

# Revitalization of Hadith Education Within the Context of Islamic Gerontology: An Analytical Study of Prophetic Themes in Empowering Positive Ageing

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## Abstract

The global trend of population ageing has become an increasingly pressing issue, including in Muslim communities. In the context of Islamic gerontology, the wellbeing of older adults extends beyond the material and physical, with serious attention needing to be given to spiritual, emotional, and psychospiritual balance. Despite extensive global discussions on active ageing, the integration of Prophetic traditions into gerontological education remains underexplored, particularly within Muslim-majority contexts such as Malaysia. Current scholarship on Islamic gerontology has largely prioritised Qur'anic studies, while hadith education, despite being the second most authoritative source of Islamic guidance has received limited pedagogical attention. This research seeks to fill this critical gap by reviving the position of Prophetic traditions as the foundation for developing an educational module relevant to the needs of the elderly, empowering them through sincere and actionable Islamic values. The primary objective of this research is to uncover pivotal Hadith themes that are most relevant to the elderly. Methodologically, this study is qualitative in nature through document analysis and semi-structured interviews with three groups of informants which are Hadith scholars, teachers and residents of Madrasah Ibn Mas'ud. Data were analysed thematically to determine major patterns. Results show that Hadith-based themes of worship and spirituality, preparation for the Hereafter, patience and acceptance of tribulations in life, simple acts with immense rewards, and cleanliness and moderation in lifestyle greatly help in enhancing spirituality, religiosity motivation, and emotional stability among older adults. This research has deep implications for the empowerment of Islamic education policy under the context of gerontology and Hadith pedagogy literature as a psychospiritual intervention with sustainable impacts.

**Keywords:** Empowering Positive Ageing, Hadith Education, Islamic Gerontology, Prophetic Themes

## Introduction

Malaysia is now experiencing a profound stage of demographic transition, with estimates that the country will reach the status of an ageing society by 2030. In accordance with the Department of Statistics Malaysia Report (Department of Social Welfare Malaysia, 2017), over 15% of the population will be 60 years and older. This demographic reality is not unique to Malaysia; it reflects a broader global trend in which societies worldwide are grappling with the challenges and opportunities of rapid population ageing (United Nations, 2023). Within this landscape, issues relating to the welfare and holistic development of older persons have become increasingly paramount, requiring the concerted attention of governments, non-governmental organisations, healthcare institutions, and religious bodies. From a theoretical standpoint, the active ageing framework emphasises that older adults require not only physical and social support but also opportunities for continuous learning and spiritual growth (World Health Organization, 2020). Similarly, the lifelong learning paradigm highlights that education should extend across the human lifespan, accommodating the evolving cognitive, emotional, and social needs of individuals (Formosa, 2019). Under the auspices of holistic human development, religious education among the elderly needs to be given priority to reinforce faith, beautify religious practice, and prepare themselves for the hereafter. At this life stage, they are highly encouraged to acquire as much religious knowledge as possible for such ends.

In Islamic tradition, knowledge is seen as a necessity by all stages of life, beyond the confines of youth. In the Qur'an, Surah al-Zumar, Allah SWT states:

﴿قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ﴾

Meaning: "Say: Are those who know equal to those who do not know? Verily, only those endowed with understanding will take heed and be reminded." (Quran, Al-Zumar:9).

According to al-Mahalli and al-Suyuti's (2010), the verse sets out a contrast between two groups of people, the blessed with knowledge who always remember Allah, maintain night prayers, have a deep fear of the Hereafter, and have hopes of Allah's mercy; and those who are ignorant and heedless. It goes without saying that these two groups of people are not equal in rank or value in Allah's estimation. The implication of this verse is to highlight that only people gifted with a healthy intellect and reason can derive lessons, responding to advice, and achieving wisdom. The verse, furthermore, indicates the importance of knowledge for the whole span of human life, including the latter part of life. As such, older people are supposed to continue seeking knowledge because the process of learning is a continuous act of worship. They are supposed to continually grasp religious decrees, practice religious rituals, and reveal the secrets of life as taught in Islam. This principle aligns with the words of Allah SWT in Surah al-Hijr:

﴿وَاعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَكَ الْيَقِينُ﴾

Meaning: "And worship your Lord until there comes to you the certainty [i.e., death]" (Quran, Al-Hijr:99).

For elderly Muslims, this underscores the obligation and necessity of continuing to acquire and internalise Islamic knowledge, particularly in areas that nurture spiritual resilience, moral clarity, and psychological preparedness for mortality. However, the current reality indicates that Islamic education for the elderly in Malaysia has yet to receive rigorous and systematic attention. This is especially evident with respect to the pedagogical

approaches and curriculum provisions that are suitably tailored to this group's needs, backgrounds, and capacities. Despite the availability of numerous religious programs, most pedagogical approaches and content still lack adequate interactivity and contextualization. Such approaches risk causing a passive learning attitude among elderly students, while also making it difficult for them to intensely interact with and absorb the learnings of hadith. Older adults also often struggle to grasp religious knowledge when teaching methods fail to consider the cognitive, emotional, physical, and social changes that come with aging, especially in terms of technical terms and lengthy explanations. This pedagogical gap can result in passive learning attitudes, hinder comprehension, and reduce the transformative potential of religious education (Deris & Hamzah, 2024).

Of particular concern is the relative neglect of hadith studies, despite hadith being the second most authoritative source of Islamic guidance after the Qur'an (Rofiah, 2017). Recent scholarship has indeed begun to explore intersections between Islam, mental health, and ageing. For example, Daher-Nashif et al. (2021) highlight the role of religious texts in shaping attitudes toward dementia and elderly care in Arab-Muslim societies. Yuliharti et al. (2024) emphasise that hadith provides rich insights into concepts of mental health, resilience, and psychosocial balance. Zulkipli et al. (2025) further argue that Prophetic psychotherapy (al-'Ilāj al-Nabawī) offers a systematic framework for sustaining spiritual and psychological harmony. While these studies affirm the significance of religious knowledge for elderly well-being, they tend to approach the subject broadly through the lens of spirituality, Qur'anic teaching, or health discourse, without systematically engaging hadith pedagogy as a specialised and structured field of study.

This gap is critical, although Qur'anic education for the elderly has received scholarly and practical attention, the pedagogical potential of hadith remains underexplored. Hadith encompasses not only legal rulings but also rich guidance on worship, patience, compassion, daily conduct, and preparation for death, dimensions highly relevant to ageing Muslims. Yet, structured modules that contextualise these teachings for older learners are largely absent. This absence limits the transformative potential of hadith education in empowering the elderly to cultivate spiritual resilience, emotional well-being, and positive ageing. Addressing this gap requires a systematic exploration of Prophetic themes that resonate with the lived realities of elderly Muslims and a pedagogical framework that adapts them into accessible and practical educational modules.

Accordingly, this study seeks to revitalise hadith education within the context of Islamic gerontology by analysing Prophetic themes pertinent to ageing and exploring their pedagogical application. The research aims to identify central themes such as worship and spirituality, patience, preparation for the Hereafter, and moderation in lifestyle, as understood by scholars, educators, and elderly learners themselves. By situating these findings within contemporary debates on lifelong learning and active ageing, this study responds to a critical research gap in the intersection of hadith pedagogy and gerontology.

This research makes three key contributions. First, it advances hadith studies by expanding its scope beyond jurisprudential or theological concerns to include its pedagogical role in elderly education. Second, it contributes to Islamic gerontology by framing Prophetic traditions as psychospiritual resources that foster resilience, meaning, and empowerment in

later life. Third, it offers practical implications for Islamic education policy, particularly in designing evidence-based curricula for elderly Muslims. Collectively, these contributions position hadith education as both a spiritual necessity and a viable psychospiritual intervention with sustainable impacts for ageing Muslim societies.

#### *The Need for Hadith Education among the Elderly*

Hadith learning for the elderly is a critical aspect in the formation of spirituality, the reinforcement of faith, and the facilitation of psychosocial well-being. From existing studies, religious learning that is practical and based on the needs of the elderly can assist them in living a more purposeful life in their old age. In this context, the provision of hadith learning as a component of Islamic learning warrants special consideration. Zakaria and Mohd Kusrin (2023) state that older adults in devotional programs showed more appreciation and practice of hadith through acts of worship carried out with greater devotion and mindfulness. This subsequently led to improved emotional well-being, with them expressing feelings of happiness and tranquility upon participation in these programs. Such evidence points to the necessity of protecting the elderly's right to religious practice through systematic activities in care facilities.

Complementary evidence further supports this position. Safitri et al. (2024) examined how Islamic religious counseling contributes to the spiritual and social development of older adults. Activities such as sholawat, dhikr, tahlil, and spiritual visitation gatherings were shown to calm the mind, strengthen faith, and foster positive social interaction. Similarly, Anwar et al. (2024) demonstrated that participation in dhikr assemblies has a significant positive relationship with the mental well-being of elderly participants, reducing psychological distress while increasing emotional and social stability. Such findings highlight that structured religious activities not only reinforce spirituality but also serve as a protective factor against loneliness, stress, and depression in old age.

From a psychospiritual perspective, Zulkipli et al. (2025) explain that hadith, as the foundation of Prophetic psychotherapy (al-'Ilāj al-Nabawī), can assist the elderly in multiple aspects of life. This approach, grounded in the internalization of iman (faith), islam (submission), and ihsan (excellence in conduct), provides a systematic methodology for sustaining psychological balance and mental harmony. The Prophetic model emphasizes values such as safety, well-being, harmony, and compassion, which can be mobilized as a therapeutic framework to promote happiness through spiritual, mental, emotional, and behavioral recovery. The application of this approach awakens the potential of tawhīd (monotheism) within the self, thereby enabling older adults to build resilience in facing trials, stress, and the inevitable challenges of daily life.

Moreover, Yuliharti et al. (2024) highlight that the study of hadith reveals key concepts of mental health such as security, independence, responsibility, and the balance between the physical and spiritual dimensions, concepts vital for the elderly to learn and internalize. In a related vein, Daher-Nashif et al. (2021) demonstrate that Islamic texts, including hadith, actively shape social and religious discourse on ageing and mental health issues in Arab-Muslim societies, particularly in relation to dementia care. These findings point to the profound potential of hadith education in providing holistic support for elderly Muslims.

On a more practical level, Mohd Amin (2025) recommends that elderly hadith education should focus on themes such as worship, fard al-'ayn, and taqwā. These themes are aligned with the Sharī'ah's call for Muslims to continually better themselves, particularly the stage of life that is nearest to the afterlife. They not only border on practical aspects of daily life but also instill a sense of consciousness on the transience of life. Hadiths that highlight the merits of prayer, sincerity, repentance, forgiveness, and etiquettes of preparing for death should therefore form the core of elderly education modules. Such teachings can potentially have a lasting effect on the formation of spiritual resilience, reinforcing trust in God's mercy and forgiveness, and reducing the fear, anxiety, and depression prevalent in old age. Resonating with this stance, Othman and Hamzah (2024) and Abdul Razak et al. (2017) emphasise spirituality, emotional support, and compassion as pillars in designing elderly learning models. While, Muhammad Fuad (2024) suggests that fundamental hadith texts such as Al-Wāfi, Sharḥ al-Arbaʿīn al-Nawawīyyah, and Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn should be incorporated in elderly education to enhance their overall development. Saidin and Abdul Majid (2025) further recommend augmenting themes on prophetic practices as a mechanism for empowering the elderly and strengthening their quality of life.

Empirical studies further reveal a close connection between spirituality and psychological resilience Baharuddin and Ismail (2013) found a significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and emotional resilience in the elderly. Spiritual intelligence is understood as the capacity to find meaning in life based on one's connection with the Divine. Hadith education has an important part in bolstering this intelligence, since hadith literature is full of spiritual values including patience, contentment, gratitude, and trust in God. The Prophet's (PBUH) advice urging the faithful to have a good opinion of God, to make supplication, and to be patient when confronted with adversity grants elderly people emotional strength to bear life's problems, isolation, and feelings of uselessness. This type of hadith education, as psychospiritual support, is therefore indispensable as a comprehensive model of religious education for the elderly, as well as indirectly for the support of their mental health.

Collectively, these studies offer empirical and theoretical proof that hadith learning is essential in older adult education. Aside from developing faith, it promotes psychosocial health through spiritual pedagogy that reinforces identity, develops self-reflection, and provides people with mental resilience in facing the final phase of life. It also positions hadith as a psychospiritual intervention capable of contributing to holistic Islamic gerontology and sustainable well-being among ageing Muslim societies.

### **Methodology**

This study employed an in-depth qualitative approach through two primary methods which are document analysis and semi-structured interviews. This approach was selected for its openness and flexibility in understanding social phenomena and human experiences, particularly within the spiritual and religious education context of the elderly. Moreover, the qualitative method allows the researcher to explore, in a contextualized manner, the values embedded within the Prophetic traditions (hadith). The data were derived from two main sources which are primary and secondary. Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews with three categories of informants which are hadith scholars, teachers and elderly residents of Madrasah Ibnu Mas'ud. During these interviews, informants were

asked about the themes of hadith they considered most relevant and meaningful to the spiritual, psychological, and social needs of older adults. Secondary data comprised a wide range of academic materials, including scholarly books, peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, and theses accessed through online databases such as Scopus, Google Scholar, and ResearchGate. These resources were utilized to identify contemporary discourses related to Islamic education and gerontology as well as to provide methodological guidance for thematic analysis. To ensure validity and relevance of findings, the study employed content analysis and thematic coding. This process involved identifying key themes from interview transcripts, including frequently recurring terms and expressions such as “ibadah at the end of life,” “continuing deeds,” and “journey to the hereafter.” Coding was conducted both deductively, based on existing literature, and inductively, through emergent themes arising from the interview data. The researcher also referred to Qur’anic exegesis (tafsir) and hadith commentaries to substantiate the identified themes. Through this process, several key hadith themes were identified as particularly pertinent for the elderly.

### **Research Findings and Discussion**

In the context of teaching and learning hadith to the elderly, the selection of appropriate themes plays a pivotal role in ensuring that they can comprehend, internalize, and practice Islamic teachings more effectively. Accordingly, the following themes are identified as most suitable for implementation among the elderly:

#### *Knowledge of Worship and Spirituality*

Elderly individuals often experience significant life changes such as deteriorating health, emotional fluctuations, social isolation, and an increased need for spiritual fulfilment. Their difficulties in performing acts of worship and spiritual practices due to physical limitations such as the inability to stand or walk normally have distanced some from their connection with Allah SWT. While some persist in their efforts, their worship may be incomplete or invalidated due to lapses such as forgetting the recitation of Surah al-Fatihah or other essential elements of prayer. At times, the prescribed order (tertib) of prayer is not properly observed, leading them gradually to abandon these practices under the assumption that Islam grants concessions for those in ill health. Consequently, many elderly individuals lack sufficient spiritual preparedness for the remainder of their lives.

Hence, in designing a model of learning for the elderly, the spiritual dimension must be prioritized. While it is undeniable that most elderly persons already value spirituality in their lifestyle, educators must give serious consideration to their physical, mental, and emotional capacities, as well as their ability to grasp knowledge and skills being imparted (Othman & Hamzah, 2024). Accordingly, the selection of hadith themes focusing on spirituality, worship, obligatory acts (fardu ‘ain), and piety (taqwa) is essential to ensure that the elderly receive guidance suited to their current needs. Such an approach strengthens their faith and provides inner tranquillity in navigating the increasingly challenging stage of late life.

This is consistent with the view of Mohd Amin (2025), who underscores the importance of hadith themes related to spirituality, worship, and taqwa, given that the elderly are at a stage of life closely associated with preparation for the Hereafter. As one respondent expressed:

“The elderly should be taught hadiths with spiritual themes, those related to worship, obligatory acts, piety, and the moral teachings embedded within hadith...” (Informant 4).

The encouragement to deepen religious knowledge is strongly emphasized by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), as reflected in his saying:

{سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: «مَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ بِهِ خَيْرًا يُفَقِّهْهُ فِي الدِّينِ»}

Meaning: “Whomever Allah wills goodness for, He grants him understanding in religion.” (Hadith al-Bukhari. *Bāb Man yuridi Allāhu Bihi Khayran Yufaqqihhu fī al-Dīn*. 71)

This hadith is highly relevant to the needs of the elderly as it underscores the importance of understanding, internalizing, and practicing religious knowledge as preparation for the Hereafter. Hence, teaching and learning hadiths that emphasize themes of worship and spirituality become a significant necessity for senior Muslims. Moreover, spiritual intelligence plays a crucial role in the well-being of the elderly, particularly in managing psychological and emotional challenges during the later stages of life (Baharuddin & Ismail, 2013). Hadiths that guide the elderly toward patience, sincerity, and preparation for the afterlife must therefore be emphasized. This corresponds with the divine command in the Qur’an:

{وَاعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَكَ الْيَقِينُ}

Meaning: “And worship your Lord until there comes to you the certainty [i.e., death]”. (Quran, Al-Hijr:99).

This verse highlights that worship is a lifelong obligation that must be instilled in the lives of the elderly. Accordingly, pedagogical approaches in hadith education should prioritize instilling values of piety through consistent acts of devotion such as prayer, remembrance (dhikr), and other forms of worship to ensure the continuity of their religious practice and the preservation of their spiritual well-being. This is consistent with the findings of Saidin & Abdul Majid (2025), who affirm that practicing religious devotion through Sunnah acts such as congregational prayer, voluntary fasting, supplication and remembrance and Qur’an recitation, are contributes positively to the spiritual well-being of the elderly.

#### *Preparation for the Hereafter*

In Islamic teachings, every believer is obliged to hold firm conviction that life in this world is merely temporary, while death is an inevitable certainty. Death, however, does not signify the end of existence; rather, it marks the beginning of the eternal journey towards the Hereafter. This awareness serves as a powerful motivation for individuals to make serious preparations for the life that follows death. Indeed, remembrance of death is a hallmark of wisdom among the faithful. The Prophet (PBUH) emphasized this in a narration by Abdullah ibn Umar RA:

{كُنْتُ مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ، فَجَاءَهُ رَجُلٌ مِنَ الْأَنْصَارِ فَسَلَّمَ عَلَيَّ النَّبِيِّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - ، ثُمَّ قَالَ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، أَيُّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَفْضَلُ؟ قَالَ: "أَحْسَنُهُمْ خُلُقًا" قَالَ: فَأَيُّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَكْيَسُ؟ قَالَ: "أَكْثَرُهُمْ لِلْمَوْتِ ذِكْرًا، وَأَحْسَنُهُمْ لِمَا بَعْدَهُ اسْتِعْدَادًا، أَوْلَيْكَ الْأَكْيَاسُ"}

Meaning: “I was with the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) when a man from among the Ansar came and greeted him. He then asked, ‘O Messenger of Allah, who among the believers is the best?’ The Prophet replied, ‘The one with the best character.’ The man asked again, ‘And who among the believers is the wisest?’ The Prophet replied, ‘The one who remembers death the most

and prepares best for what comes after it. They are the truly wise.” (Ibn Mājah. *Bāb Dhikri al-Mawti wa al-Isti’dādi Lahu*. 4259).

This ḥadīth demonstrates that remembering death is not merely a spiritual reflection, but a catalyst for moral refinement and the pursuit of deeds that yield lasting rewards in the Hereafter. The journey towards the afterlife is fraught with trials requiring spiritual strength, patience, and sufficient provision of righteous deeds. Central to this preparation is prayer (ṣalāh), which will be the first deed accounted for, alongside other acts such as remembrance of Allah (dhikr), maintaining kinship ties, and seeking beneficial knowledge. Hence, teaching ḥadīth themes on death to the elderly should emphasize both admonition and motivation to increase good deeds.

Bako (2022) found that teaching death-themed ḥadīth can soften hardened hearts, heighten spiritual sensitivity, foster Islamic commitment, and restrain worldly desires. The fear of death and a negative ending (su’ al-khātimah) motivates believers to renew their faith and obedience to Allah. The Prophet (PBUH) declared:

{قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ -: أَكْثَرُوا ذِكْرَ هَادِمِ اللَّذَاتِ "يَعْنِي الْمَوْتَ"

Meaning: “Remember often the destroyer of pleasures, namely death.” (Ibn Mājah. *Bāb Dhikri al-Mawti wa al-Isti’dādi Lahu*. 4258)

Such remembrance deters sin, instills humility, and provides tranquillity amid trials, while also instilling restraint during times of ease. Another vital theme for the elderly is the concept of ongoing charity (ṣadaqah jāriyah), whose rewards continue even after one’s death. The Prophet (PBUH) stated:

{أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، قَالَ: "إِذَا مَاتَ الْإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلَّا مِنْ ثَلَاثَةٍ: إِلَّا مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ، أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ، أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ {

Meaning: “When a human being dies, all his deeds come to an end except for three: an ongoing charity, beneficial knowledge, or a righteous child who prays for him.” (Muslim. *Bāb Mā Yalḥaqu al-Insāna Mina al-Thawābi Ba’Da Wafātihī*. 1631).

In addition, the practice of charity (ṣadaqah) carries numerous virtues, among them the bestowal of spiritual rewards upon the deceased. As stated in the hadith narrated by Ibn ‘Abbās (RA):

{أَنْبَأَنَا ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا: أَنَّ سَعْدَ بْنَ عُبَادَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ تُوَفِّيَتْ أُمُّهُ وَهُوَ غَائِبٌ عَنْهَا، فَقَالَ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ أُمَّي تُوَفِّيَتْ وَأَنَا غَائِبٌ عَنْهَا، أَيَنْفَعُهَا شَيْءٌ إِنْ تَصَدَّقْتُ بِهِيَ عَنْهَا؟ قَالَ: «نَعَمْ»، قَالَ: فَإِنِّي أَشْهَدُكَ أَنَّ حَائِطِي الْمِخْرَافَ صَدَقَةٌ عَلَيْهَا {

Meaning: “Ibn ‘Abbās (RA) reported that the mother of Sa’d ibn ‘Ubādah (RA) passed away while he was absent. He then said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, my mother has died while I was not present; will it benefit her if I give charity on her behalf?’ The Prophet (PBUH) replied: ‘Yes.’ Sa’d then said: ‘I bear witness to you that my orchard al-Mikhraf is given in charity on her behalf.’” (Al-Bukhārī. *Bāb Idhā Qāla: Arqī aw Bustānī Sadaqatun Lillāhi ‘an Ummī Fahuwa Jā’izun, wa in lam Yubayyin Liman Dhālika*. 2756).

From the perspective of istidlāl (juridical inference), such traditions form a foundational framework for all types of continuous charitable acts. Muhammad Fuad (2024) highlights that charity is strongly encouraged among the residents of Madrasah Warga Emas Ibn Mas’ūd, particularly the practice of morning charity (ṣadaqat al-ṣubḥ). According to one

informant, in addition to monetary charity, she frequently contributed to other forms of wealth, as he acknowledged:

“Giving food for breaking the fast. That too is a sunnah. To provide food.” (Informant 3).

The encouragement of this practice aims to instill in the residents’ the understanding that Islam provides a vast space for believers to dedicate rewards—through supplication, seeking forgiveness, charity, or knowledge to both them and the deceased. From the standpoint of da‘wah and social welfare, such acts not only strengthen bonds of love between the living and the departed but also reinforce the Islamic ethos that brotherhood and righteous deeds transcend the temporal boundaries of worldly life.

### *Patience and Contentment in Facing Life’s Trials*

Patience (ṣabr) represents a central tenet of Islamic teachings, consistently emphasized by the Prophet (PBUH) in confronting the inevitable trials of life. Illness, grief, anxiety, and calamities are natural realities that every human must endure. However, unlike secular perspectives that often regard suffering as a burden, Islam interprets it as an opportunity to draw closer to Allah SWT, elevate spiritual rank, and purify the soul from sins. This wisdom transforms trials from mere suffering into concealed blessings that lie behind hardship. One of the foundational traditions on patience during sickness and sorrow is the Prophet’s (PBUH) saying:

{عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: مَا يُصِيبُ الْمُسْلِمَ مِنْ نَصَبٍ وَلَا وَصَبٍ وَلَا هَمٍّ وَلَا حُزْنٍ وَلَا أَدَى وَلَا غَمٍّ حَتَّى الشُّوْكَةِ يُشَاكِّهَا إِلَّا كَفَّرَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ خَطَايَاهُ}

Meaning: “No fatigue, illness, sorrow, grief, harm, or distress befalls a Muslim, not even a thorn that pricks him, except that Allah expiates some of his sins thereby.” (Al-Bukhārī. *Bāb Mā Jā’a Fī Kaffārati al-Maradh*. 5641).

This narration highlights that every form of suffering endured by a believer carries profound spiritual significance. It is not a sign of divine wrath but rather a form of expiation (kaffārah) that cleanses sins and purifies the soul. In another narration, the Prophet (PBUH) said:

{قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: مَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ بِهِ خَيْرًا يُصِبْ مِنْهُ}

Meaning: “Whomever Allah intends good for, He afflicts him with trials.” (Al-Bukhārī. *Bāb Mā Jā’a Fī Kaffārati al-Maradh*. 5645).

This hadith provides deeper insight that tribulation is in fact a sign of divine favor. As Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (2010), in *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, explains, trials serve not only as expiation for sins but also as a means of raising one’s rank and granting honor in the sight of Allah. In this sense, patience during trials functions as a divine pedagogy (tarbiyah ilāhiyyah) that cultivates spiritual resilience and strengthens faith.

This theological and psychological framework finds resonance in the lived experiences of the elderly informants. One respondent reflected:

“I have been suffering from chronic illnesses, including diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease, for quite some time. At times, I also experience knee pain, which makes it difficult for me to rise for night prayers. Initially, I felt disappointed and sad because I was no longer strong as before. But when I remembered the Prophet’s saying that

every illness removes sins, my heart became calm. I learned to be patient, because perhaps this is how Allah purifies me” (Informant 1).

Such testimony demonstrates how the internalization of Prophetic traditions transforms physical suffering into an avenue for spiritual purification and resilience. From the perspective of Islamic psychology, this reflects the active dimensions of patience which are steadfastness in obedience, restraint from prohibitions, and perseverance in enduring hardships (Rusdi, 2016). Thus, patience is not a weakness but an effective coping strategy for managing emotional distress, particularly when confronting health and social crises (Lubis et al., 2022).

Scholarly findings further suggest that patience functions as a protective factor against depression, anxiety, and despair conditions frequently experienced among the elderly. Accordingly, the teaching of hadiths emphasizing patience, sincerity, and contentment merits special focus in elderly education. Such values not only assist the aged in coping with physical frailty and the challenges of advanced age but also enhance their spiritual intelligence. As noted by Baharuddin and Ismail (2013), spiritual intelligence enables elderly individuals to perceive suffering not as the end of life but as a transformative opportunity to strengthen their relationship with Allah, attain inner peace, and approach the hereafter with renewed hope.

#### *Simple Acts, Great Rewards*

In Islamic tradition, small deeds are often emphasized because, although they may appear simple and easy to perform, they carry immense rewards in the sight of Allah SWT. This concept is particularly relevant to the elderly, as it allows them to continue engaging in virtuous acts without being burdened by physically demanding practices. Among the Prophetic traditions highlighting this is the hadith regarding a smile as charity and offering greetings of peace, both of which are rewarded abundantly despite their apparent simplicity.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

{قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: تَبَسُّمُكَ فِي وَجْهِ أَخِيكَ لَكَ صَدَقَةٌ، وَأَمْرُكَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهْيُكَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ صَدَقَةٌ} Meaning: “Your smile in the face of your brother is charity. Enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil is also charity.” (Al-Tirmidhi. Bāb Mā Jā’a fī Sanā’i al-Ma’rūf. 1956).

This narration underscores that even the act of smiling constitutes worship and charity. For the elderly, whose physical strength may be limited, such practices are profoundly meaningful as they require neither energy nor cost yet bring significant spiritual merit while fostering positivity within the community. Moreover, a genuine smile contributes to emotional well-being, nurtures human relationships, and serves as a catalyst for spiritual tranquillity. By cultivating positive emotions, it directly enhances spiritual resilience among the elderly, enabling them to face the challenges of aging with serenity.

This aligns with the findings of Desiningrum et al. (2019), who observed that elderly individuals undergo degenerative processes across physical and psychological domains, including diminished emotional regulation such as anger, sadness, or hopelessness. Hence, smiling is not merely a facial expression but a simple strategy for spreading positive emotions, reinforcing psychological well-being, and enriching social relationships among the elderly.

Other light practices with immense rewards include the Prophet's saying:  
 {قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «لَا تَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ حَتَّى تُؤْمِنُوا، وَلَا تُؤْمِنُوا حَتَّى تَحَابُّوا، أَوْلَا أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَى شَيْءٍ إِذَا فَعَلْتُمُوهُ تَحَابَبْتُمْ؟ أَفَسُوا السَّلَامَ بَيْنَكُمْ»}

Meaning: "You will not enter Paradise until you believe, and you will not believe until you love one another. Shall I tell you something which, if you do it, you will love one another? Spread peace (by offering greetings) among yourselves." (Muslim. *Bāb Bayāni Annahu Lā Yadhkulu al-Jannata illā al-Mu'minūn, Wa Anna Maḥabbata al-Mu'minīn Mina al-Īmān, Wa Anna Ifshā'a as-Salām Sababan Liḥuṣūlihā*. 54).

Greeting others with salaam is a light yet profound act of worship. It strengthens bonds of brotherhood, cultivates mutual respect, and fosters love within society. For the elderly, offering salaam can be practiced consistently without physical strain, while still promising great spiritual rewards. Furthermore, it nurtures a sense of belonging and appreciation within the community. Yusoff et al. (2022) note that many elderly individuals prefer residing in traditional institutions, where light acts of worship such as offering greetings and remembrance (dhikr) are encouraged, bringing peace of mind and spiritual fulfilment.

This highlights the pedagogical importance of teaching hadiths centred on simple yet impactful practices.

Field interviews similarly revealed that the elderly prefer practical and directly applicable hadith teachings. One informant stated:

"I had never studied hadith before. Only here at the Madrasah did I learn them. I just want to focus on good acts of worship, to seek knowledge for the hereafter, and then practice the simple deeds..." (Informant 3).

Another informant emphasized:

"Sunnah practices must be taught to elders like me because they are not burdensome. These are things we can all do. People say they're light but valuable, like sleeping on the right side, entering the restroom with the left foot and exiting with the right, or beginning actions with the right side. These are simple acts we can adopt daily." (Informant 5).

These statements demonstrate that the elderly highly appreciate sunnah practices that are simple, practical, and closely tied to daily experiences. Such acts facilitate easier internalization, encourage consistency, and prevent feelings of burden. Living in the Madrasah further enhances their capacity to embody these practices within a supportive religious environment.

The theme of hadith education emphasizing simple acts with great rewards is highly effective for the elderly. Narrations that are straightforward, comprehensible, and relevant to daily life deserve emphasis, as they align with their capabilities and encourage sustained practice, ultimately integrating seamlessly into their lifestyle.

#### *Cleanliness, Health, and a Balanced Lifestyle*

At this stage of life, the elderly often face health challenges, physical limitations, and the need to maintain a sustainable lifestyle. Islam, as a religion of mercy, offers comprehensive guidance that not only emphasizes the importance of ritual worship but also encompasses the care of the body, nutrition, and physical movement. The Prophetic traditions of

Muhammad (PBUH) clearly indicate that health and physical well-being are integral to faith and serve as prerequisites for the proper performance of acts of worship. Cleanliness in Islam is regarded as a manifestation of genuine faith. The Prophet (PBUH) said:

{قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «الطُّهُورُ شَطْرُ الْإِيمَانِ...»}

Meaning: "Cleanliness is part of faith." (Muslim. *Bab Fadli al-Wudu'*. 223).

This hadith illustrates that cleanliness is not merely a physical routine but a spiritual practice that reflects one's obedience to Allah SWT. For the elderly, personal hygiene, cleanliness of clothing, and a clean environment are not only essential for comfort but also serve as preventive measures against illness. In terms of nutrition, the Prophet (PBUH) emphasized moderation. He said:

{سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: مَا مَلَأَ آدَمِيَّ وَعَاءَ سَرًّا مِنْ بَطْنٍ. بِحَسْبِ ابْنِ آدَمَ أَكْلَاتٌ يُقْمَنُ صَلْبَهُ، فَإِنْ كَانَ لَا مَحَالََةَ فَتُلْتُ لِطَعَامِهِ وَتُلْتُ لِشْرَابِهِ وَتُلْتُ لِنَفْسِهِ}

Meaning: "No human fills a vessel worse than his stomach. It is sufficient for the son of Adam to eat a few morsels to keep his back straight. But if he must (eat more), then one-third for his food, one-third for his drink, and one-third for his breath." (Al-Tirmidhi. *Bāb Mā Jā'a Fī Karāhiyyati Kathratil Akli*. 2380).

This hadith highlights that overeating harms the body, whereas moderation ensures health and longevity. This principle is particularly relevant for the elderly, who require balanced and controlled diets to prevent and manage illnesses such as diabetes, hypertension, and obesity, which are prevalent in later life.

Furthermore, the Prophet (PBUH) encouraged light physical activity. Although he did not prescribe specific forms of exercise, hadith related to walking, horseback riding, archery, and swimming underscore the importance of physical movement in daily life. For the elderly, simple activities such as walking or light exercise can improve fitness, reduce the risk of chronic diseases, and enhance mental health (Saidin & Abdul Majid, 2025). Modern research further supports these benefits, demonstrating that physical activity among older adults improves sleep quality, reduces stress, and slows cognitive decline (Mahindru et al., 2023).

At the Ibnu Mas'ud Madrasah, elderly residents engage in light physical activities and exercises, such as walking around the compound in the mornings, according to their physical capabilities. One participant explained:

"Every morning after sunrise, before breakfast, we walk around the shelter's grounds. It feels like circumambulating the Kaaba. We move in circles, sometimes alone, sometimes with others. We are always active walking, hanging the laundry at the back..." (Informant 2).

In conclusion, the hadith concerning cleanliness, dietary moderation, and encouragement of physical activity demonstrate that Islam promotes a balanced lifestyle as a key to holistic well-being. For the elderly, these practices not only contribute to physical and mental health but also represent a form of spiritual devotion by honouring and safeguarding the body as a divine blessing. Such a holistic approach reflects the essence of Islam as a religion that upholds both spiritual and physical welfare in harmony.

## Conclusion

This study underscores that Hadith education holds significant potential as a psychospiritual intervention within the framework of Islamic gerontology. The findings reveal that Hadith themes related to worship and spirituality, preparation for the Hereafter, patience in facing life's trials, small deeds with great rewards, as well as cleanliness and moderation in lifestyle, can positively impact the wellbeing of older adults. These themes not only strengthen spiritual values and religious motivation but also contribute to emotional stability and overall quality of life. The results demonstrate that the Prophetic traditions of Muhammad (PBUH) are not only timelessly relevant but can also serve as a crucial foundation in developing a more holistic, inclusive, and effective educational module for the elderly. Consequently, this research directly contributes to the empowerment of Islamic education policies oriented towards gerontology, while enriching academic discourse in the field of contemporary Hadith pedagogy. It is further recommended that future studies focus on the development of a specialized Hadith database to facilitate elderly individuals' access to themes pertinent to practices most suitable for them. Such an initiative would assist older adults in familiarizing themselves with relevant practices, thereby enhancing their religious observance in daily life.

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