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## Hadith Transmission and Cultural Dissemination in the Indonesian Archipelago: The Role of Maulid al-Diba'i

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### Abstract

This study examines the historical development of hadith transmission and its cultural dissemination in the Indonesian Archipelago through the Maulid al-Diba'i tradition. While hadith has historically been transmitted through formal scholarly mechanisms such as *talaqqī*, sanad verification, and codification, its dissemination has also developed through devotional and cultural practices embedded in Muslim communal life. This study aims to analyze the transmission of hadith from the early Islamic period to its cultural adaptation in Nusantara, with particular focus on the role of Maulid al-Diba'i as a medium of hadith-related dissemination. This research employs a qualitative library research design using a descriptive-thematic content analysis approach. Primary data were drawn from the text of Maulid al-Diba'i, while secondary sources included classical hadith literature, studies on hadith transmission, and scholarship on living hadith and Islamic cultural traditions in Indonesia. The findings reveal that hadith transmission initially developed through direct oral learning, memorization, and communal teaching during the prophetic era, later evolving into more structured scholarly verification through sanad criticism and codification. In the Indonesian Archipelago, hadith dissemination expanded beyond formal scholarly institutions through cultural and devotional practices. The Maulid al-Diba'i functions as an important medium for transmitting hadith-related content concerning the Prophet's lineage, virtues, moral excellence, and life journey through oral recitation, ritual performance, and communal participation. This study concludes that the Maulid al-Diba'i serves as a bridge between classical hadith tradition and lived Muslim religiosity, demonstrating that cultural adaptation constitutes an effective and legitimate pathway for preserving and disseminating prophetic teachings across generations.

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## Introduction

Hadith, defined as the words, deeds, decrees, and attributes of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), occupies a fundamental position in the structure of Islam as the second source of law after the Qur'an. In contrast to the Qur'an, which was officially codified during the time of Caliph Uthman bin Affan, the collection and development of hadith literature went through a much more complex and lengthy process over the centuries. This process is intrinsically linked to the role of scholars who dedicated their lives to preserving, developing, and disseminating hadith literature (Mustafa al-A'zami, 1978).

In the early days of Islam, when the Prophet (PBUH) was still alive, hadith was narrated directly from the most trustworthy person, one who never lied, just as the kalamullah — the Qur'an — was narrated directly from him. At the outset, the propagation of Islam was carried out secretly, until Allah SWT commanded him to do so openly, as recorded in Qur'an Surah Al-Hijr, verse 94 (Abū Zahw, 1984). After his death, the narration of hadith was carried on directly by the Companions, who spread across various regions in line with the massive territorial expansion during the era of the Khulafa' al-Rashidin. Hadith was no longer concentrated solely in Medina; it developed and spread throughout the Arabian Peninsula and beyond (al-Khaṭīb, 1988).

Geographically, it is also established that hadith transmission took on different characters depending on location: in Mecca, hadith tended to focus on matters of aqidah and revelation, while Medina became the main center for the development of Islamic law and social life. Along with the expansion of Islamic territory, distinct hadith "schools" emerged in various centers of learning — such as the Ahl al-Hadith school centered in the Hijaz and Baghdad, and the Ahl al-Ra'yu school centered in Iraq (Kufa and Basra) (sulaiman, 1998). Importantly, Western scholarship on hadith transmission has demonstrated that this process did not stop with the closing of the canonical hadith collections in the ninth–tenth centuries. Davidson's (2020) study of what he terms "post-canonical" hadith transmission shows that, for more than a millennium after the establishment of the hadith canon, the chain of transmission (isnād) was reimagined — no longer purely as a scholarly verification tool, but as an act of pious emulation and a devotional practice in its own right, giving rise to entirely new genres and sub-genres of hadith-related literature (Davidson, 2020). This finding is significant because it establishes, from within the Western academic study of hadith itself, that isnad-based transmission and popular/devotional transmission are not opposing categories but points along a continuous historical spectrum — a spectrum that the Maulid al-Diba'i, as will be discussed below, sits firmly within.

This principle of adaptive, non-static transmission applies no less to the arrival of Islam in the Indonesian Archipelago (Nusantara). As Islam spread eastward through trade, migration, and the missionary efforts of scholars from the Hijaz, Hadramaut, and South Asia, hadith did not simply arrive as static text; it was absorbed, localized, and re-disseminated through media suited to the cultural fabric of the archipelago — most notably through oral tradition, vernacular literature, and communal ritual performance. Michael Laffan's historical work on Indonesian Islam demonstrates that the very shape of "Indonesian Islam" as it is understood today was itself constituted through centuries of textual and scholarly exchange between the archipelago and the Middle East, mediated by networks of teachers, pilgrims, and texts moving in both directions (Laffan, 2011).

Complementing this, Feener and Laffan's (2005) study of Yemeni hagiographical literature in early Southeast Asian Islam traces precisely the kind of devotional-literary genre — originating from Hadramaut, the same scholarly lineage as the author of the *Maulid al-Diba'i* — that carried religious knowledge, including hadith-derived material, into the region through hagiography and praise literature rather than through formal isnad chains alone (Feener, R. M., & Laffan, 2005). In a related vein, Ronit Ricci's (2011) study of Islamic literary conversion across South and Southeast Asia shows how sacred and devotional texts were systematically "translated" — linguistically, poetically, and culturally — as they moved into new Islamic peripheries, producing works that remained recognizably rooted in their source tradition while becoming fully embedded in local literary and performative culture (Ricci, 2011).

One of the most enduring vehicles for this process in the Indonesian context is the *Maulid al-Diba'i*, a text composed by Imam Abdul Rahman al-Diba'i, a Hadrami-lineage hadith scholar, that narrates the life, character, and virtues of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) — much of it drawn from and structured around hadith material — and which has been recited communally across the Indonesian Archipelago for centuries, particularly in pesantren, mosques, and village gatherings commemorating the Prophet's birth (*Maulid Nabi*). Unlike formal isnad-based hadith transmission through written compilations (*kutub al-sittah* and beyond), the *Maulid al-Diba'i* represents a distinct mode of hadith dissemination: one that operates through recitation, memorization, musical/rhythmic performance (*rawi/marhaban* traditions), and communal ritual, rather than through scholarly chains of narration alone. This raises an important historical and methodological question: how did hadith material — originally transmitted and authenticated through the rigorous sanad system developed in the Hijaz and Iraq, and later reimagined as devotional practice in the post-canonical period (Davidson, 2020).

Studies on the history of hadith development have indeed been extensively carried out, both by classical scholars and modern researchers. These studies generally focus on three areas: the narration of hadith during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the cautious attitude of the Companions in transmitting hadith, and the process of hadith codification during the *tabi'in* period and its transmission to subsequent generations (Bayanullah et al., 2026). Within Indonesian scholarship specifically, a small but growing body of "living hadith" (*living hadis*) research has begun to treat local devotional practices — including the *Maulid al-Diba'i* itself — as sites of hadith transmission (Aini, 2015). A phenomenological study of the *Kamis Malam Majelis Shalawat Diba' Bil-Mustofa* tradition in Yogyakarta, for instance, documents the *Maulid al-Diba'i* as a living hadith phenomenon within a specific community. However, a recent historiographical review of Indonesian living hadith studies between 2015 and 2023 found that the majority of this literature remains focused on descriptive, practice-and-reception-oriented analysis, while "the aspect of transmission and transformation that is actually crucial in seeing the dynamics of the continuity of hadith in society has not been seriously touched" (Ihsan & Ashshiddieqi, 2024).

Understanding this connection matters for at least two reasons. First, because the credibility and content of hadith as the second source of Islamic law rest heavily on the integrity of its transmission, examining how hadith material travels through non-formal, cultural-literary channels such as the *Maulid al-Diba'i* — channels that Davidson (2020)

shows were already a recognized and legitimate mode of post-canonical transmission in the broader Islamic world — offers insight into an often-overlooked pathway of hadith dissemination, one that has arguably shaped popular Muslim understanding of the Prophet's character far more broadly than formal hadith compilations themselves. Second, because the Maulid al-Diba'i continues to be recited and taught across the Indonesian Archipelago today, understanding its hadith content and transmission history — situated within the broader history of Hadrami textual dissemination into the archipelago (Feener, R. M., & Laffan, 2005). — contributes to a more grounded appreciation of how Islamic tradition has been localized and preserved within Indonesian Muslim culture, and helps distinguish authenticated hadith material from later literary or devotional embellishment.

This study, therefore, aims to analyze the transmission and dissemination of hadith through the Maulid al-Diba'i within the cultural context of the Indonesian Archipelago — tracing the hadith content embedded in the text, the historical pathway of its transmission from the Hijaz/Hadramaut tradition, and its role as a vehicle of cultural-religious dissemination among Indonesian Muslims. An understanding of this process is expected to make an important contribution to the study of hadith, cultural Islam, and Islamic history in the Nusantara context as a whole.

## Method

This study applies a qualitative literature study method using a library research approach with content analysis as its primary technique. The collection of literature materials includes the identification and assessment of various relevant references in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the substance, background, and methodology used in the analysis of hadith, particularly as they are embedded within the text of the Maulid al-Diba'i. This approach is in line with the content analysis techniques commonly used in hadith studies, which involve structured reading, determination of key terminology, and an in-depth study of the essence of hadith based on its structure and interpretation of meaning.

The data sources used in this study are classified into two main categories. **Primary sources** consist of the text of the Maulid al-Diba'i itself, in its original Arabic recension as well as its Indonesian-language translations and commentaries (syarah), which serve as the direct object from which hadith-related narrative content is identified and described. **Secondary sources** are further divided into three sub-categories: (1) classical hadith and *sīrah* literature used as comparative reference material to help identify which narrative elements in the Maulid al-Diba'i correspond to, or echo, well-known hadith themes and reports (without claiming to establish or verify their formal chain of transmission); (2) academic studies on the history of hadith transmission, both from classical Muslim scholarship, and Western hadith scholarship on the historical development of transmission practices, and (3) historical and living-hadith studies on the localization of Islamic textual traditions in the Indonesian Archipelago, including works on Hadrami-Nusantara textual networks, and Indonesian scholarship on the Maulid al-Diba'i as a living hadith tradition. This classification allows the study to distinguish between the object of analysis (the Maulid text), the comparative reference material (classical hadith and *sīrah* literature), and the interpretive lens (transmission-history and living-hadith scholarship).

The unit of analysis in this study is each discrete narrative or textual segment (bait/fragment) within the Maulid al-Diba'i that contains content related to the Prophet's sayings, actions, physical attributes, or biographical events — content that is thematically or substantively connected to material found in the hadith and sīrah tradition. Each unit is treated individually so that its narrative content, thematic category, and mode of literary presentation (e.g., versification, praise/madh, or narrative description) can be identified and analyzed separately before being synthesized into broader thematic patterns.

This study employs a descriptive-thematic content analysis framework, rather than a formal hadith-authentication (takhrij al-hadith) approach. This choice is intentional: the aim of this study is not to verify the isnad or authenticity status of individual hadith reports, but to describe and interpret *how* hadith-related content is presented, transformed, and disseminated within the Maulid al-Diba'i as a devotional-literary text. The analysis draws on the concept of "living hadith" (living hadis) transmission developed in Indonesian hadith scholarship combined with the historical framework of post-canonical and devotional hadith transmission and textual localization in the Indonesian Archipelago. This framework is used to interpret how and why particular hadith-related themes were selected, transformed, and re-disseminated through the performative, oral-recitation mode of the Maulid al-Diba'i, rather than through formal isnad-based scholarly transmission alone.

The analysis proceeds through four stages. **First**, textual identification: reading the Maulid al-Diba'i in full to identify all narrative units containing content thematically related to hadith and sīrah material. **Second**, thematic classification: grouping the identified units into thematic categories (e.g., the Prophet's physical description, moral character, and biographical milestones) and noting their correspondence to well-known hadith themes in classical literature, without claiming formal sanad verification. **Third**, contextual-historical analysis: situating the identified content within the broader historical pathway of Islamic textual transmission from the Hijaz/Hadramaut tradition into the Indonesian Archipelago, drawing on the historical and living-hadith literature described above. **Fourth**, interpretive synthesis: analyzing how the Maulid al-Diba'i functions as a vehicle of hadith-related content dissemination and cultural-religious transmission among Indonesian Muslims, and what this reveals about non-formal pathways of hadith dissemination.

## Results

### ***Early Hadith Transmission as the Historical Foundation of Islamic Knowledge Dissemination***

The findings indicate that hadith transmission in the earliest period of Islam was primarily rooted in direct oral interaction between the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his Companions through the *talaqqī* method. This transmission model emphasized direct learning, listening, memorization, observation, and practical imitation. In this context, hadith was not merely received as verbal information but as embodied knowledge that was practiced and transmitted collectively.

The Companions demonstrated extraordinary seriousness in acquiring and preserving prophetic teachings. They learned religious knowledge gradually, combining understanding with practical implementation. This pattern is reflected in the narration from Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān:

*“We learned ten verses from the Messenger of Allah, and we would not proceed to the next ten until we understood and practiced what was contained in them.” (Ibn Ḥanbal, 2001)*

This narration shows that Islamic knowledge transmission in the prophetic period was based on a gradual process of internalization. Knowledge was inseparable from practice, creating a strong foundation for the preservation of prophetic teachings.

The Companions also played a central role in disseminating hadith beyond the Prophet’s immediate circle. Many of them lived around the Prophet, learned directly from him, and later returned to their communities to teach Islamic knowledge. This pattern is clearly reflected in the well-known hadith narrated by Mālik ibn al-Ḥuwayrith:

صلوا كما رأيتموني أصلي

*“Pray as you have seen me pray.” (Al-Bukhārī, 1995)*

This hadith demonstrates that hadith transmission in early Islam involved both verbal narration and practical imitation. Religious knowledge was transmitted through direct observation and lived experience.

The findings further reveal that enthusiasm for learning among the Companions contributed significantly to the preservation of hadith. They attended the Prophet’s gatherings consistently despite economic and social responsibilities. Some even developed rotational systems to ensure that prophetic teachings continued to be documented and shared within their communities. This indicates that hadith transmission from the earliest period already combined textual memory, oral narration, and communal dissemination.

### ***Verification and Institutional Development of Hadith after the Prophet’s Death***

After the death of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), hadith transmission entered a new phase characterized by geographical expansion and increasing scholarly verification. As Islam spread rapidly across various regions, the Companions became the main transmitters of prophetic teachings to new Muslim communities.

Initially, the transmission process remained relatively stable due to the strong memory and credibility of the Companions. However, political conflicts, sectarian tensions, and the emergence of fabricated hadith created serious challenges for preserving the authenticity of prophetic traditions. This situation encouraged Muslim scholars to develop stricter mechanisms of verification.

A significant transformation occurred during the period of *fitnah*, when scholars began to pay greater attention to sanad verification. This is reflected in the famous statement of Ibn Sīrīn:

*“Previously, they did not ask about sanad. But when fitnah occurred, they said: Name your transmitters for us.” (Abū Zahw, 1984)*

This finding shows that sanad criticism emerged as an intellectual response to historical challenges. The need to distinguish authentic prophetic reports from fabricated

ones eventually became the foundation for hadith codification and methodological rigor in hadith sciences.

Alongside this verification process, hadith transmission expanded geographically and developed through major centers of Islamic learning. The findings identify four principal centers of hadith development: Medina, Makkah, Kufa, and Basra.

**Medina** functioned as the primary center of hadith learning because it was the city of the Prophet and the residence of many major Companions, including Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, ‘Alī, Abū Hurayrah, and ‘Ā’ishah. This city became the center for hadiths related to law, worship, and social life.

**Makkah** developed as a center for hadith dissemination through pilgrimage gatherings. Every Hajj season brought Muslims from various regions together, creating a highly effective network for transmitting hadith.

**Kufa** emerged as an important center due to the presence of major Companions such as ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd and Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ, contributing significantly to legal and intellectual developments.

**Basra** also became an influential center, producing major scholars such as al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Ibn Sīrīn, who played essential roles in preserving hadith traditions. These findings demonstrate that hadith transmission evolved from direct prophetic instruction into an increasingly structured scholarly system, combining oral transmission, verification, and institutional learning.

### ***Hadith-Related Content in Maulid al-Diba’i***

The findings show that the Maulid al-Diba’i contains substantial hadith-related material presented in devotional-literary form. Although it is not structured as a formal hadith compilation, the text contains narratives closely connected to classical hadith and *sīrah* traditions concerning the life, virtues, genealogy, and moral excellence of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

One of the dominant themes found in the Maulid al-Diba’i is the narration of the Prophet’s noble lineage and sacred origin. The text presents the Prophet as possessing a divinely honored lineage that connects him to earlier prophetic traditions. This theme is illustrated in the opening section of the text:

*“Indeed, I was a light before Allah two thousand years before Adam was created.”*  
(Maulid al-Diba’i)

This narration emphasizes the sacred status of the Prophet and presents his birth as part of a divine historical continuum. Such narratives function as devotional representations of prophetic nobility and are central to the emotional appeal of Maulid recitation.

A second major theme is the Prophet’s moral excellence. The Maulid al-Diba’i repeatedly portrays the Prophet as the perfect embodiment of compassion, mercy,

humility, and noble character. These themes correspond strongly with classical hadith literature describing the Prophet's ethical conduct and exemplary behavior.

The text also contains descriptions of the Prophet's physical and spiritual beauty. These descriptions serve not only as biographical details but as devotional instruments that cultivate emotional attachment and love toward the Prophet. Through these portrayals, prophetic virtues become more accessible to ordinary Muslim communities.

Another important finding is the presence of miraculous elements surrounding the Prophet's birth and life. These narratives contribute to the sacred atmosphere of Maulid recitation and reinforce communal reverence toward the Prophet. While such accounts may involve varying degrees of authenticity from a strict hadith perspective, their presence demonstrates how prophetic memory is preserved through devotional literature.

Overall, the findings indicate that the Maulid al-Diba'i functions as a literary vessel for transmitting hadith-related themes in a form that is emotionally engaging, spiritually meaningful, and culturally accessible.

### ***Maulid al-Diba'i as a Cultural Medium of Hadith Dissemination in the Indonesian Archipelago***

The findings reveal that in the Indonesian Archipelago, hadith dissemination developed not only through formal study circles and pesantren scholarship but also through cultural and devotional practices embedded in communal life. One of the most enduring forms of this transmission is the recitation of Maulid al-Diba'i.

The spread of Islam in Nusantara historically involved adaptive cultural strategies. Muslim scholars and preachers often employed local traditions as effective vehicles for religious transmission. This cultural approach enabled Islamic teachings to be accepted more widely without creating significant conflict with existing social structures.

In this context, Maulid al-Diba'i became a highly effective medium for disseminating hadith-related knowledge. The text is widely recited in pesantren, mosques, village religious gatherings, and celebrations of the Prophet's birthday. Through these communal settings, prophetic narratives are transmitted to broad segments of society, including those without formal training in hadith sciences.

The effectiveness of Maulid al-Diba'i lies in its performative and collective character. Unlike formal hadith books that require technical scholarly engagement, the Maulid is transmitted through oral recitation, repetition, rhythm, and emotional participation. This process transforms hadith-related content into a shared religious experience.

The findings also show that repeated recitation strengthens memory retention and internalization. Through regular participation in Maulid gatherings, communities become familiar with the Prophet's life, virtues, and moral teachings. Children, santri, and lay Muslims gradually absorb prophetic values through repetition and communal participation.

This pattern demonstrates that hadith dissemination in Nusantara operates through both formal and informal pathways. Formal pathways emphasize sanad, verification, and scholarly authority, whereas cultural pathways emphasize collective memory, devotional engagement, and communal embodiment.

### ***Transmission Model of Hadith through Maulid al-Diba'i in Nusantara***

Based on the findings above, the transmission of hadith-related content through Maulid al-Diba'i in the Indonesian Archipelago can be understood through four interconnected models.

First, **textual transmission**, in which prophetic narratives are preserved in written devotional literature. Second, **oral transmission**, in which these narratives are disseminated through collective recitation and repetition. Third, **performative transmission**, in which hadith-related content is embodied through ritual, rhythm, and communal participation. Fourth, **cultural transmission**, in which prophetic teachings are localized and integrated into Indonesian Muslim traditions.

These findings indicate that Maulid al-Diba'i serves as a bridge connecting classical hadith traditions with lived Muslim religiosity in the Indonesian Archipelago. It demonstrates that hadith transmission is not limited to formal scholarly channels but can also operate effectively through cultural and devotional forms that preserve prophetic memory across generations.

## **Discussion**

### ***Why is Maulid al-Diba'i Effective as a Medium of Hadith Dissemination?***

The findings demonstrate that the effectiveness of the Maulid al-Diba'i as a medium of hadith dissemination lies in its ability to transform hadith-related content into an accessible, emotionally engaging, and culturally meaningful religious experience. Unlike formal hadith compilations, which are primarily studied within scholarly settings through sanad analysis and textual criticism, the Maulid al-Diba'i operates through devotional recitation, communal participation, and repeated ritual practice.

This effectiveness can be traced to the historical logic of hadith transmission in early Islam itself. As shown in the findings, hadith transmission during the prophetic period was not merely textual but deeply relational and embodied. The Companions acquired knowledge through direct interaction with the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), combining listening, observation, memorization, and practice through the *talaqqi* system. Knowledge was not treated as abstract information but as lived guidance to be internalized and transmitted within communal settings.

The Maulid al-Diba'i reproduces this logic in a different but functionally similar form. Although the medium has shifted from direct prophetic instruction to devotional literature, the essential mechanism remains comparable: repetition, internalization, and communal transmission. Through regular recitation in pesantren, mosques, and religious gatherings, participants repeatedly encounter narratives about the Prophet's life, virtues, and moral excellence. This repeated exposure strengthens collective memory and deepens emotional attachment to prophetic teachings.

Another important factor behind the effectiveness of the Maulid al-Diba'i lies in its performative nature. The text is not consumed through silent reading alone but through oral recitation, rhythm, melody, and communal participation. This performative structure creates a multisensory mode of learning in which hadith-related content becomes easier to remember and internalize. In this context, religious transmission operates not only cognitively but also emotionally and spiritually.

The findings also indicate that the Maulid al-Diba'i lowers the threshold of access to hadith-related knowledge. Formal hadith scholarship requires technical competence in sanad criticism, narrator evaluation, and legal interpretation—areas typically accessible only to scholars and advanced students. In contrast, the Maulid al-Diba'i makes prophetic narratives available to wider Muslim communities, including lay audiences, children, and rural populations. Through this devotional medium, essential teachings concerning the Prophet's lineage, virtues, character, and mission become widely accessible without diminishing their religious significance.

Thus, the effectiveness of the Maulid al-Diba'i lies in its capacity to bridge scholarly tradition and popular religiosity, making hadith-related knowledge both intellectually meaningful and socially accessible.

### ***How is Hadith Transmitted Culturally in the Indonesian Archipelago?***

The findings reveal that cultural transmission of hadith in the Indonesian Archipelago operates through interconnected mechanisms that differ from formal sanad-based transmission while still preserving the essence of prophetic teachings. This demonstrates that hadith transmission in Nusantara developed not only through scholarly institutions but also through cultural and devotional practices embedded in communal life.

First, hadith transmission occurs through **oral repetition**. In formal hadith studies, authenticity is preserved through sanad continuity and scholarly verification. By contrast, cultural transmission through Maulid al-Diba'i relies on repeated communal recitation. The continuity of transmission is maintained not through documented chains of narrators but through sustained collective practice across generations. In this sense, the "chain" of transmission becomes communal memory itself.

Second, transmission occurs through **performative embodiment**. The recitation of Maulid al-Diba'i is not merely literary but ritualistic. Hadith-related narratives are embedded in collective recitation, rhythm, praise, and emotional participation. This transforms prophetic narratives from textual information into lived religious experience. The Prophet is not only studied but remembered, praised, and emotionally encountered through ritual performance.

Third, hadith transmission occurs through **cultural localization**. The spread of Islam in Nusantara historically involved adaptive engagement with local culture. Islamic teachings were often introduced through culturally familiar forms rather than through rigid textual imposition. The Maulid tradition reflects this adaptive strategy. By integrating Arabic devotional literature with local communal traditions, Muslim scholars successfully localized prophetic teachings within Indonesian cultural life.

This pattern is consistent with broader historical processes of Islamization in the archipelago. Similar to how early preachers used local cultural media to disseminate Islamic teachings, the Maulid al-Diba'i became an effective cultural vehicle for transmitting hadith-related values. The text retains its Islamic substance while becoming fully integrated into local religious practices.

Fourth, transmission occurs through **social and spiritual authority networks**. The authority of the Maulid al-Diba'i in Indonesia is not solely derived from textual content but also from its transmission through pesantren networks, kyai leadership, and religious institutions such as Nahdlatul Ulama. These institutions function as key mediators in preserving and legitimizing the practice within Indonesian Muslim society.

These findings indicate that hadith transmission in the Indonesian Archipelago should be understood as a multidimensional process involving textual preservation, oral repetition, ritual embodiment, and cultural adaptation. Formal scholarly transmission and cultural transmission are therefore not opposing models but complementary pathways through which prophetic teachings continue to live within Muslim communities.

### ***Contribution to Hadith Studies and Islamic Scholarship***

The findings of this study contribute to Islamic scholarship in three major ways.

First, this study challenges the rigid dichotomy often drawn between formal hadith transmission and popular devotional practice. Hadith studies have often privileged sanad-based scholarly transmission as the primary framework for understanding the preservation of prophetic teachings. While this framework remains central for authentication and legal interpretation, the present findings demonstrate that hadith-related knowledge also survives and spreads through cultural and devotional pathways. The Maulid al-Diba'i illustrates that formal and non-formal transmission should not be viewed as opposing categories but as interconnected forms of preserving prophetic memory.

Second, this study contributes to the growing field of **living hadith studies** in Indonesia. Much of the existing literature on living hadith focuses primarily on reception, ritual practice, and symbolic meaning. While such approaches are important, they often pay limited attention to transmission dynamics. This study addresses that gap by highlighting how hadith-related content is transmitted, transformed, and sustained through devotional literature and communal practice. In doing so, it expands living hadith scholarship beyond descriptive analysis toward a stronger focus on transmission processes.

Third, this study contributes to broader scholarship on Islam in the Indonesian Archipelago, particularly concerning the relationship between Islamic textual tradition and local religious culture. The findings show that the localization of Islamic teachings in Nusantara does not necessarily weaken textual authenticity or religious substance. Instead, cultural adaptation can function as an effective mechanism for preserving and disseminating Islamic values. The Maulid al-Diba'i demonstrates how classical Islamic textual heritage from the Hijaz and Hadramaut was successfully transmitted into Indonesian Muslim society through culturally resonant forms.

More broadly, the findings suggest that hadith transmission should be understood as a dynamic and historically adaptive process. From direct *talaqqī* in the prophetic era, to sanad-based scholarly verification in classical Islam, to devotional and performative transmission in contemporary Muslim societies, hadith has continued to evolve in response to changing social and cultural contexts. This dynamic continuity reflects not a departure from tradition, but the enduring capacity of Islamic scholarship to preserve prophetic teachings across diverse historical settings.

Ultimately, the Maulid al-Diba'i represents an important example of how prophetic teachings continue to live within Muslim societies beyond formal scholarly institutions. It serves as a bridge between classical hadith tradition and lived Muslim religiosity, demonstrating that hadith transmission remains both intellectually grounded and culturally dynamic in the Indonesian Archipelago.

## Conclusion

This study demonstrates that hadith transmission has historically developed through dynamic and adaptive processes, beginning with direct *talaqqī*-based learning during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), continuing through sanad-based scholarly verification in the classical period, and extending into broader devotional and cultural forms in later Muslim societies. In the early Islamic period, hadith transmission relied heavily on direct interaction, memorization, practical imitation, and communal teaching. Following the Prophet's death, the expansion of Islam led to the development of major centers of hadith scholarship such as Medina, Makkah, Kufa, and Basra, where hadith transmission became increasingly structured through verification, codification, and scholarly institutions.

The findings further reveal that in the Indonesian Archipelago, hadith dissemination developed not only through formal scholarly channels but also through cultural and devotional practices embedded in communal religious life. The Maulid al-Diba'i represents a significant example of this transmission model. Although not a formal hadith compilation, it functions as an important medium for disseminating hadith-related content concerning the Prophet's lineage, virtues, moral excellence, and life journey. Through oral recitation, ritual performance, repetition, and communal participation, the Maulid al-Diba'i transforms hadith-related knowledge into a living religious experience that is accessible to broader Muslim communities.

This study concludes that the Maulid al-Diba'i serves as a bridge between classical hadith tradition and lived Muslim religiosity in the Indonesian Archipelago. The findings challenge the rigid dichotomy between formal hadith scholarship and popular devotional practice by showing that both function as complementary pathways in preserving prophetic memory. This research contributes to hadith studies, living hadith scholarship, and the study of Islam in Nusantara by demonstrating that cultural adaptation can serve as an effective and legitimate medium for transmitting Islamic teachings across generations. Future studies may further examine similar devotional texts and regional traditions to deepen understanding of the diverse modes of hadith transmission in contemporary Muslim societies.

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