fathullah, “Hadis-Hadis Dalam Kitab Durrat Al-Nāṣiḥīn,” *Refleksi* 10, no. 1 (April 1, 2008): 11–26, <https://doi.org/10.15408/ref.v10i1.39671>.

authenticity, others interpret them as complementary accounts originating from different eyewitnesses.¹² The present study argues that a comprehensive understanding of these reports requires not only sanad and matn criticism but also a comparative assessment of their transmission quality, historical context, and theological significance.¹³

From the perspective of transmission quality, the narration of ‘Ā’ishah (RA) occupies the strongest position. Recorded in both *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, it fulfills the principal criteria of hadith authenticity, including continuity of transmission, narrator reliability, and corroboration through multiple chains.¹⁴ In contrast, reports attributed to Ibn ‘Abbās and transmitted through historical compilations such as *Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa’d* possess weaker isnād structures and are therefore less authoritative as historical evidence. Likewise, the narration “Ummatī, ummatī,” preserved in later devotional literature, lacks a verifiable chain of transmission and cannot be regarded as an authentic historical report according to classical hadith standards. This comparison demonstrates that not all narrations concerning the Prophet’s death carry the same evidentiary value, even though they address the same event.¹⁵

The historical context of these narrations also deserves careful consideration. The report of ‘Ā’ishah reflects an intimate domestic perspective, portraying the Prophet’s death within the private sphere of his household. By contrast, narrations associated with ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and Ibn ‘Abbās emphasize the presence and role of members of the Prophet’s family during and immediately after his passing.¹⁶ Rather than representing mutually exclusive accounts, these reports may reflect different stages of the same event or distinct observational perspectives. This interpretation supports the view of Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī that apparent discrepancies among authentic reports should first be approached through reconciliation (*jam‘ wa al-tawfīq*) before assuming contradiction.¹⁷

Beyond historical reconstruction, these narrations also carry important theological implications. The prominence of ‘Ā’ishah’s narration within Sunni hadith literature reinforces her status as a central transmitter of prophetic knowledge and an authoritative witness to the Prophet’s private life. Meanwhile, reports emphasizing the role of ‘Alī have frequently been cited within broader discussions concerning succession and religious authority after the Prophet’s death.¹⁸ Consequently, the debate surrounding these narrations cannot be separated entirely from the theological and political developments of early Islam. The differing emphases found in these reports reveal how memories of the Prophet’s final

¹² Sujati and Apriandi, “Analisis Historis Penyebab Wafatnya Nabi Muhammad: Sakit Atau Diracun.”

¹³ Arditya Prayogi, Alamul Yaqin, and M. Zulvi Romzul Huda Fuadi, “Descriptive Study of the Nabawiyah Sirah by Ibn Ishaq and Ibn Hisham,” *International Journal of Islamic Thought and Humanities* 1, no. 2 (September 1, 2022): 107–16, <https://doi.org/10.54298/ijith.v1i2.28>.

¹⁴ Muhammad Qomarullah, “Metode Kritik Matan Hadis Dengan Pendekatan Alquran Dalam Kaidah Ilmu Naqd Al-Matan,” *AL QUDS: Jurnal Studi Alquran Dan Hadis* 6, no. 3 (December 30, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.29240/alquds.v6i3.4041>.

¹⁵ Muhammad Abu Nadlir, “PENSYARAHAN IBN HAJAR AL-‘ASQALĀNĪ TERHADAP KRITIK MATAN ‘ĀISYAH RA DALAM FATH AL-BĀRĪ,” *Wahana Islamika: Jurnal Studi Keislaman*, October 30, 2022, 145–63, <https://doi.org/10.61136/q42q2040>.

¹⁶ Hairul Hudaya, “METODOLOGI KRITIK MATAN HADIS MENURUT AL-ADLABIDARI TEORI KE APLIKASI,” *Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Ushuluddin* 13, no. 1 (March 7, 2016): 29, <https://doi.org/10.18592/jiu.v13i1.701>.

¹⁷ Qomarullah, “Metode Kritik Matan Hadis Dengan Pendekatan Alquran Dalam Kaidah Ilmu Naqd Al-Matan,” *AL QUDS: Jurnal Studi Alquran dan Hadis* 6, 2022

¹⁸ Sujati and Apriandi, “Analisis Historis Penyebab Wafatnya Nabi Muhammad: Sakit Atau Diracun.”

moments became intertwined with competing interpretations of authority and leadership within the Muslim community.

These findings both confirm and extend previous scholarship reviewed in the introduction. Whereas the study of ‘Ā’ishah’s methodology of *matn* criticism demonstrated the importance of coherence and correspondence in evaluating hadith content, the present research applies those principles specifically to the narrations of the Prophet’s death.¹⁹ Similarly, while Murtadha al-‘Askari approached the conflicting reports through *tarjih* by preferring the narration associated with ‘Alī, the present study suggests that the reports may be understood not only in terms of preference but also in terms of complementarity. Rather than viewing the narrations as mutually exclusive, this study shows that many of their differences arise from distinct perspectives preserved through the process of transmission.

Comparative Assessment of the Narrations on the Prophet’s Death

The narrations concerning the death of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) exhibit variations in several aspects, including the individuals present during his final moments, his physical position at the time of death, and the words attributed to him before his passing. At first glance, these differences may appear contradictory. However, a comparative examination of the narrations suggests that the discrepancies are primarily related to narrative perspective rather than to the core historical event itself.²⁰

From the standpoint of transmission quality, the narration of ‘Ā’ishah occupies the strongest position. Its inclusion in both *Ṣaḥīḥ* al-Bukhārī and *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim, together with the reliability of its transmitters, provides a high degree of historical credibility. In contrast, reports emphasizing the presence of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib during the Prophet’s final moments are transmitted through fewer and generally less authoritative chains. Similarly, the narration containing the phrase “*Ummatī, ummatī*” lacks a sufficiently verifiable chain of transmission and therefore cannot be accorded the same evidentiary status as reports found in the major canonical collections.²¹

Nevertheless, differences in transmission quality should not automatically lead to the dismissal of weaker reports. Historical narratives often preserve multiple perspectives on the same event. The narration of ‘Ā’ishah reflects an eyewitness account from within the Prophet’s household, whereas reports associated with ‘Alī and other Companions emphasize events occurring around the Prophet’s chamber during the final stages of his illness. Rather than representing mutually exclusive versions of history, these narrations may preserve different dimensions of the same historical reality.²²

Matn Criticism and the Question of Contradiction

A central objective of this study is to determine whether the variations among these narrations constitute genuine contradictions. Applying the principles of *matn* criticism demonstrates that such a conclusion is difficult to sustain. None of the examined narrations

¹⁹ Belal Abu-Alabbas, “The Principles of Hadith Criticism in the Writings of Al-Shāfi‘ī and Muslim,” *Islamic Law and Society* 24, no. 4 (October 3, 2017): 311–35, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685195-00244P01>.

²⁰ Arif Friyadi Friyadi, “The Romanticism of the Messenger of Allah in the Perspective of the Hadith of the History of Sayyidah ‘Aisyah Ra,” *AQWAL Journal of Qur’an and Hadis Studies* 3, no. 2 (December 21, 2022): 109–23, <https://doi.org/10.28918/aqwal.v3i2.4228>.

²¹ Friyadi, “The Romanticism of the Messenger of Allah in the Perspective of the Hadith of the History of Sayyidah ‘Aisyah Ra.”

²² Aiman Mahmood Mahdi and Ahmad Uhaydub, “The Hadith of ‘Ā’ishah (May Allah Be Pleased with Her) Regarding the Revelation of ‘Wahy’: An Analytical Study,” *Al-Idah* 43, no. 1 (June 30, 2025): 1–36, <https://doi.org/10.37556/al-idah.043.01.0929>.

contradicts Qur'anic teachings, established historical facts, or other authentic hadiths in a manner that would render them unacceptable.²³

The apparent contradiction largely concerns secondary details rather than the essential substance of the event. All authentic reports agree that the Prophet experienced illness prior to his death, remained concerned for the welfare of the Muslim community, and passed away peacefully in Madinah. The variations concern questions such as who was physically closest to him, which individuals entered or left the room, and which aspects of the event particular narrators considered most significant.²⁴

This finding supports the classical principle of *al-jam' wa al-tanfiq* (reconciliation of narrations), which prioritizes harmonization when apparently conflicting reports can reasonably coexist. The evidence suggests that the narrations are better understood as complementary rather than contradictory accounts. Consequently, the differences among them do not undermine their historical value but instead contribute to a more comprehensive reconstruction of the event.²⁵

Historical Memory and Narrative Authority

Beyond questions of authenticity, the narrations also reveal how the memory of the Prophet's death was preserved and transmitted within early Muslim society. The prominence of 'Ā'ishah's narration in Sunni hadith literature is significant not only because of its strong transmission but also because it establishes her position as a principal witness to one of the most important moments in Islamic history. Through this narration, 'Ā'ishah emerges as an authoritative transmitter of knowledge concerning the Prophet's private life.²⁶

Similarly, reports emphasizing the role of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib acquired particular importance within broader discussions concerning religious and political authority after the Prophet's death. While classical Sunni scholarship generally prioritizes the narration of 'Ā'ishah on methodological grounds, alternative traditions preserved in historical sources continued to emphasize the proximity of 'Alī to the Prophet during his final moments. This suggests that memories of the Prophet's death were not transmitted in a social vacuum but were shaped by wider discussions regarding leadership, authority, and communal identity in the formative period of Islamic history.²⁷

The narration "*Ummatī, ummatī*" illustrates another dimension of hadith transmission. Although weak from the standpoint of sanad criticism, its widespread circulation in sermons and devotional literature demonstrates its enduring spiritual appeal. Rather than functioning primarily as a historical report, the narration serves as a symbolic representation of the Prophet's compassion toward his followers. Its continued popularity highlights the

²³ Fadzlan Abd Kadir and Roshimah Shamsudin, "MANHAJ KRITIKAN MUḤADDITHŪN TERHADAP RIWAYAT SIRAH DAN PENERAPANNYA DALAM PENULISAN SIRAH," *Ma'ālim Al-Qur'ān Wa Al-Sunnah* 18, no. 1 (June 1, 2022): 47–70, <https://doi.org/10.33102/jmqs.v18i1.338>.

²⁴ Nadlir, "PENSYARAHAN IBN ḤAJAR AL-'ASQALĀNĪ TERHADAP KRITIK MATAN 'ĀISYAH RA DALAM FATH AL-BĀRĪ." *Wahana Islamika: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* (2022), 145–163

²⁵ Muhamad Ridwan Nurrohman, "Is It True That the Prophet Had Ever Had a Will before the Dying?: Historical Analysis and Analysis of Hadith Science on the Hadiths about Will," *International Journal of Nusantara Islam* 5, no. 1 (March 9, 2017): 37–46, <https://doi.org/10.15575/ijni.v5i1.1384>.

²⁶ Nuraini Nuraini, "Analyzing Hadith Sanad Validity: Steps to Assess Acceptance and Authenticity," *El-Sunan: Journal of Hadith and Religious Studies* 2, no. 1 (April 30, 2024): 56–69, <https://doi.org/10.22373/el-sunan.v2i1.5463>.

²⁷ Fikri Surya Pratama Pratama, "ANALISIS KOMPARATIF HISTORIOGRAFI SIRAH NABAWIYAH KARYA IBNU ISHAQ DAN IBNU HISYAM," *Tabuah* 26, no. 1 (May 30, 2022): 21–29, <https://doi.org/10.37108/tabuah.v26i1.677>.

distinction between historical authenticity and devotional significance within Muslim religious culture.²⁸

Analysis of Authenticity and Comparison of Hadith Text

The narrations concerning the death of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) demonstrate varying levels of authenticity and different narrative emphases. Rather than viewing these reports solely through the binary categories of *ṣaḥīḥ* and *ḍaʿīf*, a comparative analysis reveals how transmission quality, historical context, and narrative function collectively shape the preservation of the Prophet's final moments in Islamic tradition.²⁹

From the perspective of transmission reliability, the narration of 'Ā'ishah occupies the strongest position. Its inclusion in both *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, together with multiple corroborating transmission routes, provides a high degree of authenticity. By contrast, the report attributed to Ibn 'Abbās concerning the Prophet's death while leaning on 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib contains a transmitter whose biographical status cannot be adequately verified in major *rijāl* works. Consequently, the report does not satisfy the same methodological standards as the narration of 'Ā'ishah. Likewise, the narration "Ummatī, ummatī" preserved in *Durrah an-Nāṣiḥīn* lacks a traceable chain of transmission and therefore cannot be evaluated according to the conventional criteria applied to canonical hadith collections. In comparison, the Prophet's final exhortation concerning prayer and social responsibility is supported by multiple transmission routes and is generally classified as *ṣaḥīḥ li ghayrihi* due to corroborative evidence.³⁰

However, differences in authenticity do not necessarily correspond to differences in historical or social significance. The narration of 'Ā'ishah reflects an intimate eyewitness perspective from within the Prophet's household and therefore emphasizes the personal circumstances of his passing. The report associated with Ibn 'Abbās and 'Alī highlights the presence of members of the Prophet's family and has often been interpreted within broader discussions concerning succession and authority in early Islam. Meanwhile, the narration "Ummatī, ummatī" functions less as a historical report than as a devotional expression of the Prophet's concern for his community. These distinctions suggest that the narrations perform different narrative functions despite referring to the same historical event.³¹

Methodologically, the findings illustrate the importance of distinguishing between authenticity assessment and historical interpretation. Classical hadith criticism evaluates reports according to the reliability of their transmission, whereas historiographical analysis considers how and why particular narratives were preserved. In this context, the weaker status of a narration does not automatically negate its relevance for understanding the formation of collective memory or the development of religious discourse. Rather, it limits the degree to which the report may be used as direct historical evidence.³²

This observation is particularly relevant to the narration attributed to Ibn 'Abbās. While classical Sunni scholarship generally prioritizes the report of 'Ā'ishah due to its superior sanad, other scholars have examined reports associated with 'Alī as reflections of alternative

²⁸ Suleyman Sertkaya, "A Critical and Historical Overview of the Sirah Genre from the Classical to the Modern Period," *Religions* 13, no. 3 (February 24, 2022): 196, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13030196>.

²⁹ Idris Siregar and Alwi Padly Harahap, "Sejarah Kehidupan Nabī Dalam Musnad Aḥmad," *Kamaya: Jurnal Ilmu Agama* 7, no. 1 (March 9, 2024): 113–24, <https://doi.org/10.37329/kamaya.v7i1.3131>.

³⁰ Friyadi, "The Romanticism of the Messenger of Allah in the Perspective of the Hadith of the History of Sayyidah 'Aisyah Ra."

³¹ Muhammad Yahya et al., "Comparative Critical Analysis of Methodologies for Establishing the Validity of Hadith Among Sunni and Shia," *International Journal of Religion* 5, no. 6 (May 1, 2024): 777–92, <https://doi.org/10.61707/31ec2561>.

³² Masturi Irham, "Sejarah Dan Perkembangan Kritik Matn Hadis," *MUTAWATIR* 1, no. 1 (September 8, 2015): 96, <https://doi.org/10.15642/mutawatir.2011.1.1.96-112>.

historical memories within the early Muslim community. Instead of treating these accounts as mutually exclusive, contemporary hadith studies increasingly recognize that multiple narratives may coexist and reflect different perspectives on the same event. Such an approach shifts the discussion from determining a single “correct” account toward understanding how historical memory was constructed and transmitted.³³

The analysis also confirms the importance of matn criticism as emphasized in previous studies. Research on the methodology of ‘Ā’ishah’s criticism highlighted coherence with the Qur’an, historical plausibility, and consistency with other authentic reports as key criteria of evaluation. Applying these principles to the narrations of the Prophet’s death demonstrates that none of the reports contradicts fundamental Islamic teachings. The differences concern secondary details such as location, companionship, and wording rather than the essential substance of the event itself.³⁴

CONCLUSION:

Based on the analysis of various narrations concerning the final moments of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), this study concludes that matn criticism is an essential method for evaluating the historical reliability and interpretive implications of differing hadith reports transmitted by ‘Ā’ishah bint Abī Bakr and ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. The findings demonstrate that differences in wording and perspective among narrations do not necessarily indicate contradiction, but rather reflect the diversity of eyewitness accounts and the dynamics of early hadith transmission. Through comparative analysis of sanad and matn, the narration of ‘Ā’ishah bint Abī Bakr recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* is identified as the most authentic and historically reliable account, as it fulfills the criteria of sanad continuity, narrator credibility, textual coherence, and consistency with established Islamic historical sources. Meanwhile, narrations attributed to ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib particularly those found in *Durrat an-Nāṣiḥin* and *Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa’d* possess weaker transmission structures and are therefore categorized as *ḍa’īf* or *maqtū’*, although they still retain moral and spiritual value in illustrating the Prophet’s compassion toward his community. Ultimately, this study affirms that matn criticism not only strengthens the process of hadith authentication but also helps distinguish between historically authoritative narrations and those functioning primarily as ethical or devotional expressions within Islamic tradition.

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³³ Farooq, “The Farewell Sermon of Prophet Muhammad: An Analytical Review.”

³⁴ Wael Mohammed Saeid and Majed Hameed Ghazi, “Preaching and Education in The Actions and Sayings of Ahl Al-Bayt and the Companions of The Messenger of Allah When Dying,” *Al-Anbar University Journal For Humanities* 2022, no. 3 (September 1, 2022): 2162–86, <https://doi.org/10.37653/juah.2022.176482>.

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