

HEIDEGGER'S HERMENEUTICS AS AN APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING PROPHETIC HADITH: A NUSANTARA ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

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Received: 02-05-2025 | Revised: 18-09-2025 | Accepted: 30-06-2026

ABSTRACT

This study examines the application of Martin Heidegger's hermeneutical framework as an alternative method for understanding prophetic hadith through contextual, historical and existential perspectives. Employing a qualitative philosophical approach through systematic library research, the study analyzes selected hadiths from Sahih al-Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, and Musnad Ahmad using the concepts of Dasein, Being-in-the-world, and the hermeneutical circle. The findings demonstrate that Heideggerian hermeneutics situates hadith interpretation within the dynamic relationship between religious texts, the interpreter's existential horizon, and socio-historical context, thereby revealing dimensions of meaning that textual-formal approaches leave unaddressed. This research contributes to contemporary hadith studies by presenting a philosophical framework that bridges classical Islamic scholarly traditions and modern hermeneutical thought, offering Nusantara Islamic scholarship a methodologically grounded basis for developing contextual, moderate, and historically conscious interpretations of prophetic traditions. The implications extend to Islamic education and interdisciplinary inquiry, where hermeneutical analysis can strengthen engagement with contemporary religious and social challenges.

Keywords: Heidegger, Hermeneutics, Hadith, Islamic Thought, Nusantara

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji penerapan kerangka hermeneutika Martin Heidegger sebagai metode alternatif dalam memahami hadis nabawi melalui perspektif kontekstual, historis, dan eksistensial. Dengan menerapkan pendekatan filosofis kualitatif melalui studi kepustakaan yang sistematis, penelitian ini menganalisis hadis-hadis pilihan dari Sahih al-Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, dan Musnad Ahmad menggunakan konsep-konsep Dasein, Being – in – the – world (Mengada – di – dunia), dan lingkaran hermeneutika. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa hermeneutika Heideggerian menempatkan penafsiran hadis di dalam hubungan yang dinamis antara teks-teks keagamaan, cakrawala eksistensial penafsir, dan konteks sosio-historis, sehingga mampu menyingkap dimensi-dimensi makna yang sering kali luput dari pendekatan tekstual-formal. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap studi hadis kontemporer dengan menyajikan kerangka filosofis yang menjembatani tradisi keilmuan Islam klasik dan pemikiran hermeneutika modern, serta menawarkan landasan metodologis yang kokoh bagi khazanah keilmuan Islam Nusantara untuk mengembangkan penafsiran tradisi kenabian yang kontekstual, moderat, dan memiliki kesadaran historis. Implikasi dari penelitian ini menjangkau bidang pendidikan Islam dan kajian interdisipliner, di mana analisis hermeneutika dapat memperkuat keterlibatan akademis dalam merespons berbagai tantangan keagamaan dan sosial kontemporer.

Kata kunci: Heidegger, Hermeneutika, Hadis, Pemikiran Islam, Nusantara

INTRODUCTION

Within the corpus of Islamic scholarship, the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad occupies a foundational position as the second primary source of Islamic teachings after the Qur'an.¹ Its role in shaping Islamic law, ethics, and spirituality² has made the question of how hadith should be understood a matter of enduring scholarly concern. Conventional approaches to hadith interpretation have largely relied on philological analysis, chain-of-transmission verification (*isnad* criticism), and textual-formal methods developed within classical *ulum al-hadith*. While these

¹Moh. Yardho Jahira, Ihdal Umami, "Historical Transformation of Qur'anic Exegesis Methods in the Era of the Latecomers (7th–13th Century AH).," *Semiotika-Q Journal: Studies on Qur'anic Sciences and Exegesis* 5, no. 1 (2025): 300–319, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.19109/jsq.v5i1.25750..>

²Yusuf Saefulloh Maslani, Ghina Ulpah, Gilang Sukma Permana, Syfa Fauzia Mustofa, Feri Julhamdanie, "Hadith as a Source of Character Building in Contemporary Islamic Education," *Journal of Education and Thought* 18, no. 2 (2023): 1139–52 <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.55558/alihda.v18i2.131>.

methods have proven indispensable, they address primarily the authenticity and linguistic structure of prophetic statements rather than the existential and historical conditions under which meaning is constructed and received.³

Philosophical hermeneutics, and particularly the approach of Martin Heidegger, offers a complementary interpretive framework that addresses precisely this gap.⁴ In his monumental work *Being and Time* (1927), Heidegger argued that understanding is not merely a cognitive or linguistic process but an existential one: it is *Dasein*, the human subject thrown into a specific historical world, that understands from within its own involvement in that world.⁵ From this perspective, a text is not a static repository of meaning but a living dimension of experience that is continuously reinterpreted within the horizon of the reading subject. Applied to hadith, this principle opens interpretive possibilities that extend beyond the structure of language and *sanad* to encompass the historical and existential situation of the Prophet as a living, socially engaged subject.⁶

Several studies in the past decade have begun to demonstrate the relevance of hermeneutical approaches in Islamic studies. Mufid and colleagues have advanced a historical and hermeneutical reinterpretation of Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd's methods,⁷ while Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi has argued that the dominance of philological approaches in Islamic studies often fails to account for the social horizon within which textual

³Andri Afriani and Firad Wijaya, "Textual and Contextual Approaches in Hadith Studies," *Alifbata: Journal of Islamic Education* 7, no. 1 (2023): 50, <https://doi.org/10.51700/alifbata.v1i1.91>.

⁴Yeremias Jena, "Martin Heidegger on Authentic Being and Its Relevance to Healthcare," *Melintas* 31, no. 2 (2015): 110, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.26593/mel.v31i2.1621.107-129>.

⁵Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: New York: Harper & Row, 1962, 1962).

⁶Muh.Imam. Mohammad Lutfianto Sanusi, "Heidegger's Hermeneutic Approach in Understanding the Hadith of the Prophet," *Musnad: Journal of Hadith Studies* 2, no. 2 (2024): 337–95, <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.56594/musnad.v2i2.317>.

⁷et al. Mufid, Abdul, "Hadiths on Persons with Disabilities (A Reinterpretation of the Historical and Hermeneutic Study of Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd)."" (2024).

meaning is received.⁸ Mudzhar, similarly, has applied an existential hermeneutic lens to Qur'anic interpretation within the context of plural meanings.⁹ Nevertheless, studies that explicitly and systematically apply Heideggerian hermeneutics to the understanding of prophetic hadith remain conspicuously absent from the literature.

This gap is particularly significant in the context of Nusantara Islamic scholarship, where the interpretation of religious sources has historically developed through a productive dialogue between textual authority and the lived experiences of Muslim communities.¹⁰ The tradition of Islamic thought in Indonesia demonstrates that understanding hadith requires not only attention to linguistic and normative dimensions but also awareness of the historical and cultural contexts in which prophetic meanings are received and practiced.¹¹ This characteristic of Nusantara Islam suggests a natural affinity with Heideggerian hermeneutics, which holds that understanding is inseparable from human existence, historical experience, and the situated world in which interpretation takes place.¹²

The central research questions this study addresses is: how can Heidegger's hermeneutical approach be applied to understand the prophetic hadith existentially and contextually? This question is pressing because static and legalistic interpretations of hadith have demonstrated limited capacity to engage with the challenges

⁸Haerul Akmal et al., "The Concept of Safeguarding Wealth in Sharia Tourism," *Al-Istinbath: Journal of Islamic Law* 14, no. 1 (2020): 8, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.29240/jhi.v4i2.1002>.

⁹M. Atho Mudzhar Azyumardi Azra, *Hermeneutics and the Challenges of Contemporary Religious Interpretation* (Jakarta: Jakarta: Prenada Media, 2017, 2017).

¹⁰Zaenuddin Hudi Prasajo et al., "Likang Telu: Cultural Basis for Muslim-Catholic Relations in Manggarai," *AL ALBAB* 11, no. 1 (2022): 81–102, <https://doi.org/DOI: 10.24260/alalbab.v11i1.2180>.

¹¹E. Betti, *Hermeneutics as a General Methodology of the Sciences of the Spirit (1st Ed.)*, 1st ed., R, 2021, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003157236>.

¹²Muhammad Arif, "Heidegger's Hermeneutics and Its Relevance to Qur'anic Studies," *Journal of Quranic and Hadith Studies* 16, no. 1 (2015): 85–105, <https://doi.org/DOI: https://doi.org/10.14421/qh.2015.1601-05>.

of contemporary pluralism, human rights discourse, and rapid social transformation.¹³ The present study therefore pursues three interconnected objectives: to elucidate the foundational principles of Heidegger's hermeneutics; to explore their potential application within hadith studies; and to evaluate the strengths and limitations of this approach in relation to the principles of classical Islamic methodology.¹⁴ The study occupies an interdisciplinary space that brings Western philosophical thought into dialogue with traditional Islamic methodology, with the units of analysis being the meaning structures of selected hadiths and the interpretive horizons of their readers.¹⁵

This research also brings Heidegger's approach into dialogue with several traditions of Islamic understanding, including the living hadith approach, *maqashid al-syari'ah*, and the phenomenological approach to religious interpretation. Rather than displacing classical hadith methodology, this synthesis aims to construct a methodological bridge that enriches and extends the tradition's relevance to contemporary human conditions, allowing hadith to be understood not only as normative prescriptions but as reflections of human values that emerged in specific historical and social contexts.

The novelty of this research lies in positioning hadith interpretation explicitly within the triangular relationship between text, interpreter, and historical existence, a dimension that previous linguistic, legal, and socio-historical studies have not systematically theorized. The article is organized into five sections: an exposition of Heidegger's hermeneutical framework; a close reading of selected hadiths from a Heideggerian

¹³Supriyanto Supriyanto, "Implementation of Martin Heidegger's Hermeneutic Thought in the Study of Quranic Interpretation.," *AL QUDS: Journal of Qur'an and Hadith Studies* 6, no. 1 (2022): 255–78, <https://doi.org/10.29240/alquds.v6i1.3165>.

¹⁴Richard E. Palmer, *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1969, 1969).

¹⁵M. Mukhibat, "The Teaching Management and Study of Hadith: Method, Contents, and Approaches," *Utopia y Praxis Latinoamericana* 24, no. Extra6 (2019): 153–62.

perspective; an evaluation of this approach in relation to traditional hadith science; a reflection on the opportunities and challenges of integrating philosophical hermeneutics into Islamic studies; and a conclusion that synthesizes the findings and charts directions for future methodological development.

METHOD

This research employed a qualitative philosophical approach grounded in hermeneutical textual analysis.¹⁶ This methodological choice is not merely procedural but epistemologically motivated: classical hadith studies¹⁷ have predominantly operated within a textual-formal paradigm that privileges the verification of transmission chains (*isnad*) and the linguistic analysis of prophetic statements (*matan*). While these methods establish authenticity, they do not address the ontological conditions under which meaning is formed, received, and reinterpreted across historical contexts. A hermeneutical approach, and specifically one derived from Heidegger's existential analytic, is therefore necessary to access dimensions of hadith meaning that lie beyond philological recovery. The primary aim of this study is to explore the application of Heidegger's hermeneutical framework to the understanding of prophetic hadith, particularly through the concepts of *Dasein*, *being-in-the-world*, and the hermeneutical circle, which together position hadith not merely as normative text but as an expression of historically situated meaning that remains open to reinterpretation across the horizons of successive readers.¹⁸

It is necessary to clarify the relationship between this study's analytical method and the broader landscape of interpretive research. The present study draws on what may be termed

¹⁶Suryani Suryani, "The Urgency of Hermeneutics as a Method in Understanding Hadith," *AL QUDS: Journal of Qur'an and Hadith Studies* 6, no. 2 (2022): 779, <https://doi.org/10.29240/alquds.v6i2.4086>.

¹⁷Gillo, Mariano D. "Fundamentals of Hermeneutics as A Qualitative Research Theoretical Framework." *European Journal of Education and Pedagogy* 2, no. 3 (2021): 42–45. <https://doi.org/10.24018/ejedu.2021.2.3.43>

¹⁸Arif, "Heidegger's Hermeneutics and Its Relevance to Qur'anic Studies."

hermeneutical thematic analysis, a procedure that differs in important respects from the descriptive phenomenological thematic analysis associated with the Husserlian tradition. Husserlian phenomenology proceeds by bracketing (*epoché*) the interpreter's prior assumptions in order to attend to the structure of phenomena as given to consciousness. Heidegger explicitly rejected this bracketing as philosophically untenable, arguing instead that understanding is always already shaped by the interpreter's fore-structure, that is, by the historically conditioned pre-understandings, pre-conceptions, and pre-dispositions that the interpreter brings to any text. The analytical procedure in this study therefore does not attempt to suspend the researcher's interpretive horizon but instead makes it explicit as the necessary starting point of analysis. This distinction is methodologically significant and distinguishes the present approach from descriptive phenomenological methods.

The research was conducted between January and March 2024, drawing on primary and secondary collections held at the IAIN Ternate main library and accessed through international academic databases including JSTOR, SpringerLink, Taylor & Francis, Scopus, DOAJ, and Google Scholar. Primary sources comprise Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* (*Being and Time*, 1927) and *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, which provide the foundational Heideggerian concepts deployed in the analysis, alongside hadith texts drawn from *Sahih al-Bukhari*, *Sahih Muslim*, and *Musnad Ahmad*. Secondary sources include works by Indonesian Islamic scholars such as Quraish Shihab, Sahiron Syamsuddin, Azyumardi Azra, and M. Amin Abdullah, as well as relevant national and international scholarship on hermeneutics, hadith studies, and Islamic thought.

The selection of hadith texts for close reading was conducted through purposive hermeneutical sampling,¹⁹ guided by four criteria: the hadith must carry explicit existential and ethical dimensions; a documented historical context (*asbab al-*

¹⁹Abdul Mufid et al., "Rereading Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd's Method of Interpreting Religious Texts," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 79, no. 1 (2023): 1–6, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v79i1.8102>.

wurud) must be available; the hadith must bear relevance to the socio-religious realities of Muslim communities in the Nusantara; and the hadith must be widely authenticated within the tradition of classical hadith scholarship. The restriction of the corpus to hadiths concerning social and humanitarian ethics, rather than ritual prescriptions, requires explicit justification. Hadiths governing ritual practice (*ibadat*) are generally understood within Islamic jurisprudence as governed by fixed norms that resist contextual variation, since their binding force derives from their formal prescriptive character rather than from the social circumstances of their utterance. Hadiths addressing ethical conduct, by contrast, emerge directly from the Prophet's engagement with concrete social situations, making them the most productive site for Heideggerian analysis, which centers on the interpreter's existential engagement with the world. Including ritual hadiths in the corpus would thus risk misapplying the hermeneutical framework to texts whose meaning is structurally resistant to the kind of existential reinterpretation this study pursues.

Data analysis was conducted through four iterative hermeneutical stages. First, the researcher's pre-understanding was identified and made explicit, in keeping with Heidegger's argument that the fore-structure of understanding constitutes the unavoidable starting point of all interpretation rather than a distortion to be eliminated. Second, each selected hadith was subjected to historical contextual analysis through examination of its *asbab al-wurud* and its place within classical hadith scholarship, establishing the original horizon of meaning within which the prophetic utterance emerged. Third, the Heideggerian conceptual framework was applied systematically to each text, examining how the concepts of *Dasein*, *being-in-the-world*, temporality, and the hermeneutical circle illuminate dimensions of meaning inaccessible to philological methods alone. Fourth, the resulting interpretations were contextualized within the socio-religious realities of Nusantara Muslim communities, including the tradition of living sunnah and the contextual hermeneutical practices of contemporary Indonesian Islamic scholarship.

The validity of interpretation was pursued through theoretical triangulation, which in the present study is not merely invoked as a general principle but operates at specific analytical junctures. At the level of ontological framework, Gadamer's concept of the fusion of horizons (*Horizontverschmelzung*) is engaged where the analysis addresses the meeting point between the Prophet's original temporal horizon and the contemporary reader's historical situation. At the level of textual meaning, Ricoeur's distinction between explanation and understanding is brought to bear where the analysis moves between the structural features of hadith language and the existential meaning disclosed through engagement with that language. At the level of contextual application, the hermeneutical practices of Nusantara Islamic scholarship serve as a regulative horizon against which the Heideggerian readings are tested for their compatibility with the living interpretive tradition of Indonesian Muslim communities. Expert review by specialists in Islamic hermeneutics and audit trails documenting each stage of the analytical procedure were also employed to ensure the transparency, consistency, and scholarly accountability of the research process.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Findings

Heidegger's hermeneutical approach to understanding hadith opens new interpretive horizons by positioning hadith as an existential manifestation of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) within history, rather than merely as a normative document.²⁰ Heidegger argues that understanding is not an objective, self-contained product but arises from the interpreter's *thrownness* (*Geworfenheit*) into a specific world, a condition of being-in-the-world that is always already shaped by time, limitation and social involvement.²¹ When this principle is applied

²⁰Sindung Tjahyadi, "Manusia Dan Historisitasnya Menurut Martin Heidegger," *FILSAFAT* 18, no. 1 (2008): 47–58, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.22146/jf.3515>.

²¹Rifqi Khairul Anam, "Hermeneutics Situation As The Philosophizing Method Of Martin Heidegger And Its Relevance To," *Kanz Philosophia: A Journal for*

to hadith texts, the meaning of prophetic utterances is revealed as neither self-contained nor static, but as perpetually open to reinterpretation through the existential engagement of historically situated readers.

One of the central findings of this study is that the concept of *Dasein* can be productively employed to understand the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as a living historical subject who actively engaged with the social dynamics of seventh-century Arabian society.²² The prophetic hadith are inseparable from his existence as *Dasein*, that is, as a concrete human being who experienced historical thrownness, situational constraints, and a specific horizon of meaning in his speech and action. This understanding invites readers to approach hadiths not as decontextualized final norms but as context-bound prophetic responses, which in turn require reinterpretation in accordance with the temporal and social situation of contemporary readers.

A second significant finding concerns Heidegger's concept of temporality, which holds that human existence is always constituted through the interplay of past, present, and future. In the context of hadith, this principle implies that every prophetic saying was generated within a specific temporal configuration and cannot be treated as uniformly ahistorical.²³ Hadiths addressing social relations, ethics, and domestic life must therefore be read within the historical conditions of their emergence in order to avoid the absolutization of meaning. This finding aligns with the contextual interpretive tradition of Indonesian Islamic scholarship, as exemplified by Quraish Shihab and Sahiron Syamsuddin, both of whom recognize that the meaning of religious texts evolves in relation to changing historical circumstances.

Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism 10, no. 2 (2024): 161–82. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.20871/kpjipm.v10i2.343>

²²William Lange, “Heidegger’s Being and Time,” 2016.

²³Reflita Reflita, “KONTROVERSI HERMENEUTIKA SEBAGAI MANHAJ TAFSIR (Menimbang Penggunaan Hermeneutika Dalam Penafsiran Al-Qur’an),” *Jurnal Ushuluddin* 24, no. 2 (2016): 135–49, <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.24014/jush.v24i2.1625>.

A third finding concerns the hermeneutical circle, which Heidegger describes as the movement of understanding between the parts and the whole of a text, mediated by the interpreter's pre-understanding. In the Nusantara context, this pre-understanding is shaped by local culture, social experience, *pesantren* tradition, and the practice of living sunnah. Awareness of this dynamic is essential for resisting the absolutization of any single interpretation, while at the same time creating space for sustained dialogue between the prophetic text and the reader's historically conditioned horizon. The Heideggerian framework thus demands a reading of hadith that is reflective, contextually alert, and open to continuous revision.

These four conceptual findings are summarized in Table 1, which maps each of Heidegger's key hermeneutical concepts onto its corresponding philosophical description and its specific application in the reading of prophetic hadith.

Table 1.
Integration of Heidegger's Key Concepts and Their Application
in Understanding the Prophetic Hadith

Heidegger's Concept	Philosophical Description	Application to the Hadith of the Prophet
Dasein	Humans as subjects who exist in their being-thrown into the world	The Prophet as a concrete human in history, not merely a metaphysical entity
Being-in-the-world	The existence of humans is always within the context of the social and historical world.	Hadiths were born from the Prophet's involvement in the social realities of his time.
Temporality	Human understanding and	Hadith is understood in a temporal context;

	existence are always bound by time.	not all hadith are ahistorical.
Fore-structure of understanding	The subject has a pre-understanding that shapes the process of comprehension.	The interpretation of hadith is influenced by the social and intellectual experiences of its readers.
Hermeneutic circle	The meaning is not singular and final; occurs in cycles between parts and whole	The meaning of hadith continues to evolve through the dialogue between the text and the reader over time.

Source: Processed from Heidegger's primary works and secondary literature, including Mufid et al. and Zarkasyi.²⁴

Table 1 demonstrates that each of Heidegger's foundational principles can be operationalized as an interpretive framework for broadening the understanding of prophetic hadith in a contextual and existential direction. These findings are consistent with broader efforts to renew Islamic hermeneutical methodology, as argued by Mufid et al.²⁵ in their reinterpretation of Abu Zayd's approach, and by Zarkasyi.²⁶ in his integration of maqashid thinking with hermeneutical analysis.

Close Reading I: Hadith on Human Potential (Sahih Muslim, No. 2638)

²⁴Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi, *Maqashid Syariah: A Hermeneutical Study and Modern Concept* (Jakarta: Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2020),

²⁵Mufid, Abdul, "Hadiths on Persons with Disabilities (A Reinterpretation of the Historical and Hermeneutic Study of Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd)."

²⁶Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi, *Maqashid Syariah: A Hermeneutical Study and Modern Concept*.

To demonstrate how Heidegger's hermeneutical approach operates concretely, this study undertakes close readings of two selected hadiths. The first is as follows:

عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ النَّاسُ مَعَادِنُ كَمَعَادِنِ الذَّهَبِ وَالْفِضَّةِ
خَيْرُهُمْ فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ خَيْرُهُمْ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ إِذَا فَهَّمُوا
(HR. Muslim, No. 2638)

Meaning: "Humans are like mines of gold and silver. The best people in the time of ignorance are the best in Islam when they understand the religion."²⁷

This hadith, narrated by Abu Hurairah and recorded in *Sahih Muslim* No. 2638, addresses the diversity of human character and the latent qualities within human beings. From the perspective of *matan* analysis, the metaphor of gold and silver mines conveys that humans possess different inherent qualities that can be cultivated and directed through faith and knowledge. The phrase *idhā faqihū* ("when they understand religion") emphasizes that human excellence is determined not by natural endowment alone but by religious understanding and moral transformation. In its interpretive context, this hadith reflects the Prophet's recognition that Islam does not suppress human potential but orients it toward ethical and spiritual maturity.

Within the framework of Heideggerian hermeneutics, this hadith is not read merely as a normative moral statement but as an existential expression of the Prophet Muhammad's understanding of human nature as *Dasein*, a being-in-the-world with its own latent potential and life history. The metaphor of the mine conveys that humans possess a concealed existential potential, which Heidegger's concept of *aletheia* (unconcealment or disclosure) illuminates: just as ore must be extracted from the earth to reveal its value, the hidden dimensions of human existence can only be disclosed through active self-engagement with the world. In

²⁷Muslim ibn Al-Hajjaj, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Book 45, Hadith 205 (2638b) (Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1991), <https://sunnah.com/muslim:2638bv>.

Heidegger's framework, this is the process of the uncovering of being, the revelation of human existence through concrete participation in the realities of life.

The phrase *idhā faqihū* further points to the centrality of the fore-structure of understanding as a prerequisite for genuine interpretation. Understanding does not arise independently of experience but is rooted in the interpreter's historical and social situatedness (*Geworfenheit*). This hadith thus implies that human potential can only be actualized through deep engagement with the values of life and authentic spiritual experience, a claim that resonates closely with Heidegger's insistence that meaning is always disclosed through the interpreter's existential involvement rather than through detached observation.

Read in this way, the hadith constitutes an invitation to explore human existential potential within the framework of Islamic values through active engagement with the world and its history.²⁸ This reading avoids the static treatment of hadith as a fixed normative prescription and instead opens a dynamic, contextual, and existential interpretive space. Heidegger's hermeneutical approach thereby offers not only a critique of literal and formalistic methods but also a basis for developing a more human-centered, dialogical, and reflective methodology for engaging prophetic tradition, one that is highly relevant for addressing contemporary challenges²⁹ characterized by social complexity, multiculturalism, and spiritual crisis.³⁰

Close Reading II: Hadith on Intention (Sahih al-Bukhari, No. 1)

²⁸R Yuli Ahmad Hambali, "Subject and Scripture: Exploring Existential Moments in the Ordinary Reading of Scripture," *Wawasan, Jurnal Ilmiah Agama Dan Sosial Budaya* 8, no. 1 (2023): 19–30, <https://doi.org/DOI:10.15575/jw.v8i1.30207>.

²⁹Abdulloh Fuadi, "Quraish Shihab's Quranic Exegesis On Interreligious Harmony And Its Relevance To The Contemporary Western Hermeneutics," *Ulumuna* 25, no. 1 (2021): 137–61, <https://doi.org/DOI:https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v25i1.441>.

³⁰White, Carol J. *Time and death: Heidegger's analysis of finitude*. Routledge, 2017. DOI <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315236056>

The second hadith selected for close reading is as follows:

إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ

(HR. al-Bukhari No 1. Book of Bad'ul Wahy)

Meaning: "Indeed, every action depends on its intention."³¹

This hadith, narrated by Umar ibn al-Khattab and recorded as the first hadith in *Sahih al-Bukhari* in the chapter of *Bad' al-Wahy*, is one of the most foundational traditions in Islamic ethics. From the perspective of *matan* analysis, the hadith asserts that the value of an action is determined not only by its external form but by the intention, awareness, and purpose that animate it. The concept of *niyyah* indicates that human action is inseparable from moral responsibility and spiritual orientation. In its historical context, this hadith is associated with the event of the *hijrah*, during which outwardly identical actions carried entirely different meanings depending on the inner orientation of the actor. The hadith therefore affirms the necessity of understanding human action within its historical and existential context rather than as a purely external observable act.

Within Heidegger's hermeneutical framework, this hadith admits of rich analysis through the concepts of *Dasein*, temporality, and projection. First, *niyyah* cannot be understood merely as an inner desire or psychological state but must be grasped as a form of existential orientation toward the future. Heidegger describes human existence as fundamentally characterized by *Entwurf* (projection), whereby *Dasein* constantly projects itself toward possibilities. *Niyyah* is precisely this kind of existential projection: it is the forward-directed orientation that gives human action its meaning and moral weight. This reading aligns with Heidegger's broader claim that human actions are not merely behavioral events but expressions of existence itself.³²

³¹M. I. (n.d.) Al-Bukhari, *Sahih Al-Bukhari. Book 1, Hadith 1. In M. Muhsin Khan (Trans.), The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al-Bukhari.* (Riyadh: Darussalam.v, n.d.).

³²Supriyanto, "Implementation of Martin Heidegger's Hermeneutic Thought in the Study of Quranic Interpretation.".

Second, the hadith implies that the quality of action is conditioned by the interpreter's horizon of understanding. In Heideggerian terms, this is the fore-structure of understanding, the pre-understanding that every human being brings to both interpretation and action. Intention does not arise independently of experience but is born from the individual's life history, social situation, and thrownness into a specific historical context (*Geworfenheit*). The hadith can thus be read as a prophetic recognition that every human being acts from within a particular historical and existential horizon, a recognition that anticipates the Heideggerian insight that subjectivity is always already historically situated.³³

Third, from the perspective of temporality, the hadith reveals the temporal structure inherent in human action: a person forms an intention in the present on the basis of past experience while projecting toward a future goal.³⁴ This tripartite temporal structure corresponds closely to Heidegger's analysis of the unity of *Gewesenheit* (having-been), *Gegenwart* (the present moment), and *Zukunft* (futural projection).³⁵ The hadith can therefore be read as a reminder that human action is irreducibly temporal and cannot be evaluated in abstraction from one's existential journey through time.

The Heideggerian reading of this hadith thus reveals that prophetic ethical teaching is not reducible to a legal prescription governing outward compliance but opens onto a philosophical understanding of human action as an expression of being-in-time. This interpretation enriches hadith reading by foregrounding the interpreter as an active, temporally situated subject rather than a passive recipient of normative instruction.

Synthesis of Findings

³³Jena, "Martin Heidegger on Authentic Being and Its Relevance to Healthcare."

³⁴Suryani, "The Urgency of Hermeneutics as a Method in Understanding Hadith."

³⁵Arif, "Heidegger's Hermeneutics and Its Relevance to Qur'anic Studies."

The two close readings analyzed above demonstrate that the application of Heideggerian hermeneutics opens new horizons for understanding the prophetic hadith in an existential and contextual manner. The analysis reveals that the Prophet can be understood as a living, historically engaged *Dasein* who responded to the social, political, and moral dynamics of his community, and that the hadith he produced are therefore best understood as existential expressions born from that engagement rather than as timeless legal decrees.

These readings further clarify that hadiths carry an irreducible dimension of temporality: their meaning is tied to specific historical configurations, and this situatedness legitimates reinterpretation in accordance with the shifting horizons of successive reading communities. The hermeneutical circle, as Heidegger describes it, ensures that this reinterpretation is not arbitrary but proceeds through the disciplined movement between the text and the reader's pre-understanding, making meaning dynamic without collapsing into relativism.

Beyond the close readings, the present study finds that Heideggerian hermeneutics makes a contribution at the methodological level of hadith studies that exceeds the interpretation of individual texts. The framework allows hadith scholarship to move beyond the binary opposition between textualism and contextualism by situating context not as an external supplement to meaning but as an ontological condition of understanding itself. Historical context is not an additional layer imposed upon the prophetic text; it is the irreducible horizon within which meaning first emerges.

A further methodological finding concerns the status of the interpreter within the hadith tradition. Classical *ulum al-hadith* attends primarily to the credibility of transmitters (*'adalah* and *dhabt*) and to textual consistency (*matan* criticism), while the existential position of the interpreter is rarely theorized. Heidegger's concept of the fore-structure of understanding demonstrates that every act of interpretation is preceded by culturally, educationally, and historically conditioned assumptions. In the Nusantara context, this fore-structure is shaped by *pesantren* culture, Shafi'i jurisprudence, and the

discourse of moderate Islam, all of which inevitably condition how hadiths are understood and applied in practice.

This study also finds that Heideggerian hermeneutics provides a principled explanation for the plurality of hadith interpretations across Muslim scholarly traditions. Interpretive differences among scholars across regions and historical periods are not methodological failures but reflect genuinely different modes of being and historical horizons. This insight strengthens the legitimacy of interpretive plurality within Islamic scholarship while preserving fidelity to the authority of prophetic tradition. Finally, the application of Heidegger's concept of temporality enables a principled distinction between the ethical spirit (*ruh al-hadith*) and the historically conditioned form of prophetic statements, a distinction that is essential for contemporary ethical reasoning on issues of social justice, pluralism, and human dignity. Rather than fixing hadith meaning within a past temporal horizon, temporality allows meaning to unfold dynamically while remaining anchored in prophetic intentionality.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that Heidegger's key concepts, namely *Dasein*, *being-in-the-world*, temporality, fore-structure of understanding, and the hermeneutical circle, collectively offer an analytical framework capable of presenting a renewed reading of prophetic hadith while complementing, rather than displacing, the textual-formal approaches that have long dominated Islamic studies.³⁶ The discussion below develops three interconnected arguments: that an existential reading through *Dasein* repositions the Prophet as a historically engaged subject; that temporality enables a principled distinction between the historical form and the enduring ethical spirit of prophetic utterances; and that the fore-structure of understanding and the hermeneutical circle together explain the legitimacy of interpretive plurality within hadith scholarship. These arguments

³⁶Lafont, Cristina. "Heidegger's hermeneutics 1." *Law's Hermeneutics*. Routledge, 2017. 11-33. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781315648651-2/heidegger-hermeneutics-1-cristina-lafont>

are then extended to address the contribution of Heideggerian hermeneutics to the discourse of religious moderation in Nusantara Islam.

Dasein and the Existential Repositioning of the Prophet

An existential reading through the concept of *Dasein* allows hadiths to be understood as the Prophet's historical and situational responses to the concrete realities of seventh-century Arabia, rather than as isolated and decontextualized normative injunctions. In Heideggerian terms, *Dasein* refers to a mode of being that is always already thrown (*Geworfenheit*) into a particular world shaped by social relations, cultural norms, and historical circumstances. When this concept is applied to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), it highlights his role not only as a transmitter of divine revelation but also as a human subject who actively engaged with the ethical, social, and moral challenges of his community.

From this perspective, hadiths are not merely abstract legal propositions but expressions of prophetic praxis that emerged from lived encounters with concrete situations, including social injustice, moral ambiguity, communal conflict, and everyday human interaction. Understanding the Prophet as *Dasein* does not undermine the sacred authority of hadith; rather, it reinforces the Qur'anic affirmation of the Prophet's humanity (*bashariyyah*) as an integral dimension of his prophethood. This existential positioning allows contemporary readers to appreciate hadiths as meaningful responses to concrete human conditions, thereby opening interpretive space for contextual engagement without negating normative significance.

This existential reading also challenges the rigid textualism that detaches hadith from its historical lifeworld. By situating prophetic discourse within its original horizon of meaning, readers are encouraged to distinguish between universal ethical intentions and context-bound expressions, a distinction that is essential for preventing literalist interpretations that result in ethical rigidity or social irrelevance. In the Indonesian intellectual tradition, this approach resonates strongly with the contextualist paradigm advanced by Quraish Shihab, Amin Abdullah, and Sahiron

Syamsuddin, all of whom emphasize the inseparability of text, context, and reader. Heidegger's concept of *Dasein* provides a philosophical grounding for this paradigm by demonstrating why contextual interaction is not optional but ontologically unavoidable: interpretation is always an existential act performed by historically situated beings. An existential reading of hadith thus enables Indonesian Islamic scholarship to articulate a methodologically robust framework that remains faithful to prophetic tradition while remaining responsive to contemporary human realities.

Temporality and the Ethical Spirit of Prophetic Utterance

The concept of temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*) in Heidegger's philosophy holds that human existence is constituted through the unified structure of past, present, and future, and that meaning is always disclosed within this temporal horizon rather than existing outside of it. When applied to hadith studies, this insight challenges the assumption that prophetic meaning is timeless in a static sense and invites scholars instead to differentiate between the historically conditioned form of a prophetic statement and its enduring ethical orientation.

The hadiths examined in this study illustrate this distinction concretely. In the hadith on human potential (*Sahih Muslim*, No. 2638), the Prophet's use of the metaphor of gold and silver mines reflects the social and cognitive world of seventh-century Arabian society, where mineral wealth served as a natural index of latent value. The temporal horizon of this utterance shapes its form; however, its ethical spirit, namely the principle that human excellence is disclosed through understanding and moral engagement rather than through inherited status alone, transcends that horizon and speaks directly to the challenges of contemporary pluralist societies. Similarly, the hadith on intention (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, No. 1) emerged within the specific historical context of the *hijrah*, where the moral differentiation of outwardly identical acts was a pressing social necessity. The temporal form of this utterance is historically particular, yet its existential core, that human action is constituted by the orientation of the self toward future possibilities, retains full normative force in the present.

Recognizing this temporal situatedness does not relativize the authority of hadith but rather enables scholars to apply prophetic guidance with historical consciousness. Within the Nusantara Islamic intellectual tradition, this temporal sensitivity aligns with hermeneutical approaches that emphasize renewal (*tajdid*) and contextual relevance. Heideggerian temporality provides a philosophical explanation for this practice by demonstrating that understanding is itself historically conditioned and forward-looking: meaning is never exhausted in a single interpretive moment but unfolds continuously as new historical contexts emerge. Temporality thus reinforces the understanding of hadith as a living moral resource rather than a closed legal archive, encouraging scholars and practitioners to engage prophetic guidance ethically and creatively in response to contemporary human concerns.³⁷

Fore-Structure, the Hermeneutical Circle and Interpretive Plurality

The concepts of the fore-structure of understanding and the hermeneutical circle together affirm that hadith interpretation is always shaped by the interpreter's pre-understandings and unfolds through a dynamic dialogue between text, history, and the reader's lived experience. In Heidegger's hermeneutics, understanding is never a neutral or objective act; it is always preceded by a horizon of assumptions, traditions, and experiences that orient interpretive engagement. This fore-structure does not distort meaning by default but rather constitutes the condition of possibility for understanding in the first place.

Applied to hadith studies, this insight reveals that readers inevitably approach prophetic traditions with inherited frameworks, whether theological, juridical, cultural, or ideological. In the Indonesian context, these pre-understandings are shaped by *pesantren* education, the dominant traditions of *Shafi'i* jurisprudence, local cultural practices, and the living sunnah. Recognizing the role of fore-structure allows scholars to

³⁷Anam, "Hermeneutics Situation As The Philosophizing Method Of Martin Heidegger And Its Relevance To."

examine critically how these backgrounds condition interpretation, thereby preventing the illusion of a single, ahistorical hadith meaning that stands independent of any interpretive community.

The hermeneutical circle extends this insight by explaining how understanding develops through a continuous movement between the parts and the whole of a text, mediated by the reader's prior assumptions and progressively refined through sustained engagement. When readers approach hadith, they begin with preliminary expectations shaped by their tradition and refine those expectations through interaction with the text and its historical context. This circular process does not produce relativism; rather, it fosters interpretive responsibility by requiring ongoing self-reflection and openness to revision. Meaning is not arbitrarily imposed but gradually disclosed through disciplined and accountable engagement.

Within Nusantara Islamic scholarship, this hermeneutical awareness resonates with long-standing practices of communal deliberation (*bahts al-masa'il*), contextual reasoning, and ethical consideration, practices that implicitly acknowledge interpretation as a communal and historically situated activity. Heidegger's framework provides a philosophical articulation of this reality, strengthening methodological transparency and interpretive humility. The integration of the fore-structure and the hermeneutical circle ultimately positions the reader not as a passive recipient of hadith meaning but as an active, responsible participant in the process of its ongoing disclosure.

This study has demonstrated that Heidegger's existential hermeneutics offers a productive and philosophically rigorous alternative framework for understanding prophetic hadith. By applying the concepts of *Dasein*, *being-in-the-world*, temporality, fore-structure of understanding, and the hermeneutical circle to two foundational hadiths, the study reveals dimensions of prophetic meaning that classical *ulum al-hadith*, with its emphasis on transmission verification and linguistic analysis, has not systematically addressed. The close readings of *Sahih Muslim* No. 2638 and *Sahih al-Bukhari* No. 1 demonstrate concretely that prophetic utterances are not decontextualized legal decrees but

existential expressions generated from within the Prophet's historically situated engagement with the social and moral realities of seventh-century Arabia. This repositioning of hadith as existential discourse, rather than merely normative text, constitutes the study's primary theoretical contribution to the field of hadith hermeneutics, complementing rather than displacing the verifying function of classical methodology established by scholars such as Imam al-Nawawi, Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, and al-Khatib al-Baghdadi.

At the methodological level, the study advances hadith scholarship by moving beyond the binary opposition between textualism and contextualism³⁸ that has structured much of the contemporary debate in Islamic hermeneutics. Rather than treating historical context as an external supplement imposed upon prophetic meaning, the Heideggerian framework situates context as an ontological condition of understanding itself. The study further theorizes the existential position of the interpreter, a dimension that classical hadith methodology has largely left unaddressed, by demonstrating through the fore-structure of understanding that every act of hadith interpretation is preceded by culturally, educationally, and historically conditioned pre-understandings.³⁹ This insight provides a principled explanation for the plurality of interpretations across Muslim scholarly traditions without collapsing into relativism, since the hermeneutical circle ensures that interpretive revision remains disciplined and accountable to the prophetic text. In doing so, the study advances a more specifically ontological contribution than previous hermeneutical work in Islamic studies, including that of Mufid et al. and Zarkasyi,⁴⁰ by grounding contextual

³⁸Rauno Huttunen and Leena Kakkori, "Heidegger's Theory of Truth and Its Importance for the Quality Of Qualitative Research," *Journal Of Philosophy Of Education*, 54, no. 3 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9752.12429>.

³⁹Drs. M. M Wardoyo, "Agama Dan Manusia," *Al- A' Raf XI*, no. 1 (2014): 81–100, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.22515/ajpif.v11i1.1200>.

⁴⁰Mufid et al., "Rereading Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd's Method of Interpreting Religious Texts."

reinterpretation in Heidegger's existential analytic⁴¹ rather than in epistemological or juridical contextualism alone.

The contribution of this study extends beyond methodological theory to bear on the practical discourse of religious moderation (*moderasi beragama*) in the Nusantara context. The two hadiths analyzed in the Findings provide direct textual grounding for this connection. The hadith on human potential (*Sahih Muslim*, No. 2638), read through the Heideggerian lens of *Dasein* and *aletheia*, reveals that the prophetic tradition affirms the dignity of human diversity and the capacity of all human beings for ethical excellence through religious understanding, offering a prophetic foundation for the principles of tolerance and respect for diversity. The hadith on intention (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, No. 1), read through temporality and existential projection, reinforces this by establishing that the moral value of human action is determined by inner orientation rather than external formal conformity, thereby supporting a pluralist understanding of Islamic ethics suited to the culturally and religiously diverse communities of Indonesian Muslim society. Together, these readings demonstrate that Heideggerian hermeneutics helps hadith function as a living ethical resource that navigates between the two extremes moderate religious discourse seeks to avoid: purely literal readings that detach prophetic guidance from social reality⁴², and excessive relativism that dissolves prophetic authority into contingency.

Distinctively, this study advances hadith hermeneutics by introducing Heidegger's ontological-existential framework as an interpretive horizon, moving beyond epistemological contextualization toward an explicit engagement with the lived being of the Prophet and the contemporary reader. This positions hadith not merely as transmitted texts or normative references but

⁴¹Supriyanto, "Implementation of Martin Heidegger's Hermeneutic Thought in the Study of Quranic Interpretation."

⁴²Arif Budiman et al., "Hadith-Based Ethics : Neighborly Social Relations in the Prophetic Tradition," *Mashdar: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis*, 6, no. 2 (2024): 145–60, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.15548/mashdar.v6i2.9832>.

as historically grounded and existentially meaningful sources of ethical guidance for modern Muslim societies. The study also establishes that Heideggerian hermeneutics has a natural affinity with the interpretive traditions of Nusantara Islamic scholarship, including the living sunnah approach, the contextual hermeneutical practices of UIN and IAIN institutions, and the deliberative tradition of *pesantren* learning, suggesting that this framework can serve as a methodological bridge between classical hadith scholarship and the demands of contemporary Islamic intellectual life.

CONCLUSION

This research demonstrates that Heidegger's existential hermeneutics provides a methodologically rigorous foundation for understanding prophetic hadith in a contextual and existential manner. By operationalizing the concepts of *Dasein*, *being-in-the-world*, temporality, fore-structure of understanding, and the hermeneutical circle, the study establishes that hadiths are not merely static normative texts but historically situated expressions of the Prophet's engagement with the social and moral realities of seventh-century Arabia. The close readings of *Sahih Muslim* No. 2638 and *Sahih al-Bukhari* No. 1 confirm that Heideggerian categories open new interpretive horizons concerning human existential potential, the temporal structure of ethical action, and the conditions of authentic religiosity, demonstrating that prophetic guidance retains its normative authority while admitting of richer, more contextually responsive interpretations than textual-formal approaches have produced.

The main contribution of this research lies in complementing classical *ulum al-hadith* with an existential-reflective interpretive approach. Where traditional methodology attends to transmission verification and linguistic integrity, the Heideggerian framework addresses the ontological conditions under which meaning is formed and renewed across successive historical horizons. By incorporating the intellectual traditions of the Nusantara, including *pesantren* culture, the living sunnah approach, and hermeneutical practices at UIN and IAIN institutions, this study positions the Heideggerian model as a

relevant framework for advancing a moderate, dialogical, and historically conscious Indonesian Islamic discourse, grounding contextual reinterpretation ontologically rather than merely epistemologically or juridically.

The practical implications extend to Islamic education and interdisciplinary scholarship. The hermeneutical close reading model developed here encourages students to connect prophetic texts with their social contexts and existential experiences, while opening space for research connecting hadith studies with philosophy, ethics, and the social sciences. In the context of Indonesian religious moderation, the existential hermeneutical framework provides a principled basis for reading prophetic guidance as an ethical foundation for harmonious coexistence within diverse societies.

There are some limitations of this study. Heidegger's framework was developed entirely within the Western continental tradition and cannot account for divine revelation (*wahy*) as a category theologically distinct from human historical experience, a dimension his secular ontology has no resources to theorize. The framework also does not engage with *isnad* criticism and cannot substitute for the authentication procedures of classical hadith methodology. Future research should therefore develop integrative models that bring Heideggerian existential analysis into systematic dialogue with classical *ulum al-hadith*, ensuring that existential interpretation operates upon a textually authenticated foundation.

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