Contextualizing the Hadith on Tying Hair in a Ponytail during Prayer: A Ma'ani al-Hadis Study

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Abstract

This article investigates the Hadith prohibiting having one's hair in a ponytail while praying. The variety of hairstyles available today and the associated demands make it difficult for certain people, both men and women, to avoid them. It would be fascinating to see if this contradicts the Prophet's Hadith. Comprehending the Hadith in the current context becomes a solution to finding answers that are put forward utilizing the ma'ani al-hadis approach to contextualize the Hadith in line with the developments. Employing a qualitative approach, this article concludes that the understanding of the Hadith above is based on the norms of the time. The Hadith's prohibition on setting one's hair in a ponytail during prayer can be interpreted differently, allowing one's hair to be in a ponytail during prayer. Contextualization refers to an effort to understand and interpret a religious teaching or instruction, such as a hadith, by considering various cultural, social, and temporal contexts. In this situation, contextualizing the Hadith's "prohibition to tie one's hair during prayer" illustrates how the rule can be modified to the
present time, which differs from the period when the Hadith was revealed. This highlights that the interpretation and application of Islamic law are not static but may adapt to changing periods and social circumstances.

**Keywords:** Contextualization; Hadith; Ponytail.

**Abstrak**


**Kata Kunci:** Hadis; Kontekstualisasi; Menguncir Rambut.

**A. Introduction**

Hair is the crown of every human since it is one of the most important concerns, particularly among women.¹ Nowadays, the evolution of hair fashion, including the development of hair

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models, is unavoidable, leading to the domain of colors.\textsuperscript{2} This is not to mention the general types of hair fashion, including long hair, dreadlocks, curly, afro, oval, and qaza. This phenomenon affects not just seniors but also teenagers and children.\textsuperscript{3} This phenomenon is seen in the rapid evolution of hairstyles affected by fashion, which is prevalent in electronic media, particularly television and cell phones (YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok). As a result, haircuts that become popular are simple to duplicate by anyone who wants to follow suit.\textsuperscript{4}

As a crown, it is understandable that each individual styles their hair differently, especially if they are very concerned with fashion. Each individual's preferences undoubtedly determine the hairstyle; some choose short or long, curly or straight, while others prefer colored hair. When someone has long hair, she is likelier to wear it in a ponytail, especially if she wears a hijab to work or pray.\textsuperscript{5} For most people, hair is a crucial part of their look. However, a lack of references to hairstyle variants frequently results in people having uniform hairstyles.\textsuperscript{6} Although the modeling industry offers a vast range of hairstyles, consumers can still struggle to select the appropriate one.\textsuperscript{7}

Islamic teaching emphasizes the significance of looking neat and appealing, including proper hair maintenance. Thus, it is

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\item[7] Sri Hardiyanti, “Perancangan Aplikasi Mobile Catalog Model Rambut Dengan Menerapkan Algoritma Crochemore Perrin.” Page 2
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not encouraged to tie one's hair up when praying. Women and some men with long hair put their hair in a ponytail while praying to avoid blocking the parts of the body that need to touch the spot when prostrating. However, the Prophet's Hadith specifies that wearing one's hair in a ponytail during prayer is not allowed. Thus, it is worthwhile to investigate this further to acquire a complete understanding.

Several studies have been conducted by experts related to this theme, including Andhika Tri Putra, who discussed ponytails in movies (Semiotics Analysis of Ponytail Representation in the Movie "I Love You Masbro!!!"). Andri Setiawan, who explained the hadith analysis on hair dyeing, Amilatun Nasibah, who investigated the Hadith on the prohibition of hair extension and the cause for eyelash grafting (Ma'anil Hadith Study), Wafa Satria Kamil, who investigated emulating Prophet Muhammad's hairstyle as a form of ittiba' sunnah by Muslim youths, and Radhie Munadi elaborated on the length of the Prophet Muhammad's hair (Ma'anil al-Hadis Study and Implementation in the an-Nadzir Congregation in Gowa, South Sulawesi).

Some of the prior research differs significantly from those that the author investigated. In this case, the author will focus on the contextualization of ponytails during prayer because, looking at the developments, many hair phenomena are adopted by every woman, and even more so by men, even though this can cause one's

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prayer to be in violation of the Prophet's guidelines. As a result, this study is structured around two problems: What is the understanding of the Hadith on the prohibition of wearing one's hair in a ponytail during prayer, and how is the Hadith contextualized?

This article employs a qualitative research design with library research. The data collection technique employed was documentation, specifically collecting Hadith found in Mu'jam al-Mufahras li al-fazi al-Hadis al-Nabawi, making it easy to find Hadith and information about the prohibition of ponytail during prayer. This study is based solely on library research, the data analysis employed was the descriptive analysis based on the ma'ani al-hadis approach.

B. Hair Styles in Classical Times

Islam is a wonderful religion that is particularly concerned with everyday affairs. Islam expects a Muslim to look excellent from the tip of the toe to the tip of the hair, with no exception for attractive and pristine haircuts. One of the principles exemplified by the Prophet is hair care. He instructed people to beautify their hair.14

In terms of hairstyles, al-Khatibi noted that it was customary for Arabs during the period to let their hair long and adorn it. Several narrations, including those of al-Tirmidzi, al-Baihaqi, Abu Dawud, al-Bukhari, Muslim, and others, describe the Prophet's hair as not curly and not straight, with a length of only between the ears and both shoulders. The Prophet's hair sometimes grew to the middle of his ears yet only reached his shoulders at others. The Prophet's hair was extremely dark, and he frequently combed it until it split. Wearing a turban was customary during the Prophet's lifetime.15

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14 Muhammad Idris Abdurrauf al-Marbawy, Idris Al-Marbawy, (Bandung: Syarikat alMa’arif). Page. 50
The Prophet liked to style his hair loosely, as did Jews and Christians, and frequently mimicked non-Islam people's habits.\textsuperscript{16} However, the Prophet was also bald while undertaking Hajj and Umrah. Other historians believe the Prophet did not purposefully grow his hair long since there was no time to cut it.\textsuperscript{17} According to history, the Prophet's companions had a variety of hairstyles, including long hair, shoulder-length hair, waist-length hair, and others. Of course, there were many other types of hair patterns at the time of the Prophet, ranging from curly to straight, and a diversity of hair colors.\textsuperscript{18}

However, as time passes, the range of hair models grows, prompting many youngsters to style their hair as they like. Employing fake hair, often known as wigs, can increase the number of hairstyles that can be altered while maintaining their authenticity or are not permanent. Many people avoid the hassle of styling their hair at the salon by wearing wigs.\textsuperscript{19} Hair models are continuously evolving because hair is an important part of everyone's lives. However, there are times when hair models from the classical era return to the public limelight.\textsuperscript{20}

C. Contemporary Hair Styles

Changes cannot be divorced from humans' role because humans are social beings who wish to live in better conditions than they did previously. Humans are always changing in response to the times and technologies. These alterations might be dynamic, even revolving. In today's world, as many models of change occur

in life, so does the trend of hair models, which significantly impacts appearance.21

Hair trends change every year, affecting the people who style their hair while ignoring other hairstyles. Because of a lack of references to varied hairstyles, many people end up with the same hairdo.22 Today's hairstyles vary greatly; some are thin above the ears, others leave only 1 cm of hair on the top of the head, and many more. One style that has grown popular among urban youth is the "sasak" style, which clears the hair above the ears.23

A short crested hairstyle that resembles a rooster's comb is currently popular. These haircuts are popular among young people and adults, including students, athletes, entertainers, businessmen, politicians, and members of parliament. Nowadays, beauty is one of the most significant criteria, and how a person looks reflects his or her personality. A good appearance can also boost self-confidence, attract the attention of persons of the opposite gender, and promote trust in others.24

The explanation above provides numerous examples of hair that is trendy and not out of date. Hairstyles that are popular among teenagers are associated with dreadlocks, which causes some males to adopt the hair trend. Dreadlocks are a fashion trend today, and salon stylists can create this twisted hairstyle relatively quickly. Dreadlocks have a special meaning for the inhabitants of Dieng, Central Java. Children with dreadlocked are thought to be

incarnations of the spirits of Kyai Mumpuni and Kyai Kolodete, as shown in the images below.

Figure 1.1 Dreadlock Hairstyle Figure 1.2 Long Hair

Dreadlocks are an old Indonesian mythology that originated in the Dieng region. In other words, dreadlocks are local instances with a sacred meaning as a symptom or sign that those who believe in them cannot ignore. Dreadlocks are intimately associated with a religion or belief, as well as a depiction of a tribe or people as a social norm. Around 1970, dreadlocks were popular and accepted in the neighborhood, as did reggae music in the wider community. Previously, dreadlocks were associated with specific populations or ethnic groups in Africa, such as the Maasai, Shamans, and Yoruba tribes. Their dreadlocks differ in shape, size, and color. This becomes a reference to the types of dreadlocks that are currently in style.

Long hair is one of the hairstyles that can help you gain attention in public. However, in 1973, long hair became taboo, if not illegal, because it was associated with negative connotations. Unlike now, long hair has become the norm for everyone. Long hair is a nonverbal message transmitted through a sign or symbol, the significance of which varies depending on the individual. Its meaning varies and changes depending on a person's or society's

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experience and knowledge. No one describes in detail what constitutes long hair. 

Some examples of hair models above nstrate that the passage of time does not negate the importance of hair as a personal trait. Different hairstyles can help to define a person's appearance. Thus, the context of hair look has changed dramatically between the Prophet's time and the present.

D. Understanding the Hadith on Putting One's Hair in a Ponytail during Prayer

When praying, there are several rules that Muslims must observe so that their worship is valid and accepted by Allah, one of which is about tying the hair during prayer. In the narration of Ibn Abbas that the Prophet said:

An Kuriab, maula Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him), told the story of Abdullah ibn 'Abbas, that he once saw Abdullah ibn Harith praying with his head hair tied behind him. Then Ibn Abbas rushed to remove the tied hair. After the prayer, Abdullah bin Harith asked Ibn Abbas, "Why did you treat my head hair like that?" I heard," Ibn Abbas replied, "The Messenger of Allah said, "The example of a person who prays with his hair tied like this is like a person who prays with his hands tied behind his back." (HR. Muslim and others)

In Nailul Authar, Imam Syaukani quotes Imam al-'Iraqi about the Hadith above,

Based on this interpretation, it appears that the prohibition only applies to men, not women. Women's hair is aurat. It is necessary to conceal it (particularly during prayer). If the hair is

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loose, the hijab may show through, leaving her unable to hide it. This will result in the invalidation of the prayer.

According to al-Qadhi, the above Hadith indicates that Allah demands prostration. Placing all limbs on the earth when prostrating is an essential requirement from Allah. Imam al-Shafi'i and Imam Ahmad believe that it is required to prostrate with all limbs on the earth. Another opinion holds that it is only necessary to place the forehead because the Prophet only placed it on the ground, and the other six limbs are sunnah.

In terms of understanding the Hadith, the Prophet stated that there are three prayer instructions. First, prostration on seven limbs or bodies, including the forehead and nose (counted as one), hands, and feet. Second, it is prohibited to tie one's hair. Third, it is prohibited to bind or roll clothing. According to the Hadith, the Prophet instructed all members, including the hair, to be placed on the ground and not tied. Ibn al-Athir also claims that tying one's hair before going to pray reduces the merit received.

Imam al-Iraqi claims that the prohibition in the preceding Hadith exclusively pertains to men, not women. However, Abdurrahman al-Jazairi clarifies that the law of tying hair during prayer is makrooh. Abdul Somad also stated on his YouTube channel that if a Muslim ties his hair during prayer and then rises from prostration, he is deemed arrogant. This is why the Prophet forbade tying the hair during prayer in the Hadith. Sofyan Chalid bin Idham Ruray agrees, stating that most scholars believe tying one's hair during prayer is makrooh rather than prohibited. The rule is based on a general hadith that applies to both men and women.

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30 Ibnu al-Atsir, Jami’ al-Ushul, jilid 1, hal. 196. (Maktabah Syamilah al-Ishdar 3.48); Adz.Dzahabiy, Siyar. Page 130.


32 Abdul Somad, Janganlah Shalat Dalam Rambut Terikat, 2018, https://youtu.be/Vh_bgHkOMag?si=u5IR-MPSnnD_m3L.

However, Imam al-Albani believes that the decision to tie the hair is exclusive to men and does not apply to women.\textsuperscript{34}

Based on the discussion, it is possible to conclude that the Hadith prohibiting women and men from wearing their hair in a ponytail during prayer is not haram. It is only known as makrooh because it can hinder receiving the reward for prayer perfection. If a woman fears that her hair may be seen during prayer, it is permissible to tie it up.

E. Contextualization of the Hadith on Putting One's Hair in a Ponytail during Prayer

Every stage of human existence creates changes, particularly in the surroundings. The general environment of society can have both positive and negative effects, particularly in today's world.\textsuperscript{35} This is in conjunction with changes in people's hair, which has an increasing number of models. Following the hairstyles of admired individuals is a trend among teenagers. This is because a good appearance can be found in a person's dress, especially when determining hairstyles.\textsuperscript{36}

Choosing a hairstyle is one of the habits of today's youth, who imitate the hairstyles of their idols to appear cool and fashionable. However, many people are unsure whether it is against the Hadith to cover the surface area of the forehead when praying. According to Ibn Abbas, the Prophet instructed that all limbs must be properly positioned during prayer.

\begin{quote}
"Muhammad ibn Hatim narrated to us that Bahz narrated to us that Wuhaib narrated to us that Abdullah ibn Thawus narrated to us from Thawus from Ibn Abbas that the Messenger of Allah said: "I was
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\textsuperscript{34} Syeikh Abdurrahman Al-Jaziri, \textit{Kitab Shalat Fikih Empat Mahzab}.
\textsuperscript{36} Abdul Qodir Jaelani, “Remaja Dan Gaya Rambut (Perilaku Remaja Dalam Memilih Model Rambut Sebagai Dampak Dari Pengidolaan Seorang Tokoh.” Page 1
commanded to prostrate on seven limbs: the forehead—and he pointed with his hand at the nose—the two hands, the two feet, and the tips of both feet. And we do not fold our clothes or tie our hair.”

In the Hadith above, the Prophet clearly instructs that it is compulsory to lay down all limbs, especially the hair, which is forbidden to be tied up during prayer. Ibn al-Athir explains why hair should not be tied up during praying: it can lessen the reward because it does not engage in prostration. This is analogous to a person with his hands tied behind his back so they do not fall to the ground when prostrating. However, this rule on tying one's hair during prayer solely applies to men, not women.

Based on this Hadith, it is apparent that the Prophet forbade tying one's hair during prayer, and all Muslims who wish to pray should follow suit. However, in terms of historical context, the situation at the time of the Prophet vastly differed from today. The modern era is one that reflects the evolution of times, with hair serving as a benefit to all humans. As a result, the Prophet's prohibition on tying one's hair into a ponytail during prayer has become a separate issue in light of modern trends in hairstyles and fashion.

The modern era has contributed to the advancement of civilization. Discoveries and advancements in a variety of sectors define this age. Practically speaking, modern technologies have made life easier for humans by, among other things, creating opportunities to improve human life standards, alleviate physical suffering, and lighten the pressures of daily life. This period has erased the gap or place for all human beings in all corners of the world, allowing each individual to easily access the creation and discovery of science that moves at the same rapid pace as the times.

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On the one hand, technological and scientific advancements in the age of globalization bring about significant and extraordinary changes and benefits. However, these innovations have had several negative consequences for human life. This is especially true for those who pray with their hair up. During the Prophet's day, it was simple for the Companions to ask the Prophet directly when something strange occurred, as opposed to today, when people have numerous questions about life, particularly concerning the prayers they perform daily. The Hadith prohibits putting one's hair in a ponytail during prayer, which differs from today's pressing need to do so, especially with the numerous haircuts that can obscure the forehead when prostrating.\textsuperscript{40}

The context of the Prophet's Hadith might change and is not always fixed, depending on the current events and situations. With the many phenomena that occur today, the Prophet's Hadith can become dynamic, such as the development of hairstyles that were once forbidden to put in a ponytail during prayer, but for the current context (especially men), it is permissible to put them in a ponytail in line with the style and hairstyle worn by each Muslim as a form of trend.

F. Conclusion

Based on the brief explanation above, this article comes to the following conclusions. The Hadith prohibits tying one's hair during prayer, which is considered makrooh and not haram because it can hinder achieving the reward of prayer perfection during prostration. Nevertheless, if a woman's hair is worried to be seen during prayer, she may tie it. In other words, the Hadith only applies to men, not women. Second, the phenomenon of today's hairstyles that are increasingly following societal trends, with reference to the understanding of the Hadith's prohibition on tying hair during prayer, the explanation of the Hadith that applies to men can expand its meaning to become permissible. In addition to the fact that the Prophet's hairstyles differed from today's, many modern haircuts and models require men to wear their hair in a ponytail during prayer. Contextualization refers to an endeavor to

understand and interpret a religious teaching or instruction, such as a hadith, by considering various cultural, social, and temporal circumstances. In this situation, the contextualization of the Hadith regarding the restriction of wearing one's hair in a ponytail during prayer nstrates that the rule can be modified to today's reality, which differs from when the Hadith was revealed. This highlights that the interpretation and application of Islamic law are not static but may adapt to changing periods and social circumstances.

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