

Ḥadīth as an Epistemological Authority and the Challenge of the Politicization of Religion: A Critical Reading of Fouad Zakariyya's Critique of Islamism in *Myth and Reality in the Contemporary Islamist Movement*

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Abstract: This article offers a critical analysis of Fouad Zakariyya's thought as articulated in his work *Myth and Reality in the Contemporary Islamist Movement*, employing analytical frameworks derived from ḥadīth studies. Zakariyya argues that contemporary Islamist social movements function as ideologically constructed bridges that exploit and instrumentalize religious symbols and texts, including ḥadīth, to legitimize particular political agendas. Through an epistemology of ḥadīth that encompasses *naqd al-isnād* and *naqd al-matn* (chain and content criticism), as well as historical contextual analysis, this study contends that Zakariyya tends to epistemologically oversimplify religious texts, including ḥadīth, by reducing them to mere ideological instruments, without adequately recognizing ḥadīth as a normative Islamic scholarly discourse endowed with a well-established internal critical tradition. Ḥadīth and Islamic religious texts are not instruments for justifying authoritarian governance that is resistant to critique; rather, they constitute normative ethical values that remain open to moral evaluation and contextual interpretation. This study argues that the core problem in the phenomenon of Islamism does not lie in ḥadīth as a source of normative Islamic teaching, but in the selective and ideologically driven socio-political reception of ḥadīth. These findings underscore the importance of drawing a clear distinction between the epistemological authority of religious texts, including ḥadīth, and their actualization, appropriation, and interpretation within socio-political dynamics that are inherently subject to change over time.

Keywords: Ḥadīth; Fouad Zakariyya; Social movement; Islamism; Ḥadīth Epistemology; Islamic Politics.

Introduction

Studies and research on religious texts, including the Qur'ān and ḥadīth, demonstrate a high degree of interconnectedness with the dynamics of political power, ideology, and social movements. Within the context of Indonesian politics, some observers view the large-scale gathering known as the *Reuni Akbar 212* (2 December 2025) as an illustration of this interaction (Tempo.co, 2025). In the area of Monas, Jakarta, this phenomenon essentially represents a form of social movement that demonstrates a process of politicizing religious texts as a medium for pursuing political power, either implicitly or explicitly. This indicates that religious texts, namely Qur'ānic verses and ḥadīths, function as instruments that exert significant influence over particular social groups, motivating them to mobilize and undertake efforts toward social change, including the attainment of political power directly or indirectly in order to realize a shared collective vision that has become a dominant discourse within the group.

Within the context of social movements, religious texts, including ḥadīth literature, are no longer positioned solely as sources of normative religious-legal discourse; rather, they also operate as media or instruments of legitimation within the political social movements of Islam in various countries. One Islamic thinker who articulated a direct and forceful critique of the politicization of religion in support of power is Fouad Zakariyya. In his work *Myth and Reality in the Contemporary Islamist Movement*, Fouad Zakariyya asserts that processes of Islamization and the activists of Islamic political movements effectively construct religious texts, including ḥadīths, as ideological myths employed as tools to justify agendas of power. In his view, religious texts, including ḥadīths, are treated as ahistorical sacred texts, resulting in a deadlock of rationality, resistance to critique, and an understanding of texts that tends toward rigid textualism.

Fouad Zakariyya's critique of Islamization thus gives rise to a fundamental scholarly and epistemological problem: namely, whether religious texts, including ḥadīths, as products of a scholarly discipline, are inherently ideological in nature, or whether the problem instead lies in the ways these texts are understood, socially received, contextualized, and actualized within socio-political spheres. This article proceeds from the assumption that Fouad Zakariyya does not adequately distinguish between these two aspects; consequently, his critiques tend to imply a delegitimization of the epistemology of religious texts, including ḥadīths, as an autonomous scholarly system.

In Fouad Zakariyya's view, the state should not ground its policies in religious texts or religious principles, which by definition would include ḥadīth texts. For him, when states abandon secularism, they become less independent and more susceptible to external interests. Secularism, therefore, is regarded as a necessity for states in the realm of international relations, whereas religion-based states are seen as generating disadvantages and serious disruptions that are detrimental to the conduct of international relations (Zakariyya, 2005, p. 44).

According to Fouad Zakariyya, if international relations among states are founded upon religious values, public loyalty will ultimately be directed toward religious teachings rather than toward the state itself. For example, the loyalty of Muslim communities in the Philippines would shift toward Indonesia, while Christian communities in Lebanon would redirect their allegiance toward France, and so forth (Zakariyya, 2005, p. 44).

In Fouad Zakariyya's view, any international association or alliance founded upon Islamic religious principles would inevitably give rise to parallel alliances or associations based on Christian beliefs, a dynamic that would serve as a catalyst for international disputes and conflicts among nations and states (Zakariyya, 2005, p. 44).

According to the author, Fouad Zakariyya's assertion that loyalty to the state should not be grounded in religious values because it may lead to sectarianism that harms the state and triggers interstate conflict is not entirely accurate. Islamic religious texts, such as the Prophetic ḥadīths, in fact call their adherents to remain firmly committed to noble values of truth, humanity, and justice that are universal in nature. Loyalty to the state and its government is indeed strongly emphasized in religious texts; however, this obligation is accompanied by clear qualifications, namely, that such loyalty must remain aligned with universal moral principles. When a state and its government cross the red line of injustice, the people are not permitted to support or justify the state through blind allegiance. Absolute loyalty and unconditional defense of the state, regardless of the values of justice and truth, constitute a form of harmful blind fanaticism that is strongly condemned in Islamic religious teachings. For this reason, the State of Israel, which has committed brutal acts of injustice against the people of Gaza, must not be supported by its citizens or residents, because injustice remains injustice and must be opposed, even when it is perpetrated by a government of the same nation, ethnicity, or state.

Before his prophethood, the Messenger of God ﷺ, despite belonging to the prominent Quraysh tribe, strongly condemned the actions of a Quraysh leader who refused to pay his debt to a merchant from a non-Quraysh tribe after having already received the goods. This Quraysh figure committed a clear act of injustice and, moreover, sought to shield himself behind the political power and dominance of the Quraysh tribe over other Arab tribes. In response, the Prophet ﷺ, together with several Quraysh leaders who still upheld universal values of justice and humanity beyond tribal and territorial boundaries, participated in the establishment of a noble pact known as Ḥilf al-Fuḍūl (the Ethical Pact), convened at the house of a Quraysh notable named 'Abd Allāh ibn Jud'ān. The essence of this pact was a firm rejection of all forms of injustice, regardless of the perpetrator, and the restoration of the rights of the oppressed, irrespective of their tribe or social status.

The Messenger of God ﷺ consistently remembered this event and treated it as a universal moral guideline for his community, so that they would not fall into blind allegiance to tribe, nation, state, or group without regard for the higher values of truth, justice, and humanity. The Prophet ﷺ later recalled this pact by saying:

((لَقَدْ شَهِدْتُ فِي دَارِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ جُدْعَانَ حِلْفًا، مَا أَحَبُّ أَنْ لِي بِهِ خُمْرَ النَّعَمِ، وَلَوْ أَدْعَى بِهِ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ لَأَجَبْتُ))

“I indeed once personally witnessed a ḥilf (covenant) at the house of 'Abd Allāh ibn Jud'ān. I would not exchange it for anything of great value, even red camels. Were I to be invited to a covenant of this kind in Islam today, I would certainly respond to it wholeheartedly.” (Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, n.d., ḥadīth no. 1655; al-Albānī, 1998, p. 44; al-Bayhaqī, 2003, vol. 6, p. 596; Ibn Hishām, n.d., vol. 1, pp. 134–136).

Thus, this report clearly teaches Muslims that absolute loyalty and unconditional defense are to be directed toward the values of justice, rather than toward allegiance based on tribe, race, or state. Islam, therefore, firmly affirms moral teachings and values that are universal in nature, while simultaneously rejecting and decisively repudiating all forms of blind loyalty or narrow fanaticism grounded in group, tribal, or national affiliations. This is because the core message of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ is *rahmatan li-l-‘ālamīn* a source of mercy and universal goodness for all of creation.

Fouad Zakariyya and His Critique of Islamism

Fouad Zakariyya's thesis emerges from the tradition of Arab rationalist movements that tend to incline toward secularism and view religious texts as historical and symbolic constructions. Within Zakariyya's analytical framework, Islamism is positioned as an ideology that employs religious texts to pursue particular political agendas. He directs sharp criticism at several key calls of Islamist movements, including the demand for the comprehensive implementation of Sharī'ah values in governance, the notion of legitimizing political authority on the basis of divine sanction, and the Islamist tendency to absolutize Islamic values or texts by portraying Islam as a complete and flawless system. In his view, the slogans of Islamist movements significantly restrict the space for rational thought and serve to entrench and consolidate ideological influence and dominance.

In this context, religious values and texts including ḥadīth are not understood as scholarly norms endowed with diverse methodologies and critical analytical tools, but are instead transformed into “symbolic power,” ideologically produced to construct and sustain myths of Islamic political authority. Although this critical thesis offers substantial benefits for analyzing the relationship between religious texts and political power, Zakariyya's analysis becomes problematic when it fails to distinguish between religious texts as foundational sources of normative teachings within the Islamic tradition and religious texts as symbols that, according to empirical

historical evidence, have at times been falsified or manipulated in the practices of certain groups seeking to attain political power.

Theoretical Framework: Ḥadīth Epistemology

Religious texts, including the teachings of the Prophet known as ḥadīth, are not positioned merely as accumulations of normative narratives transmitted textually from one generation to another. Rather, they constitute a structured epistemic system a complex and well-organized architecture of knowledge grounded in rigorous scholarly principles. Over time, ḥadīth texts have been subjected to sustained critical examination, a process that necessitates caution and methodological precision in the application of scientific procedures to determine their validity, given the significant influence of ḥadīth on the formation of beliefs, ideological doctrines, and the social practices and movements of the Muslim community.

The high level of scholarly awareness among Muslim scholars emerged in response to concrete historical realities in which ḥadīth texts were highly susceptible to distortion or deviation, whether through errors in transmission across generations or through manipulation by individuals in positions of power. Accordingly, the history of ḥadīth textual traditions and scholarship represents a social and intellectual response by Muslim scholars aimed at continuously safeguarding the authenticity of the teachings of the Prophet Muḥammad from the actions of certain social groups that seek to manipulate and politicize ḥadīth texts practices that would inevitably undermine the integrity, beauty, and universal character of Islamic teachings (al-A'zamī, 1977, pp. 3–15).

Therefore, the epistemology of ḥadīth science is firmly grounded in methodological components and instruments that mutually reinforce one another and operate in layered, systematic processes. The most urgent foundation is *naqd al-sanad*, which is the methodology for critically examining the chain of transmission (*isnād*) of a ḥadīth by assessing the credibility, moral integrity, and intellectual capacity of each narrator. Using the method of *al-jarḥ wa al-ta'dīl*, ḥadīth scholars develop rules and scientific standards to evaluate the validity of the transmission process, ensuring that the authenticity of a ḥadīth is not influenced by manipulators such as social or political power holders, but rather determined through rational and scientific verification. The second foundational element in ḥadīth studies is *naqd al-matn*, which involves critical analysis of the content of a ḥadīth. This process examines the coherence, rationality, and alignment of the content with the fundamental principles of the Qur'an and other ḥadīth whose authenticity has already been verified. This perspective and analytical approach indicate that the acceptance or authenticity of a ḥadīth should not be confined solely to the validity of its isnād; it must also pass rigorous content and meaning validation (Itr, 1997, pp. 27–45; Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, n.d., pp. 98–112).

Furthermore, within the context of ḥadīth epistemology, there is what is called *fiqh* or *sharḥ al-ḥadīth*, which refers to the effort and capacity to thoroughly comprehend the values and meanings contained in ḥadīth by meticulously tracing their historical context, social realities, and the higher objectives of Islam. Using this analytical tool, ḥadīth texts should not be received or understood merely textually; rather, they must be interpreted in accordance with changing circumstances without compromising the fundamental values and principles embedded within the ḥadīth. This methodology demonstrates that the scholarly tradition of ḥadīth is inherently critical and actively opposes the mythologization of texts without proper foundation. It also refutes unilateral claims by those who assert absolute authority over religious texts. Consequently, ḥadīth texts function as a wellspring or source of moral and ethical guidance, remaining open to rational and responsible interpretation, and are by no means instruments to legitimize political power.

Ḥadīth and Power Relations: Normative Function in Limiting Authority

Why does Fouad Zakariyya strongly oppose the implementation of Islamic sharia in state governance? The answer lies in the historical record of Islamic state practices, which he considered bleak. Fouad stated that Iran and Sudan are two countries that recently experimented with the implementation of Islamic sharia, which, in his assessment, failed. Furthermore, there is a long series of historical attempts in other Islamic countries such as Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Libya. According to Fouad, all efforts by proponents of sharia implementation in these Islamic states converge on an undeniable outcome: Islamic governance systems consistently fail to be **maqṭū'** that is, they remain disconnected or severed from freedom, equality, justice, and all values that religion inherently seeks to uphold (Zakariyya, 2005, p. 4).

The existence of individuals, social movements, congregations, or Islamic political parties that deviate from the values of Islamic religious texts should not be used as instruments to legitimize or justify the dangers and harms of implementing religious texts or sharia in state governance.

This perspective is markedly different from that of Fouad Zakariyya, who positions religious texts, including ḥadīth, as tools for ideological legitimization of power. In contrast, authentic ḥadīth from Prophet Muhammad ﷺ contain normative principles designed to limit, correct, and supervise political authority. Within this framework, ḥadīth do not function as instruments for sacralizing authority but serve as sources of public ethics that critically engage with political domination.

1. Refutation of the Claim of Absolute Obedience

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said:

((لَا طَاعَةَ لِمَخْلُوقٍ فِي مَعْصِيَةِ الْخَالِقِ))

“There is no obedience to any created being in disobedience to the Creator.” (Narrated by Ahmad) (Ahmad ibn Hanbal, 2001, vol. 2, p. 86, hadith no. 1095).

From the perspective of ḥadīth epistemology, this narration explicitly rejects the concept of unlimited obedience to political authority. Even when power is framed through religious symbols and discourse, such legitimacy remains conditional and subject to ethical-transcendental norms. Thus, ḥadīth functions as a normative mechanism that restricts claims of absolute authority rather than reinforcing them.

Furthermore, any authoritarian policy or stance by a state claiming to implement Islamic ideology or Shari‘ah constitutes a misuse of power and trust, which must be corrected and prevented with utmost effort, while still considering the aspects of *maṣlaḥah* (benefit) and *mafsadah* (harm) within the framework of *amr bi-l-ma‘rūf wa nahy ‘an al-munkar*. This does not, however, marginalize the role of religion in governance. Enforcement of Shari‘ah at the state or legislative level alone, without awareness and acceptance from the people or its adherents, will inevitably lead to imbalance and social instability.

For instance, when an *amīr* (commander) was appointed by the Prophet ﷺ as the head of the Islamic state in Madinah, but then misused his leadership over the Muslim troops and acted tyrannically toward his subordinates while claiming his authority came from the Prophet, the Prophet ﷺ explicitly forbade obedience and compliance with such a commander’s orders. Imam al-Bukhārī narrates in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* an account sourced from the Companion ‘Alī ibn Abī Tālib:

أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بَعَثَ جَيْشًا، وَأَمَرَ عَلَيْهِمْ رَجُلًا، فَأَوْقَدَ نَارًا، وَقَالَ: ادْخُلُوهَا. فَأَرَادُوا أَنْ يَدْخُلُوهَا، وَقَالَ آخَرُونَ: إِنَّمَا قُرْزَنَا مِنْهَا. فَذَكَرُوا لِلنَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَقَالَ لِلَّذِينَ أَرَادُوا أَنْ يَدْخُلُوهَا: "لَوْ دَخَلُوهَا لَمْ يَزَالُوا فِيهَا إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ". وَقَالَ لِآخَرِينَ: "لَا طَاعَةَ فِي مَعْصِيَةٍ، إِنَّمَا الطَّاعَةُ فِي الْمَعْرُوفِ". (al-Bukhārī, 1422 AH, hadith no. 7250)

In this ḥadīth, ‘Alī ibn Abī Tālib narrated that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ once sent a detachment of Muslim soldiers and appointed an *amīr* (commander) to lead them. In one narration, the leader’s name was ‘Abdullāh ibn Ḥudẓafah. One day, ‘Abdullāh ibn Ḥudẓafah commanded the soldiers to light a fire and said to them: “Enter into the fire!” Some of the subordinates nearly obeyed and stepped into the flames. Fortunately, others reminded them and expressed their refusal to follow their superior’s order, as it was clearly dangerous and harmful to themselves. They understood that Islam does not instruct its followers to harm or kill themselves without a legitimate reason, even if the command comes from a Muslim leader. When this incident reached the Prophet ﷺ, he clarified that obedience to a Muslim leader is only required in matters that are *ma‘rūf* (good and proper) and in accordance with authentic religious texts. Obedience does not extend to actions based on religious texts that have been misused or manipulated by the leader.

2. Normative Vigilance Against the Politicization of Religion

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ also said:

((إِنَّ أَخَوْفَ مَا أَخَافُ عَلَى أُمَّتِي الْأَيْمَةَ الْمُضِلِّينَ))

“Indeed, what I fear most for my ummah are the leaders who lead them astray.” (Reported by Ahmad) (Ahmad ibn Hanbal, 2001, vol. 38, p. 455, hadith no. 23128)

This hadith conveys that governmental authority, from the perspective of hadith, is not to be regarded as an element immune to criticism. On the contrary, rulers or governments are precisely placed within a domain of normative scrutiny, especially when religious texts are mobilized as instruments of ideological justification. This perspective underscores the critical stance of hadith regarding the potential misuse of religion within the political sphere. The hadith of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ explicitly states that the greatest concern for the ummah is the emergence of misleading leaders (*al-a‘immat al-muḍillīn*), conveying a profound moral message about the relationship between power and religion. This prophetic declaration indicates that the greatest threat to the Muslim community does not necessarily come from external forces but can arise from internal authorities who abuse their leadership positions. Thus, the hadith positions leadership as an ethical issue that must always be critically monitored within collective communal life.

From the hadith perspective, political authority is not understood as a sacred institution exempt from moral evaluation or social correction. On the contrary, power is treated as a sphere vulnerable to deviation, particularly when religious claims are used as the basis for legitimizing policies or political actions. Implicitly, this hadith rejects the notion of absolute obedience to leaders without considering the dimensions of truth, justice, and public welfare, which are fundamental principles of Islamic teaching.

Furthermore, the Prophet’s warning can be read as a form of normative vigilance against the politicization of religion that is, when religion is reduced to an ideological instrument to perpetuate power domination. Within this framework, hadith functions as a source of internal critique, emphasizing the importance of safeguarding religion from political manipulation. Therefore, the hadith tradition serves not only as a spiritual guide but also as an ethical mechanism to limit and correct the use of religion in political domains, ensuring it does not deviate

from the moral values of Islam.

3. The Ethics of Power and the Principle of Accountability

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ also said:

((كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ))

“Each of you is a shepherd, and each of you will be held accountable for his flock.” (Reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim) (al-Bukhārī, 1422 AH, hadith no. 7138; Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj, n.d., hadith no. 1829)”

This authentic narration asserts that every individual is a leader and will be held accountable for their leadership, embodying a fundamental principle of the ethics of power in Islam. This statement indicates that leadership is not merely a structural or administrative position but a moral responsibility inherent in every social role. Consequently, the concept of leadership in the ḥadīth is not limited to formal rulers but encompasses all actors who hold authority, whether in public or private spheres.

Within this framework, power is understood as a trust (*amānah*) that necessitates accountability, both before humans and before God. The ḥadīth explicitly shifts the understanding of authority from merely a right to command to a duty to manage and protect those under one’s responsibility. As a result, authority is not sacred or immune from critique but is open to ethical evaluation based on justice, welfare, and social responsibility.

Furthermore, this ḥadīth situates power within a normative framework that constrains tendencies toward absolutism. The principle of accountability it contains serves as a moral mechanism to prevent the abuse of authority and the accumulation of unchecked power. Thus, the ḥadīth tradition provides an ethical foundation for political life, emphasizing the balance between authority and responsibility while reinforcing the legitimacy of critique against power that deviates from Islamic moral values.

Epistemological Critique of Ḥadīth on Fouad Zakariyya’s Thought

1. Reductionism at the Epistemological Level

One fundamental issue in Fouad Zakariyya’s thought is his tendency to equate the ideological utilization of religious texts, including ḥadīth, in the political domain with the intrinsic character of ḥadīth as a source of scholarly knowledge. This approach reflects a serious epistemological error, as it disregards the existence of an internal critical tradition that has long developed within the ḥadīth discipline. By treating ḥadīth merely as an ideological product, Fouad Zakariyya overlooks the mechanisms of verification and epistemic control that constitute the core foundation of ḥadīth scholarship.

2. Marginalization of the Ḥadīth Criticism Tradition with Political Content

Throughout the historical development of ḥadīth texts, there has been a strong awareness among Islamic scholars of the dangers posed by the production of mawdū’ (fabricated) ḥadīth motivated by political power interests. From the early periods, ḥadīth scholars constructed and developed methodological tools aimed at identifying, accepting, or disqualifying ḥadīth reports that emerged from the womb of political ambition. These historical facts and data strongly emphasize that the politicization of religious texts is not a phenomenon overlooked or outside the analytical scope of ḥadīth scholars; on the contrary, it became one of the main reasons for the emergence of critical discourse on ḥadīth criticism.

3. Generalization of the Concept of “Islamism”

Another problem in Fouad Zakariyya’s analysis lies in his tendency to treat Islamism as a single, homogeneous entity. His generalized analysis neglects the diversity of orientations, forms, and contexts in the reception or interpretation of ḥadīth texts and other religious texts across the spectrum of political Islamic movements. In reality, the actualization and interpretation of ḥadīth texts within Islamism are influenced by many factors, including social, historical, and cultural variations, and therefore cannot be reduced to a single, uniform ideological model.

Discussion: Ḥadīth as a Living Tradition

The phenomenon of Islamism can be more accurately understood through the framework of *living ḥadīth*, an approach that situates ḥadīth and religious texts not merely as static sacred texts, but as a tradition that continuously evolves, undergoing cycles of reception, interpretation, and actualization across diverse social movement contexts. From this perspective, ḥadīth and religious texts are read as forms and components of practices agreed upon by Muslim communities, always shaped by temporal changes, social structures, and configurations of power within a society. Therefore, the meaning and function of religious texts should not be

assumed to exist in a vacuum; rather, they are continuously guided by the relationship between the text, the interpreter (*mufasssir*), and the socio-political context of the surrounding community.

By applying the analytical lens of *living ḥadīth*, the issue of Islamism cannot be reduced to religious texts, including ḥadīth, as the primary source of Islamic teachings. Instead, attention must be directed to the long socio-political processes through which ḥadīth and other religious texts are actualized within discourses of power at specific historical moments, including in the modern era. This analysis facilitates the identification of mechanisms of selection and interpretation of ḥadīth texts employed by political actors to legitimize particular interests. In this context, ḥadīth texts may become symbolic legitimization tools, with meanings reconstructed according to political actors' objectives, rather than reflecting directly the epistemology of the ḥadīth and religious texts themselves.

Furthermore, the *living ḥadīth* analytical approach enables a proportional and fair critique (*inshāf*) of the malpractice of ḥadīth texts in political arenas without delegitimizing ḥadīth as the foundational normative pillar of Muslim belief. This perspective clearly distinguishes between the epistemic authority of religious texts, including ḥadīth, as a scientific discipline within Islamic tradition and the socio-political practices that misuse these texts. Therefore, critiques of Islamism can be more accurately directed toward changes in social and geopolitical dynamics that shape the production of meaning in ḥadīth texts, while simultaneously reinforcing the status of ḥadīth as the normative and ethical foundation within the Islamic tradition.

Conclusion

This study concludes that Fouad Zakariyya has made a significant contribution in exposing and deconstructing the tendency to mythologize religious texts, including ḥadīth, within the political behavior of modern Islamic rulers. His critique effectively demonstrates how calls to religious narratives are often misused to maintain and achieve political power in governance. While this reflects a social movement reality, Zakariyya's research does not fully analyze the distinction between religious texts as normative sources including ḥadīth as an epistemic inheritance of Islamic tradition, which inherently contains methods of evaluation, critique, and internal control over religious practice.

From the ḥadīth perspective, the issue of Islamism as a social movement cannot be understood merely as a problem of textual religious values, which Zakariyya argues cannot serve as foundational principles in governance. In reality, the problem is more accurately analyzed as an issue of reception, interpretation, and practice specifically, how religious texts, including ḥadīth, are selected, interpreted, and actualized within the framework of socio-political movements at particular historical moments. Islamic ḥadīth and religious texts are not instruments to justify governance that is resistant to critique or feedback; rather, they represent noble values that remain open to continuous study and evaluation in accordance with the social and moral contexts in which they exist, provided that such interpretations adhere to virtuous reasoning and principles that do not contradict the fundamental precepts of Islamic law (*sharī'ah*).

In conclusion, critiques of the social movement of Islamism should focus on the practices and diverse dynamics of socio-political movements that reduce and manipulate the authority of religious texts, rather than obscure the values of religious texts, including ḥadīth, to the extent that it is claimed that religion cannot serve as a basis for governance. This approach is more balanced and just, maintaining objectivity without conflating the misuse of religious texts with the intrinsic values of Islamic teachings in governance. Therefore, ḥadīth and Islamic religious texts can still serve as guiding principles to control and limit authority, rather than to justify unbounded authoritarian power.

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