



The Use of Sutra in Prayer

(a living Hadith Study at As-Sunnah Islamic College Deli Serdang)

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the understanding of the academic community of the As-Sunnah Islamic College Deli Serdang regarding the hadith on sutrah in prayer and to reveal the practice of using sutrah in prayer as a manifestation of living hadith in the environment of the As-Sunnah Islamic College Deli Serdang. This study employs a qualitative approach and phenomenological method, with data collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The results indicate that understanding of the hadith regarding sutrah is quite strong among the academic community, influencing its practical application in daily life, particularly in prayer practices. These findings demonstrate how hadith is not only used as a source of law but also brought to life within the social and cultural context of Islamic education.

Keywords: Sutra; *Living* hadith; STAI As-Sunnah

Article Info

Article History:

Received: 2025-05-03 Accepted: 2025-06-24 Publish: 2025-06-30



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:10.51590/waraqat.v10i1.1071

Introduction

Understanding and practising hadith in the life of a Muslim plays a very important role, as hadith is the second source after the Qur'an that serves as a guide in various aspects of life¹ or can also be said to be a moral, spiritual, and ritual guide in daily life.² Hadith provides more detailed explanations regarding the teachings found in the Qur'an and offers concrete examples through the behaviour and words of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Therefore, a proper understanding of hadith is essential to ensure that Islamic teachings can be implemented accurately in daily life, especially in matters of worship.³

Prayer is a central act of worship in Islamic teachings and serves as the second pillar of the Five Pillars of Islam, with its procedures clearly and detailed explained in the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. One important aspect of the prayer procedures taught by the Prophet ﷺ in his hadith is the use of a sutrah, which is a barrier or partition, serving to prevent people from passing in front of those who are praying.⁴ The sutrah in prayer is used as a marker indicating that the area is off-limits because it is being used by others for prayer. One of the benefits of using a sutrah is also as a means to maintain concentration and minimise disturbances during prayer.⁵ This practice is derived from various hadiths of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ that emphasise the importance of using a sutrah, whether in mandatory prayers or sunnah prayers, whether in a mosque or elsewhere.

One of the hadith that indicates the Prophet's ﷺ command and recommendation to use a sutrah during prayer is the hadith narrated by Abu Daud in his Sunan through the noble companion Abu Sa'id al-Khudri,

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْعَلَاءِ ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو خَالِدٍ ، عَنِ ابْنِ عَجَلَانَ ، عَنْ زَيْدِ بْنِ أَسْلَمَ ، عَنْ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ : قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ : " إِذَا صَلَّى أَحَدُكُمْ فَلْيُصَلِّ إِلَى سُتْرَةٍ ، وَلْيَدْنُ مِنْهَا " ⁶

Muhammad bin al-'Ala' narrated to us, Abu Khalid narrated to us from Ibn 'Ajlan from Zaid bin Aslam from Abdurrahman bin Abu Sa'id al-Khudri from his father, who said: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "When one of you prays, let him face the sutrah and draw close to it."

This hadith indicates that the use of sutrah is not just a habit, but rather part of the sunnah taught by the Prophet ﷺ. Scholars such as Ibn Qudamah⁷, and Ibn Rushd⁸ have also agreed on the recommendation (sunnah) of using a sutrah during prayer. This sunnah practice is evident in how the Prophet ﷺ was accustomed to preparing an object that could serve as a sutrah before his prayer and then prayed facing that sutrah. He ﷺ would typically prepare something like an arrow, a spear, or a saddle for his mount to use as a sutrah. At times, he

¹ Aisyah Firdayanti et al., "Studi Hadist Dan Pengimplementasiannya Dalam Kehidupan Sehari Hari," *Social, Educational, Learning and Language (SELL)* 1, no. 2 (December 29, 2023): 220, <https://doi.org/10.61930/sell.v1i2.44>.

² H. Ahmad Farhan M.S.I SS and Dr Aan Supian M.Ag, *PEMAHLAMAN HADIS DAN IMPLIKASINYA DALAM PRAKTEK KEAGAMAAN JAMA'AH TABLIGH DI KOTA BENGKULU (KAJIAN LIVING HADIS)* (Samudra Biru, 2021), 1.

³ Reva Sheptiya Anjani, "Al-Qur'an Dan Hadist Sumber Hukum Dan Pedoman Hidup Umat Muslim," *Religion : Jurnal Agama, Sosial, Dan Budaya* 2, no. 6 (November 22, 2023): 533, <https://doi.org/10.55606/religion.v1i6.768>.

⁴ Muhammad Fikri Firdaus, "Sharah Hadith about Sutrah Prayer in the View of the Ulama" 4 (2021): 267.

⁵ Yulian Purnama, "Kupas Tuntas Sutrah Shalat," 52–56, accessed April 23, 2025, https://ebooksunnah.com/id_ID/ebooks/kupas-tuntas-sutrah-shalat.

⁶ Abu Daud Sulaiman ibnu al-Asy'ats, "Sunan Abi Daud," vol. 2 (Damaskus: Daar ar-Risalah al-'Alamiyah, 2009), 29.

⁷ Abdullah ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Qudamah Al-Maqdisi, "Al-Mughni," vol. 3 (Riyadh: Daar 'Alam Al-Kutub, 1997), 80.

⁸ Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Rusyd, "Bidayah Al-Mujtahid Wa Nihayah al-Muqtashid," vol. 1 (Kairo: Maktabah ibn Taimiyah, 1415), 278.

would face a tree or an animal mount when he could not find another sutrah and when praying outside the mosque. The pillars and walls of the mosque were usually used as sutrah by the Prophet ﷺ when inside the mosque.⁹

The importance of using a sutrah in prayer is evident from the numerous hadiths of the Prophet ﷺ that encourage and command the use of a sutrah in prayer, and even those who came later paid close attention to this matter. They endeavoured to practise the acts exemplified by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ in his hadiths as best as they could. However, in modern times, most Muslims have not yet made it a deeply habit in their daily worship. Most Muslim communities are unaware of or even do not consider the use of a sutrah in prayer to be important.

In contemporary studies, there is a concept known as 'living hadith,' which emphasises the importance of bringing hadith to life in real-world contexts, rather than merely reading them as texts. Living hadith focuses on the practical application of hadith in the context of the evolving lives of Muslims, taking into account existing social and cultural situations. This concept demonstrates that hadith is not merely a text to be understood theoretically but must also be implemented in real practice, in line with the challenges of the times.¹⁰ Phénomènes such as the use of sutrah in prayer are part of the discussion in the study of living hadith, where hadiths related to sutrah in prayer are not only read and understood textually, but also brought to life and interpreted in the social reality of society. Thus, the Prophet's hadith can be practised and realised in life, and its implementation can be sustained, becoming a culture and tradition that is continuously preserved by a society within their environment.¹¹

In the context of Islamic higher education, such as at the As-Sunnah Islamic College Deli Serdang, the use of sutrah is an interesting practice to study. As-Sunnah Islamic College Deli Serdang is one of the Islamic educational institutions that is very concerned with purifying Islamic teachings based on the Qur'an and Sunnah. As an Islamic higher education institution, As-Sunnah Islamic College Deli Serdang is committed to instilling a proper understanding of the Qur'an and Sunnah among its students, both in theory and practice.¹² At this college, the implementation of Islamic teachings is not limited to classroom instruction but is also integrated into daily life, including in religious practices such as prayer. Therefore, the practice of using sutrah in prayer at As-Sunnah Islamic College Deli Serdang serves as a concrete example of how living hadith is applied in academic life.

Studies on the use of sutrah in prayer have been conducted by several researchers, both from the perspective of fiqh and hadith. For example, research conducted by Muhammad Fikri Firdaus and Yumna discusses the explanation of hadith about sutrah in prayer from the perspective of scholars.¹³ There is also research by Muhd. Ridwan (2023) which discusses the response of feminists to hadith about sutrah.¹⁴ Additionally, there is research by Saadal Jannah et al. that includes the ruling on sutrah according to Imam Syaukani.¹⁵ And a study

⁹ Firdaus, "Sharah Hadith about Sutrah Prayer in the View of the Ulama," 265.

¹⁰ Habibah Afyanti Putri, Kurnia Utami Nursholichah, and Marhumah -, "Implementasi *Living Hadist* Dalam Pembelajaran Anak Usia Dini Di TK Annur 2 Yogyakarta," *Jurnal PG-PAUD Trunojoyo: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran Anak Usia Dini* 11, no. 2 (October 27, 2024): 160–61, <https://doi.org/10.21107/pgpaustrunojoyo.v11i2.26157>.

¹¹ M. Khoiril Anwar, "Living Hadis," *Farabi* 12, no. 1 (June 1, 2015): 73–74.

¹² "PANDUAN AKADEMIK T.A. 2024-2025," n.d., 3–5.

¹³ Firdaus, "Sharah Hadith about Sutrah Prayer in the View of the Ulama."

¹⁴ Muhd Ridwan, "Pemahaman Hadis Sutrah dalam Shalat: Tanggapan terhadap Kaum Feminis yang Keberatan dengan 'Binatang dan Wanita itu Sederajat,'" *Jurnal Riset Agama* 3, no. 1 (January 25, 2023): 266–84, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jra.v3i1.20544>.

¹⁵ Saadal Jannah, "Hukum Sutrah Menurut Imam Al-Syaukani (Studi Kitab Nail Al-Autar)," *AL-MUTSLA* 6, no. 2 (n.d.).

by Zulfikar on a comprehensive understanding of the hadith regarding sutrah, which was studied using the *ma'anil* hadith method.¹⁶ However, most of these studies are normative-theoretical in nature and do not touch on phenomenological aspects, especially in the context of living hadith.

In the field of living hadith studies, several studies have explored how the Prophet's hadiths are implemented in social, cultural, and educational life, such as the study by Muhammad Rafi which looks at the existence of a living hadith in the tradition of Friday almsgiving by the *Sijum* Amuntai community¹⁷. There are also studies on living hadith occurring within educational institutions such as Islamic boarding schools, such as Ananda Prayogi's study discussing the tradition of reciting Surah Al-Waqi'ah at the Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School as a living hadith,¹⁸ and Ainun Hakiemah's study on the tradition of completing the recitation of the Qur'an at the Pandanaran Islamic Boarding School in Yogyakarta.¹⁹ However, no specific studies have been found that discuss living hadith regarding the practice of using sutrah in prayer, especially within an academic environment. Although the hadiths on this matter are quite clear, and the practice is likely influenced by social, cultural, and even institutional environments, this indicates a research gap that has not been extensively addressed by previous academic studies. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by focusing on the practice of using sutrah in prayer at the As-Sunnah Islamic College in Deli Serdang.

This article presents scientific innovation by examining the practice of using sutrah in prayer as a living hadith phenomenon in the academic environment of the As-Sunnah Islamic College Deli Serdang. Unlike previous normative studies, this research highlights the practical and sociological dimensions of the hadith on sutrah in the lives of students and the academic community, thereby contributing new insights to the development of living hadith studies, which remain under-explored in contemporary academic circles. This study seeks to demonstrate the relevance of hadith in prayer practices among students and their understanding of hadith related to sutrah.

Based on the above background, the research problem is: How do the community of the As-Sunnah Islamic College Deli Serdang understand the hadiths on sutrah, and how is the practice of using sutrah in prayer manifested in this environment as an expression of living hadith? The hypothesis proposed is: The use of sutrah in prayer at the As-Sunnah Islamic College Deli Serdang indicates the integration of theoretical understanding of hadith with daily religious practices among students and the academic community. This study will examine how the understanding and implementation of hadith about sutrah occur in the academic environment, as well as the factors influencing the success of its application.

The primary objective of this study is to determine the perspectives and understanding of hadiths related to sutrah among the academic community As-Sunnah Islamic College Deli Serdang, explore the practice of using sutrah in prayer within that environment, and analyse how hadiths about sutrah are brought to life in the academic and social context of the

¹⁶ Zulfikar, "HADITH SUTRAH: STUDY OF MA'ANIL HADITH," *International Journal of Islamic Education, Research and Multiculturalism (IJIERM)* 2, no. 3 (2020): 202–21, <https://doi.org/10.47006/ijierm.v2i3.46>.

¹⁷ Muhammad Rafi, "Living Hadis : Studi atas Tradisi Sedekah Nasi Bungkus Hari Jumat oleh Komunitas Sijum Amuntai," *Jurnal Living Hadis* 4, no. 1 (September 2, 2019): 133, <https://doi.org/10.14421/livinghadis.2019.1647>.

¹⁸ Ananda Prayogi, "Study of Living Hadith on Reciting Surah Al-Waqi'ah Tradition at Pesantren Tebuireng: Studi Living Hadis atas Tradisi Pembacaan Surah al-Waqi'ah di Pesantren Tebuireng," *Jurnal Living Hadis* 7, no. 2 (April 28, 2023): 239–51, <https://doi.org/10.14421/livinghadis.2022.4391>.

¹⁹ Ainun Hakiemah and Jazilus Sakhok, "Khataman Alquran Di Pesantren Sunan Pandanaran Yogyakarta: Kajian Living Hadis," *Mutawatir: Jurnal Keilmuan Tafsir Hadith* 9, no. 1 (June 5, 2019): 125–44, <https://doi.org/10.15642/mutawatir.2019.9.1.125-144>.

campus. This study also aims to provide further understanding of the relevance of living hadith in Islamic higher education and to enrich religious discourse and Islamic education rooted in the Qur'an and Sunnah.

This study uses qualitative research, which is research expressed in words or sentences²⁰ using field research methods. According to Creswell, qualitative research is used when researchers want to explore in depth individuals' meanings of a phenomenon in a particular social context, involving direct interaction between researchers and research subjects.²¹ Because of the object studied in this research is the form and model of practice or application and understanding of hadith related to sutrah in prayer in the As-Sunnah Islamic College Deli Serdang's environment, this research is classified as living hadith research using a hadith and phenomenological approach. The phenomenological approach is a science for understanding and describing what a person thinks, feels, and knows in their consciousness and experience at that moment, and all of that is about truth.²² This type of approach allows for a deep and holistic exploration of the phenomenon of living hadith regarding the use of sutrah in prayer within the As-Sunnah Islamic College Deli Serdang's environment. In this context, the hadith about sutrah is understood not only as a normative text but also as a living reality practised in the daily lives of the academic community at As-Sunnah Islamic College Deli Serdang.

The research location is at the As-Sunnah Islamic College in Deli Serdang, North Sumatra. This college is known for its understanding of Ahlusunnah wal Jama'ah based on the practices of the Salaf, who strive to observe and apply Islamic religious law based on the Quran and the hadith of the Prophet ﷺ in their daily lives. Therefore, this college is a strategic location for exploring the dynamics of living hadith.

The research subjects consist of students, educators, lecturers, and campus staff. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, i.e., by choosing individuals who were considered to have a deep understanding and active involvement in campus religious practices, especially in the context of hadith related to sutrah and its practice in prayer.

The Data of this research was collected through three main techniques:

1. Participatory Observation: The researcher directly engaged in the campus social environment to observe the use of sutrah in prayer practices, both in performance of mandatory prayers and individual sunnah prayers. This technique allowed the researcher to capture empirical phenomena naturally.²³
2. In-depth Interviews: Conducted with key informants, including hadith scholars, imam of the campus mosque, and several students. The interviews were semi-structured to allow flexibility in exploring their understanding of the hadith on sutrah and its practices.²⁴
3. Documentation: This includes the collection of written documents such as college worship handbook, documentation of religious activities, and photos or videos of prayer practices that reflect the use of sutrah. This technique aims to support the primary data obtained through observation and interviews.²⁵

Data was analysed inductively using the interactive model developed by Miles and Huberman, which involves three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing

²⁰ H Hadi Amirul & Haryono, "Metodologi Penelitian Pendidikan," *Bandung: Pustaka Setia*, 1998, 126.

²¹ "Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design_ Choosing Among Five Approaches 3rd Edition (PDFDrive)," n.d., 79–80.

²² John W Creswell, "Penelitian Kualitatif & Desain Riset (Memilih Di Antara Lima Pendekatan). Pustaka Pelajar: Yogyakarta," 2013, 105.

²³ James P. Spradley, *Participant Observation* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980), 53–62.

²⁴ Norman K Denzin and Yvonna S Lincoln, "The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research," n.d., 608.

²⁵ Matthew B. Miles, A. M. Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*, Third edition (Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2014), 62–65.

conclusions/verification.²⁶ To maintain data validity, source triangulation techniques are employed, which involve comparing information from various data sources (interviews, observations, and documentation), as well as technique triangulation to test the extent and reliability of data by verifying the accuracy of data from the same source using different techniques.²⁷

Result and Discussion

Several hadiths that form the basis for the application of sutrah in prayer are hadiths narrated from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, a companion of the Prophet, which were recorded by Abu Daud in his Sunan.

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْعَلَاءِ ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو خَالِدٍ ، عَنِ ابْنِ عَجَلَانَ ، عَنْ زَيْدِ بْنِ أَسْلَمَ ، عَنْ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ : قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ : " إِذَا صَلَّى أَحَدُكُمْ فَلْيُصَلِّ إِلَى سُتْرَةٍ ، وَلْيَتَدَنَّ مِنْهَا " ²⁸

Muhammad bin al-'Ala' narrated to us that Abu Khalid narrated to us from Ibn 'Ajlan from Zaid bin Aslam from Abdurrahman bin Abu Sa'id al-Khudri from his father, who said: The Messenger of Allah, may peace and blessings be upon him, said, "When any of you prays, let him face the sutrah and draw near to it."

This hadith is recorded by Abu Daud in his Sunan, in the book of prayer, in the chapter titled *Ma Yu'maru al-Mushalli an Yadra'a 'an al-Mamarri bayna Yadaibi* (chapter on what is commanded of the one praying to prevent someone from passing in front of him) with number 698. This hadith has a strong chain (sanad), as stated by Shuaib al-Arnauth when verifying Sunan Abi Daud. Al-Albani commented on this hadith in *Shahih Sunan Abi Daud*, stating that its degree is *hasan sahih*.²⁹

Another hadith that serves as a basis for the practice of using a sutrah in prayer is the authentic hadith narrated by al-Bukhari,

حَدَّثَنَا مُسَدَّدٌ ، قَالَ : حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى ، عَنْ عُبَيْدِ اللَّهِ ، أَخْبَرَنِي نَافِعٌ ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ يُرَكِّزُ لَهُ الْحَرْبَةَ فَيُصَلِّي إِلَيْهَا ³⁰

Musaddad told us, he said: Yahya told us from Ubaidullah, Nafi' from Abdullah told me that a spear was once put in front of the Prophet, peace be upon him, and he prayed facing it." There is also a hadith that indicates the standards and measurements of objects that can be used as a sutrah in prayer, as mentioned in the following hadith:

حَدَّثَنَا قُتَيْبَةُ ، وَهَنَّادٌ ، قَالَا : حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو الْأَحْوَصِ ، عَنْ سِمَاكِ بْنِ حَرْبٍ ، عَنْ مُوسَى بْنِ طَلْحَةَ ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ : قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ : " إِذَا وَضَعَ أَحَدُكُمْ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِثْلَ مُؤَخَّرَةِ الرَّحْلِ ، فَلْيُصَلِّ وَلَا يُبَالِ مَنْ مَرَّ وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ " ³¹

Qutaibah and Hannad narrated to us, saying: Abu Al Ahwash narrated to us from Simak bin Harb from Musa bin Thalhah from his father, who said: "The Messenger of Allah, peace and

²⁶ Mathew B Miles et al., *Analisis Data Kualitatif: Buku Sumber Tentang Metode Metode Baru* (Penerbit Universitas Indonesia (UI-Press), 1992), 16.

²⁷ Andarusni Alfansyur and Mariyani Mariyani, "SENI MENGELOLA DATA: PENERAPAN TRIANGULASI TEKNIK, SUMBER DAN WAKTU PADA PENELITIAN PENDIDIKAN SOSIAL," *Historis: Jurnal Kajian, Penelitian Dan Pengembangan Pendidikan Sejarah* 5, no. 2 (December 27, 2020): 149, <https://doi.org/10.31764/historis.v5i2.3432>.

²⁸ al-Asy'ats, "Sunan Abi Daud," 29.

²⁹ Muhammad Nashiruddin al-Albani, "Shahih Sunan Abi Daud," vol. 1 (Riyadh: Makatabah Al-ma'arif li An-nasyr wa At-tauzi', 1998), 204.

³⁰ Muhammad ibnu Ismail al-Bukhari, "Shahih Al-Bukhari" (Beirut: Daar ibnu Katsir, 2002), 131.

³¹ Abu Isa Muhammad ibnu Isa at-Tirmidzi, "Al-Jami' Al-Kabir," vol. 1 (Beirut: Daar al-Gharbi al-Islamiy, 1996), 366–67.

blessings be upon him, said: ‘If any of you places something like a horse saddle in front of him, he need not concern himself with who passes behind him.’”

Basysyar ibn ‘Awwad has authenticated this hadith and added that in this chapter there are also narrations from Abu Hurairah, Sahl bin Abu Hatsmah, Ibn Umar, Sabrah bin Ma’bad al-Juhani, Abu Juhaifah, and ‘Aisyah. Abu Isa stated that this hadith has the degree of *hasan shahih*. Scholars practise this hadith and say, “The sutrah of the imam is the sutrah for his followers.” Muhammad Nashiruddin al-Albani also stated that this hadith is *hasan shahih* in the book *Shahih Sunan at-Tirmidzi*, as he evaluated the hadith of Ibn Majah number 940.³² There are many other similar hadiths that serve as the basis for the practice of using a sutrah in prayer. The quality of these hadiths is *maqbul* (acceptable), whether they are *sahih* or *hasan*. However, in the study of living hadith, a practice or act derived from a hadith does not necessarily require that the practice originate from a *sahih*, *hasan*, or *dha’if* (weak) hadith; the most important thing is that the hadith is not *maudhu’* (fabricated).³³ However, to maintain the purity of worship, practices, and religious-based activities, only authentic and acceptable evidence should be used as a reference and foundation. Using *mardud* (rejected) hadith, such as weak or fabricated ones, especially forged ones, is a major mistake. Such rejected hadiths should not be practised and cannot serve as a foundation in the life of a Muslim.³⁴ Regarding weak hadiths that cannot be elevated to the level of *hasan lighairihi*, they cannot be practised or used as a legal basis, especially regarding matters of *halal* and *haram*.³⁵ However, scholars permit the practice of weak hadiths in the chapter on *Fadhail A’mal*.³⁶ Nevertheless, when there are many acceptable hadiths that can serve as a legal basis for a particular practice, there is no need to rely on weak hadiths.³⁷

Based on the results of observations and interviews conducted with the As-Sunnah Islamic College community, such as students and lecturers, they are aware of the hadiths related to sutrah and their degrees of authenticity. In addition to knowing the hadith, they also understand and comprehend the meaning of the hadith, the general concept of sutrah, and the purpose of placing sutrah in front of someone performing prayer. The sutrah referred to in the hadith is an obstacle placed in front of someone performing prayer to prevent others from crossing it. This is also consistent with what is stated in the book *al-Mausu’ah al-Fiqhiyyah*: “The sutrah for someone performing prayer, in terms of definition, is anything that is planted and erected in front of the person praying, such as a stick or the like, which serves as a barrier to prevent others from passing in front of the person praying.”^{38,39} Most of the students and lecturers have a good understanding of the legal basis for using a sutrah in prayer. This knowledge is generally obtained from hadith lessons in class, studies and lectures heard from scholars, as well as from reading materials related to sutrah.

³² Muhammad Nashiruddin al-Albani, “Shahih Sunan At-Tirmidzi,” vol. 1 (Riyadh: Makatabah Al-ma’arif li An-nasyr wa At-tauzi, 2000), 198.

³³ Saifuddin Zuhri Qudsy, “LIVING HADIS: GENEALOGI, TEORI, DAN APLIKASI,” *Jurnal Living Hadis* 1, no. 1 (May 6, 2016): 181, <https://doi.org/10.14421/livinghadis.2016.1073>.

³⁴ H. Rajab, “HADIS MARDUD DAN DISKUSI TENTANG PENGAMALANNYA,” *Jurnal Studi Islam* 10, no. 1 (2021): 47, <https://doi.org/10.33477/jsi.v10i1.2229>.

³⁵ Kusnadi Kusnadi, “Kehujjahan Hadis Daif Dalam Permasalahan Hukum Menurut Pendapat Abu Hanifah,” *Ulumul Syar’i: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Hukum Dan Syariah* 7, no. 2 (December 6, 2018): 1.

³⁶ Ahmad Farih Dzakiy, Muhammad Da’in Khozani, and Siti Mulazamah, “Hadis Dhaif dan Hukum Mengamalkannya,” *Al-Bayan: Journal of Hadith Studies* 1, no. 1 (July 27, 2022): 4.

³⁷ Imam Suhada et al., “Analisis Konsistensi Mahmud Yunus Tentang Tidak Berhujjah Dengan Hadis Dhaif,” *Jurnal Ulunnaba* 11, no. 2 (December 31, 2022): 123–24, <https://doi.org/10.15548/ju.v11i2.4196>.

³⁸ “Al-Mausu’ah al-Fiqhiyah,” vol. 24 (Kuwait: Wizarah al-Auqaf wa asy-Syu’un al-Islamiyah, 1983), 187–89.

³⁹ Abdurrahman al-Jaziry, “Kitab Al-Fiqh ‘Ala al-Madzahib al-‘Arba’Ah,” vol. 1 (Beirut: Daar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyah, 2003), 243.

Nevertheless, there are different opinions regarding the legal ruling on using a sutrah in prayer. Some groups understand that the use of a sutrah is obligatory based on the literal interpretation of the hadith. Others, however, understand that the proper use of a sutrah is sunnah, considering the analytical approach to hadith and the differing hadith based on hadith science. This difference of opinion is also found in many fiqh literature from various schools of thought and hadith literature from both early and later scholars.

Those who say it is obligatory to use a sutrah base their opinion on the hadith of Ibn Khuzaimah, which uses an imperative verb indicating that the ruling on using a sutrah is obligatory.

حَدَّثَنَا بُنْدَارٌ ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرِ يَعْنِي الْحَنَفِيَّ ، حَدَّثَنَا الضَّحَّاكُ بْنُ عُثْمَانَ ، حَدَّثَنِي صَدَقَةُ بْنُ يَسَّارٍ ، قَالَ : سَمِعْتُ ابْنَ عُمَرَ ، يَقُولُ : قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ : " لَا تُصَلِّ إِلَّا إِلَى سُتْرَةٍ ، وَلَا تَدْعُ أَحَدًا يَمُرُّ بَيْنَ يَدَيْكَ ، فَإِنْ أَبِي فَلْتُقَاتِلْهُ ؛ فَإِنَّ مَعَهُ الْقَرِينِ " ⁴⁰

Bundar narrated to us, Abu Bakr (al-Hanafi) narrated to us, Adh Dhahhak bin Utsman narrated to us, Shadaqah bin Yassar narrated to us, he said, ‘I heard Ibn Umar say, ‘The Messenger of Allah, may peace and blessings be upon him, said, ‘Do not pray except facing a sutrah, and do not allow anyone to pass in front of you; if they refuse to be stopped, then fight them, for indeed with them is a companion (a devil).’

An absolute command results in an obligatory ruling to perform the act commanded, and to do so as soon as possible.⁴¹ This ruling does not change or become a Sunnah until there is evidence that affects and alters it. However, all hadiths regarding the use of a sutrah indicate the command to use it. As for the hadith indicating that the Prophet once prayed without using a sutrah, it is a weak hadith that cannot be relied upon and cannot change the obligatory ruling of using a sutrah into a sunnah.⁴² Scholars who hold this opinion include Muhammad Nashiruddin al-Albani⁴³, Ibnu Hazm⁴⁴ and asy-Syaukani⁴⁵.

Meanwhile, those who say that the law of using a sutrah is sunnah do so because there is a hadith indicating that the Prophet ﷺ once prayed without using a sutrah in front of him. Even Shu'aib al-Arnauth authenticated this hadith in his commentary on Musnad al-Imam Ahmad.⁴⁶ Similarly, Sheikh Abdul Aziz bin Baaz authenticated the sanad chain of this hadith in his commentary on Bulughul Maram. This serves as strong evidence to shift the obligation of using a sutrah to the status of a sunnah.⁴⁷ The Scholars who adopt this opinion include

⁴⁰ Ishaq ibn Khuzaimah As-Sulami an-Naisaburi, ‘Mukhtashar Al-Mukhtashar Min al-Musnad Ash-Shahih ‘an an-Nabi ﷺ,’ vol. 2 (Riyadh: Daar Al-Miimaan, 2009), 51.

⁴¹ Muhammad ibn Shalih al-Utsaimin, ‘Al-Ushul Min ‘Ilmi al-Ushul’ (Alexandria: Daar al-Iman, 2001), 18.

⁴² Farih ibn Shalih al-Bahlal, *Ithaf Al-Ikhwab Bi Ahkam Ash-Salat Ila as-Sutrah* (Riyadh: Daar al-Atsar, 1993), 74.

⁴³ Muhammad Nashiruddin al-Albani, *Tamaam Al-Minah Fi at-Ta’liq ‘Ala Fiqh as-Sunnah* (Oman: Daar ar-Rayah, n.d.), 300.

⁴⁴ Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Sa’id ibn Hazm, *Maratib Al-Ijma’* (Beirut: Daar al-Kitab al-‘Ilmiyah, n.d.), 30.

⁴⁵ Muhammad ibn ‘Ali asy-Syaukani, *As-Sail Al-Jarrar*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Daar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyah, n.d.), 176.

⁴⁶ Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Hanbal, *Musnad Al-Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal*, vol. 3 (Beirut: Muassasah ar-Risalah, 1995), 431.

⁴⁷ Abdul ‘Aziz ibn ‘Abdillah ibn Baaz, *Hasyiyah ‘ala Bulugh al-Maram* (Riyadh: Daar al-Imtiyaz, 2004), 185.

asy-Syafi'i⁴⁸, Abu Hanifah⁴⁹, an-Nawawi⁵⁰, Ibnu Qudamah⁵¹, Abu Malik Kamal ibn as-Sayyid Salim⁵², Ibnu Abdi al-Baar⁵³, and other scholars.

The differences in the use of sutrah in prayer among the As-Sunnah Islamic College community do not cause conflict among them, but rather enrich the religious understanding of the campus community. This is also evident in that, despite their differences regarding the ruling on using sutrah in prayer, they remain united in practising this hadith of the Prophet ﷺ. They always strive to apply the values taught by the Prophet ﷺ in his hadith to their lives. There is a sense of incompleteness, awkwardness, or even anxiety when they begin prayer without a sutrah in front of them or when they lose the sutrah during prayer, and this can indeed occur.

The practice of the hadith and the use of a sutrah in prayer in this environment is also influenced by the mindset and perspective of the As-Sunnah Islamic College community regarding acts of worship that are considered sunnah, such as using a sutrah during prayer. Most Muslims believe that sunnah acts are merely deeds that, when performed, earn reward, and when neglected, do not result in sin or punishment. Due to such arguments, sunnah acts like using a sutrah in prayer remain rarely practised among Muslims. This contrasts with the community at As-Sunnah Islamic College, who demonstrate high enthusiasm and dedication in performing acts that are merely sunnah in nature. They believe that a Muslim who consistently performs sunnah acts in their life and maintains them can become the most perfect follower of the Prophet ﷺ.⁵⁴

Based on direct observation and field documentation, it was found that the practice of using sutrah in prayer by the academic community of As-Sunnah Islamic College Deli Serdang is quite diverse but consistent. Not only in the college mosque, this sutrah practice is also often seen in the corridors of lecture buildings, dormitory buildings, and even in students' private rooms. They appear accustomed to using sutrah during prayer, whether in congregational prayer where the sutrah is placed in front of the imam alone, or when praying alone during sunnah prayers.⁵⁵ During congregational prayers, the sutrah—a specially made board for this purpose—is placed in front of the imam, and the congregation does not need to use a sutrah, as the imam's sutrah also serves as the sutrah for those behind him.⁵⁶ The shape and placement of the sutrah for the imam can be seen in the following image,

⁴⁸ Muhammad ibn Idris asy-Syafi'i, "Ikhtilaf Al-Hadis," in *Al-Umm* (Beirut: Daar al-Fikr, 1990), 623.

⁴⁹ Muhammad ibn Al-Hasan asy-Syaibani, *Kitab Al-Hujjah 'Ala Ahli al-Madinah* (Beirut: 'Alam al-Kutub, n.d.), 88.

⁵⁰ Yahya ibn Syaraf an-Nawawi, *Kitab Al-Majmu' Syarh Al-Muhadzab Li Asy-Syairaa'zi*, vol. 3 (Jeddah: Maktabah Al-Irsyad, n.d.), 226.

⁵¹ Al-Maqdisi, "Al-Mughni," 80.

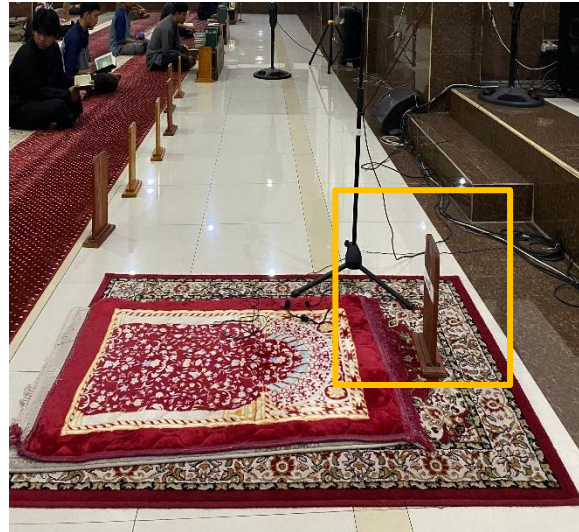
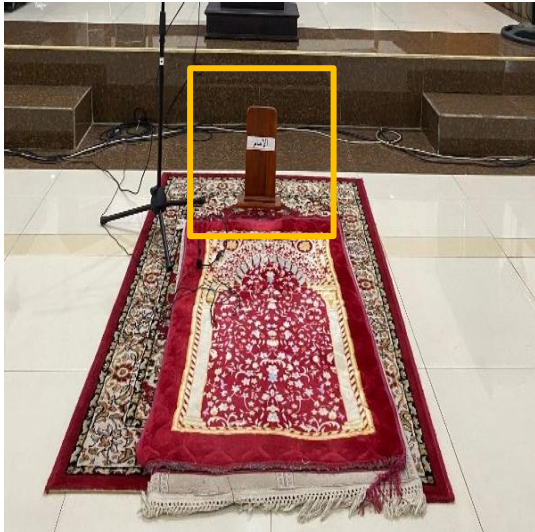
⁵² Abu Malik Kamal ibn as-Sayyid Salim, *Shahih Fiqh As-Sunnah*, vol. 1 (al-Maktabah at-Taufiqiyah, n.d.), 342.

⁵³ Yusuf ibn Abdillah ibn Muhammad ibn Abdi al-Baar, *At-Tambid*, vol. 4 (Maroko: Wizarah 'Umum al-Auqaf wa asy-Syu'un al-Islamiah, n.d.), 193.

⁵⁴ Ahmad ibn Abdil Halim ibn Taimiyah ad-Dimasqi, *Al-'Ubudiyah* (Beirut: Al-Maktab Al-Islami, 2005), 116.

⁵⁵ Shalih ibn Fauzan ibn Abdullah Aly Fauzan, *Kitab Ash-Salat* (Kairo: Daar al-Imam Ahmad, 2013), 56.

⁵⁶ al-Bukhari, "Shahih Al-Bukhari," 130.



picture 1: Sutrah for Imam (a special board for sutrah)

The practice of using sutrah in prayer is more commonly seen in individual sunnah prayers. Typically, members of As-Sunnah Islamic College who wish to perform prayer will first look for an object that can be used as a sutrah. They usually pray facing a wall or pillar of the mosque as their sutrah. Other objects commonly used as sutrah include Quran stands, fans, bottles, or bags that are tall enough to serve as sutrah, donation boxes, and specially made boards designed for this purpose. Even other people can be used as sutrah. This can be seen in the following image,



Picture 3: Other people as a sutrah



Picture 4: a bag for sutrah



Picture 5: Mushaf rack as sutrah



Picture 6: Donation box as sutrah



Picture 7: Mosque pillar as sutrah



Picture 8: a special board made for sutrah



Picture 9: a bottle as a sutrah



Picture 10: The students of As-Sunnah Islamic College perform the praying with sutrah

The practice of using a sutrah during prayer by the community of As-Sunnah Islamic College Deli Serdang, using various objects, is an implementation of the hadiths of Prophet

Muhammad ﷺ related to the sutrah. The Prophet ﷺ provided several examples of objects that can be used as sutrah in his hadith, such as walls⁵⁷, pillars⁵⁸, arrows⁵⁹, spears⁶⁰, beds⁶¹, mounted animals⁶² and many others. In addition to the objects mentioned by the Prophet ﷺ in his hadith, the Prophet ﷺ provided guidelines for determining the standard size and height of objects that can be used as sutrah in prayer, namely as high as a piece of wood placed on the back of a mount, or in Arabic, مؤخرة الرجل.⁶³ An-Nawawi, when explaining this hadith, stated that the height is approximately two-thirds of a cubit.⁶⁴ A cubit is a measurement starting from the tip of the elbow to the tip of the middle finger.⁶⁵

In practice, there is another type of sutrah commonly used and employed as a sutrah during prayer at As-Sunnah Islamic College, which is another person or the back of another person. This is a common sight when in the As-Sunnah Islamic College's environment, especially in the campus mosque. This is based on the general hadith of the Prophet ﷺ regarding the standard size and height of objects that can be used as a sutrah, and many scholars also permit this. Ibn Hajar argued that using another person as a sutrah is permissible as long as the person can pray peacefully and is not disturbed by the sutrah⁶⁶ Ibn Qudamah also states that it is permissible to use another person as a sutrah for prayer. It is narrated that Ibn Umar could not find a way to reach the mosque pillar and pray there, so he instructed someone to stand behind him, allowing Ibn Umar to pray facing the person's back.⁶⁷

The application of the sutrah hadith at As-Sunnah Islamic College does not stop there. Several hadiths related to and intersecting with the sutrah hadith, which even become a necessity and consequence in the practice of the sutrah hadith, are the hadiths about the command to approach the sutrah during prayer. The command to approach the sutrah has been mentioned earlier, namely the hadith narrated by Abu Daud, in which the Prophet ﷺ commanded to pray facing the sutrah and to approach it, meaning that the distance between the person praying and the sutrah should not be too far, as this would defeat the purpose of the sutrah as a barrier to prevent others from passing through, nor should it be too close, as this would make it difficult to perform the movements of prayer, such as prostration. The Prophet ﷺ mentioned that the distance should be as wide as a path for a goat⁶⁸ or approximately three cubits.⁶⁹

Another hadith practice related to and intersecting with the sutrah hadith is preventing and blocking others from passing in front of someone who is praying. This hadith practice cannot be separated from the issue of sutrah, as this hadith serves as the purpose and objective of the sutrah practice in prayer, where the presence of sutrah is intended to act as a barrier to

⁵⁷ al-Bukhari, 131.

⁵⁸ al-Bukhari, 132.

⁵⁹ Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Hanbal, *Musnad Al-Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal*, vol. 24 (Beirut: Muassasah ar-Risalah, 1995), 57.

⁶⁰ Muslim ibnu al-Hajjaj, *Shahih Muslim* (Riyadh: Darut Thayyibah, 2006), 228.

⁶¹ al-Hajjaj, 233.

⁶² al-Hajjaj, 229.

⁶³ al-Hajjaj, 228.

⁶⁴ Yahya ibn Syaraf an-Nawawi, *Shahih Muslim Bi Syarh An-Nawawi* (Kairo: Al-Mathba'ah Al-Mishriyah, 1929), 216.

⁶⁵ Muhammad Rawas Qal'ahji, *Mu'jam Lughah al-Fuqaha* (Beirut: Daar an-Nafais, 1996), 190.

⁶⁶ Ahmad ibn 'Ali ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, *Fathul Baari Bi Syarh Shahih Al-Bukhari* (Damaskus: Daar ar-Risalah al-'Alamiyah, 2013), 453.

⁶⁷ Al-Maqdisi, "Al-Mughni," 85.

⁶⁸ al-Bukhari, "Shahih Al-Bukhari," 131.

⁶⁹ Muhammad ibn Shalih al-'Utsaimin, *Syarh Shahih Al-Bukhari* (Kairo: Al-Maktabah Al-Islamiyah li An-Nasyr wa At-Tauzi', 2008), 403.

prevent others from disrupting someone's prayer by passing in front of them. This hadith serves as a clarification: if there are people who are unaware or insist on passing in front of someone who is praying, they must be prevented and stopped from doing so. The Prophet ﷺ strongly emphasised this issue in his hadith by commanding that those who wish to pass in front of someone praying should be firmly and forcefully stopped. The Prophet ﷺ even referred to such individuals as devils.⁷⁰ When such incidents occur, the community at the As-Sunnah Islamic College typically blocks the person attempting to pass by extending their hands forward and holding them back to prevent them from proceeding. This may occur in the STAI As-Sunnah environment because the person passing by is unaware and does not know that someone is praying. Therefore, once they become aware or are prevented from passing, they will not cross in front of the person praying and will seek an alternative route. The research findings indicate that As-Sunnah Islamic College is an educational environment that emphasises the importance of reviving the Sunnah and practising the Prophet's hadiths. In this context, it is clear and evident how the hadith on sutrah in prayer is implemented very well in this environment. Even the living hadith of sutrah at As-Sunnah Islamic College is not limited to its use in prayer, but the hadith related to sutrah are also practised and implemented in daily life, such as approaching the sutrah and blocking those who pass in front of someone praying. This further emphasises that the living hadith about sutrah at As-Sunnah Islamic College Deli Serdang truly exists and is consistently practised.

The implementation of the hadith about sutrah at As-Sunnah Islamic College did not happen overnight; there are factors that influence it, such as the environment, where the strengthening of Sunnah values is an integral part of the institution's vision. This habit-forming activity is supported by the example set by faculty members, senior students, and dormitory supervisors, who consistently remind students to maintain proper prayer etiquette, including the use of sutrah. Additionally, there is a good understanding and knowledge of the hadith regarding sutrah, including its legal rulings, theories, and practices. The availability of facilities also plays a significant supporting role. At As-Sunnah Islamic College, especially in the college mosque, it is easy to obtain objects that can be used as sutrah, and the mosque management has even created special boards for sutrah, further facilitating the practice of the hadith on sutrah. This systemic support demonstrates the integration between normative understanding (*nash*) and practical implementation (*amal*), in line with the living hadith approach.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the practice of using sutrah in prayer at As-Sunnah Islamic College Deli Serdang is a concrete example of the application of living hadith in contemporary Islamic academic communities. The awareness of the academic community regarding the importance of using sutrah does not only stem from theoretical learning but is also supported by a consistent environmental habit that emphasises the implementation of the Prophet's Sunnah in daily practices. The involvement of the campus administration, along with a Sunnah-based curriculum, reinforces this practice as campus culture, aligning with experts' views on how hadith can transform into living social practices (living hadith). This study reinforces the understanding that living hadith is not only found in traditional culture but can also be systematically developed within formal educational environments based on the Qur'an and Sunnah. The implementation model at As-Sunnah Islamic College can serve as a reference for other Islamic educational institutions in reviving the values of

⁷⁰ Abu Abdillah Muhammad ibnu Yazid al-Qazwiniy, *Sunan Ibnu Majah*, vol. 1 (Kairo: Daar Ihya Al-Kutub Al-'Arabiyah, 1918), 307.

hadith within academic and religious-social frameworks. Recommendations for future research include conducting similar studies at other educational institutions with different characteristics to enrich the body of research on living hadith across various social, cultural, and educational contexts.

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