



## **CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE MEANING OF HADITH REGARDING THE EXHORTATION TO INCREASE OFFSPRING FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF HASAN HANAFI'S HERMENEUTICS: A Counter Effort against The Childfree Phenomenon**

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### **Abstract**

This research aims to uncover the meaning of the text and context, as well as the effort to contextualize the meaning of the Hadith concerning the encouragement to have many offspring in order to counter the phenomenon. It poses three research questions: firstly, what is the quality of the Hadith concerning the encouragement to have many offspring. Secondly, we will examine the meaning of the Hadith regarding the encouragement to have many offspring. Thirdly, we will explore the contextualization of the meaning of the Hadith concerning the encouragement to have many offspring within the context of childfree. This study is a literature review with a deductive approach, employing the hermeneutic method of Hadith by Hasan Hanafi through three operational steps, namely historical criticism, eidetic criticism, and practical criticism. As a result of this research, the first finding is that the Hadith about the encouragement to have many offspring is considered to be authentic (*sahih lighairihi*). Secondly, the textual meaning is the prohibition of celibacy and marrying

infertile women, as well as the recommendation to get married, while the contextual meaning is that the Prophet will take pride in having numerous descendants. Thirdly, contextualization of the hadith, which is about having descendants and preserving the lineage.

**Keywords:** Children, Descendants, Hadith, Marriage

### **Abstrak**

Penelitian ini dilatar belakangi sejak munculnya fenomena dalam sebuah pernikahan yang mulai marak diperbincangkan. Fenomena tersebut yakni adanya sepasang suami istri yang menolak untuk memiliki anak, karena pada hakikatnya fenomena ini dapat memutuskan mata rantai regenerasi yang mengakibatkan kerusakan dari sisi akidah maupun dari sisi sosial kemasyarakatan. Penelitian ini berusaha untuk mengungkap makna teks dan konteks serta upaya kontekstualisasi makna hadis tentang anjuran memperbanyak keturunan dalam rangka meng-counter fenomena tersebut, dengan mengajukan tiga rumusan masalah yaitu pertama, Bagaimana kualitas hadis tentang anjuran memperbanyak keturunan. Kedua, Bagaimana makna hadis tentang anjuran memperbanyak keturunan. ketiga, Bagaimana kontekstualisasi makna hadis tentang anjuran memperbanyak keturunan dalam konteks childfree. Penelitian ini merupakan jenis studi kepustakaan yang bersifat deduktif dengan menggunakan metode hermeneutika hadis Hasan Hanafi melalui tiga langkah operasional yaitu langkah kritik historis, kritik eidetis, dan kritik praksis. Sebagai hasil temuan dari penelitian ini yaitu pertama, Hadis tentang anjuran memperbanyak keturunan memiliki kualitas shahih lighairihi. Kedua, Makna tekstual yaitu larangan membujang dan menikahi wanita mandul serta anjuran untuk menikah, sedangkan makna kontekstual yakni nabi akan berbangga dengan banyaknya keturunan. Ketiga, Kontekstualisasi makna hadis yakni memiliki keturunan dan menjaaga keturunan.

**Kata Kunci:** Anak-Anak, Hadist, Keturunan, Menikah

## Introduction

In the fundamental teachings of Islam, every human being is created in pairs to enter into a marriage with the aim of completing half of their religion (Al-Baihaqi, n.d.). Marriage is not merely for fulfilling desires or sexual instincts, but also for the purpose of procreation (Nurhayati, 2011). Islam teaches that having offspring is one of the innate characteristics of human beings, as stated by Al-Ghazali, who asserts that children are a trust from Allah that must be nurtured and protected in order to attain the virtues of life and draw closer to Allah (Taubah, 2015). In the hadith of the Prophet, it is explained that the position of a child is such that they can elevate the status of their parents in paradise (Majah, n.d.). They are capable of bringing comfort to the hearts of both parents and serving as adornments in this world and the hereafter as in QS. Al-Kahfi:46. In essence, a child has also been given the guarantee of sustenance by Allah as in QS. Al-Isra':31. Moreover, one slogan that is commonly heard in society is "banyak anak, banyak rezeki" which means that each child born into the world has their own portion of sustenance (Samiudin, 2017).

There is a phenomenon considered paradoxical to Islamic teachings, commonly referred to as Family Planning (KB) in Indonesia, which is a government program aimed at controlling the population density.(Shiska Trianziani, 2018) This phenomenon represents a life choice of a couple to limit their desire to have children. The term "KB" in the Arabic language is *tanzim an-nasl* which means «family planning» and *tahdid an nasl* which means «limiting offspring.» According to the Arabic dictionary Mu'jam Al-Ma'ani, the term *tanzim* means organization and *an nasl* means offspring or generation. This concept is considered pro as it involves organizing one's offspring (*tanzim an-nasl*) and is still deemed acceptable. On the other hand, the term *tahdid* means limitation, thus this concept is considered contradictory as it goes against Islamic

teachings. However, after being communicated and further researched, eventually, the Family Planning (KB) program is seen as beneficial and capable of creating economic and social prosperity for families and the nation.

The current trending phenomenon, which has become a phenomenal issue and has garnered both support and opposition, is referred to as «childfree» (getting married without having children) (Farisi, n.d.). The phenomenon of childfree has become a prominent topic of discussion among Muslim communities in Indonesia, leading to the emergence of negative stigma from the general public. The issue of childfree in Indonesia started with a public figure who declared themselves as a follower of the childfree principle in their marriage, and this was shared on their social media account (Muslim, 2021). Indeed, such a principle is certainly in direct contradiction with the teachings of the Quran and Hadith if it occurs in a Muslim. Essentially, Islam teaches that marriage is a means to perfect one's faith, and one of the objectives of marriage is to have righteous offspring (Fikra & Darmalaksana, 2022).

Both of these phenomena are empirically based and are considered normatively contrary to the teachings of Islam. Therefore, in the course of this research, the researcher found several groups from various perspectives that discuss the hadith on procreation. One of them is examined from the perspective of textual and contextual analysis by Warsito, which focuses on the hadith about the command to have many offspring from an economic perspective (Warsito, 2018). Another article, authored by Ach Farid, examines the hadith on the encouragement to have many offspring from the perspective of living hadith. The hadith in question is recorded in Abu Daud No. Index 2050 (Farid, 2021). Similarly, the categorization of studies on the childfree phenomenon encompasses various perspectives, including the study from the perspective of takhrij hadith by M. Irfan Farraz Haecal et al., which focuses on analyzing the

childfree phenomenon from the standpoint of Islamic law (Haecal, n.d.). Another article reviewed from the perspective of women's reproductive rights is the work of Usawatul Khasanah, which focuses on childfree from the aspect of women's reproductive rights in Islam (Uswatul Khasanah, 2021). Furthermore, from the perspective of Islamic education in Abdul Hadi's work, et al., the focus is on childfree from the perspective of Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) (Khotimah, Sadari & Hadi, 2022).

From several previous works, the author has not found any research that directly discusses the hadith about encouraging to have many offspring in terms of its meaning and its connection to the current childfree phenomenon. Therefore, the author intends to focus this research on re-examining the hadith about the encouragement to have many offspring, considering both its textual and contextual aspects, and contextualizing the meaning of the hadith with the current childfree phenomenon. The research will cover several points: First, the position of children in Islam. Second, the discourse on the childfree phenomenon. Third, the understanding of hadith regarding the encouragement to have many offspring. The benefit of this study is to provide guidance for married couples in making decisions regarding choosing a childfree lifestyle.

In this study, the author employed the qualitative data analysis method through library research, which was deductive in nature and drawn from primary and secondary data sources. The data collection for this research involved conducting a literature review of various journals, books, and articles that presented similar case studies to the current research. Furthermore, in the data collection of hadiths for this research, the method of takhrij hadith bi al-lafdzi was employed, which involves tracing hadiths using keywords from one of the phrases of the hadith regarding the encouragement to have many offspring (Noorhidayati, 2017b). This was followed by the maudhu'i method, which aimed to

determine the theme from various aspects. Similarly, the analysis of the collected data employed the hermeneutical method offered by Hasan Hanafi, which involved three operational steps: historical criticism carried out through the critique of hadith (naqd al hadith), eidetic criticism involving textual and contextual meaning examination with linguistic and historical approaches, and finally, practical criticism aiming to contextualize the meaning of hadith in relation to the relevance concerning the childfree phenomenon (Noorhidayati, 2017a).

## **The Position of Children in Islam**

According to the terms used in the Qur'an, the meaning of a child is derived from the words "al-walad" or "al-aulad," as mentioned in Surah Al-Balad: 3, Surah At-Taghabun: 15, and Surah Al-Anfal: 28. These terms are frequently employed to signify the meaning of a child, and there are many other terms from both the Qur'an and Hadith that convey meanings about children (Kharomen, 2019) This is important because it serves as evidence that Islam highly regards a child as having a significant role and function. In several other verses, such as Surah Al-Furqan: 74, Allah SWT describes a child as a descendant who plays the role of "qurrota a'yun" (a source of comfort to the eyes). In Surah Al-Kahf: 46, a child is described as the adornment of life. Even a family with various wealth will not feel complete and satisfied without being blessed with children (Maghfira, 2016)

The position of a child in Islam, as explained in several verses of the Quran above, is not only to bring comfort to the heart, adorn life, and continue the struggle of their parents but also to be an investment of good deeds for the parents, earning them rewards and elevating their status as servants of Allah in the Hereafter (Ahmad, n.d.) However, the position of a child can also become a trial and a temptation for both parents as in QS. al-Taghabun: 15. If they are unable to uphold the rights

of a child. Likewise, the position of a child within the family is also significant, as they can be a source of pride and trust entrusted by Allah to a married couple, serving as both a blessing and a trial. Children are also a gift bestowed upon a married couple, as reflected in the Arabic term “Wahaba,” which means to give. Etymologically, the word “Wahaba” symbolizes the act of giving something to someone without expecting anything in return. This term is also frequently used in several verses of the Quran, such as in Surah Ibrahim: 39, Surah Al-Anbiya: 90, and Surah Al-An’am: 84.

The presence of children also entails two types of relationships and ways of dealing with them, namely “Hablum min Allah” and “Hablum min Al-Nas.” “Hablum min Allah” refers to the relationship between humans and Allah as a form of gratitude to Allah with the hope of having righteous and pious children. On the other hand, “Hablum min Al-Nas” is the relationship with fellow human beings, portraying happiness for the blessing by sharing and caring for each other socially (Ibrahim, 2005). The position of children can also be a source of joy or medicine for the parents as in the QS. al-Furqon:74. This explains that a child can be a remedy for all disappointments and emotional issues for both parents. However, a child, who is also a treasure entrusted by Allah, can also become a trial and a source of conflict for the couple, as wealth and children are often the causes of human negligence (Samiudin, 2017). It begins with boasting and showing off, both concerning wealth and children. Therefore, there needs to be a good relationship between children and their parents, and proper education must be imparted to the children by their parents.

In a hadith narration, it explains the chapter on showing kindness and devotion to parents. This serves as a reminder that a child can bring blessings to both parents, and they will be elevated in status due to the seeking of forgiveness by a child on behalf of their parents (Majah:

3650, n.d.) Similarly, Islam explains that a child has their own rights, one of which is the right to grow, live, and develop according to their own natural disposition (*fitrah*) in QS. al-Amin:151. Furthermore, the rights of children that need to be fulfilled by both parents include ensuring that the parents take care of their family, especially their children, to protect them from the torment of Hellfire. The notion of taking care in this context means safeguarding them by performing good deeds, obeying Allah's commands, and staying away from His prohibitions in QS. al-Tahrim:6.

## **Discourse on the Phenomenon of Childfree**

The term "childfree" has been defined since 1970 as a married couple choosing not to have children. Based on several research findings, there are various reasons underlying a couple's decision to not have children, one of which is that couples tend to have higher education levels and primarily reside in urban areas. Based on the research results from US Consensus (2004), there are several correlations for choosing to be childfree based on educational level: 14.3% for high school graduates, 18.2% for bachelor's degree holders, and 27.6% for master's degree holders. Furthermore, the potential for adopting the childfree principle among unmarried women is 82.5%, whereas among married women who choose to be childfree, it is 12.9%. (Husnul Khotimah Sadari Abdul Hadi, 2022) Similarly, based on data from the National Survey of Family Growth cited from [www.gooddoctor.com](http://www.gooddoctor.com), more than 15% of women and 24% of men have decided not to have children. Meanwhile, according to a survey conducted in Canada by the General Social Survey (GSS) in 2001, it revealed that 7% of people in Canada aged between 20 to 34 years, representing 434,000 individuals, stated that they have no intention of having children. Additionally, 4% of some individuals from Canada expressed that marriage is an important aspect aimed at increasing



offspring or giving birth to a new generation (Khasanah, 2021).

As per the data from the research above, it is essential to understand that being childfree is a mutual agreement between couples in their marriage. The term “childfree” is currently considered relatively new and unfamiliar among Indonesian society, but it is commonplace and familiar to people abroad, especially in major countries like the United States. Couples who choose to be childfree have specific reasons, not solely stemming from women’s perspectives, but also from reasons related to financial constraints, health issues, or traumatic family experiences, leading individuals, particularly women, to decide not to have children.(iriani Indri Hapsari, 2015) The decision to choose to be childfree is an individual’s right to determine the desired lifestyle. In the midst of Indonesia’s deeply ingrained culture, the childfree phenomenon is not in line with the societal construct regarding life without having children after marriage. Having children after marriage has become a habitual practice in society, and individuals are expected to have children after marriage as it is considered a completion of a family (Hapsari, 2015).

One example that underlies the use of the term “childfree” in Indonesia is the presence of statements from a married couple, such as an influencer named Gita Savitri and her husband, Paul Andre Paartohap (Muslim, 2021). They believe that having a child is not an obligation, but rather an individual’s life choice. Furthermore, there is another article from a public figure who also has unique reasons for adopting the childfree lifestyle, namely Sarah Paulson, who is known for her role in the series “American Horror Story.” Sarah has interesting reasons for deciding to choose a childfree lifestyle. Her reasons stem from the fear of having children and later regretting it. To anticipate any change in her future opinion, she has taken a preventive measure by freezing her eggs. However, Sarah has also mentioned that if she ever decides to

have children in the future, she can access the frozen eggs at any time (Muslim, 2021).

This has led to the emergence of negative stigma, particularly among the Muslim community, as it is perceived to go against the natural order for women to have children and contradicts religious norms. However, before the rise of the childfree phenomenon, there was already a government program known as Family Planning (KB). The government's family planning program is one of its efforts to control the population in Indonesia. It should be noted that the objective of this program is to manage pregnancies through contraceptive methods in order to create economic and social well-being for the entire society (Trianziani, 2018). However, the public's perception, especially among the millennial generation, has led to misunderstandings in interpreting the government's program, as they believe that it can support the current hot and trending issues. Additionally, this program may create a societal construct where negative views towards the decision of not having children are marginalized, as there is ample evidence suggesting that a couple can lead a happy life without the presence of children. Consequently, by participating in this family planning program, they become comfortable with the idea of choosing not to have children after marriage.

### **Understanding Hadith Regarding the Encouragement to Increase Offspring**

In examining the meaning of a hadith, it is not enough to merely look at the text of the hadith or simply consider its translation and content. This also relates to the relevance of a hadith to be used as evidence in line with the development of time. Regarding the hadiths about the encouragement to increase offspring, researchers will employ the hermeneutic method offered by Hasan Hanafi because this method

is considered capable of resolving issues in understanding the meaning of hadiths. The Hasan Hanafi method comprises three operational steps. The first step is historical criticism, which involves analyzing the hadith to determine its validity and authenticity in terms of the chain of narrators (sanad). This includes criteria for authenticity, such as continuous chains (muttasil), narrators being trustworthy ('adil), all narrators being reliable (dabit), hadiths free from contradictions (syuzuz), and hadiths without 'illat (hidden defects) (Musahadi, 2000).

In terms of eidetic criticism, it involves understanding the hadith through three steps of analysis. The first step is the analysis of the matan, which includes the explanation of the meaning of the hadith. The second step is the analysis of historical reality, aiming to find the socio-historical context of the hadith. The third step is the analysis of generalization, which is based on reality to reveal the universal meaning present in the hadith. The next step is the understanding of the final meaning of the hadith from the perspective of praxis criticism. This criticism is used to analyze the changes in the meaning of the hadith resulting from the process of generalization into the current reality of life. This analysis is often known as contextualizing the hadith to the present reality (Musahadi, 2000).

### *Historical Criticism*

Historical criticism, which aims to determine the validity and authenticity of the hadith regarding the encouragement to increase offspring, was conducted through the use of the Jawami' Al-Kalim software application. As a result, several variations of the hadith were found, including the hadith narrated in Sunan Abu Daud No. 1757, as follows:

حَدَّثَنَا أَحْمَدُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَدَّثَنَا يَزِيدُ بْنُ هَارُونَ أَخْبَرَنَا مُسْتَلِمُ بْنُ سَعِيدِ بْنِ أُخْتِ مَنْصُورِ بْنِ زَادَانَ عَنْ

مَنْصُورٍ يَعْنِي ابْنَ زَادَانَ عَنْ مُعَاوِيَةَ بْنِ قُرَّةَ عَنْ مَعْقِلِ بْنِ يَسَارٍ قَالَ

جَاءَ رَجُلٌ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ إِنِّي أَصَبْتُ امْرَأَةً ذَاتَ حَسَبٍ وَجَمَالٍ وَإِنَّهَا لَا تَلِدُ  
أَفَأَتَزَوَّجُهَا قَالَ لَا ثُمَّ آتَاهُ الثَّانِيَةَ فَتَهَاهُ ثُمَّ آتَاهُ الثَّلَاثَةَ فَقَالَ تَزَوَّجُوا الْوُدُودَ الْوُلُودَ فَإِنِّي مُكَاثِرٌ بِكُمْ الْأُمَّمَ

*Meaning: "Ahmad bin Ibrahim narrated to us, who narrated from Yazid bin Harun, who reported from Mustalim bin Sa'id, who was the son of Manshur bin Zadzaan, who heard from Manshur bin Zadzan, who heard from Muawiyah bin Qurrah, who heard from Ma'qil bin Yasar. Ma'qil bin Yasar said, a man came to the Prophet and said, 'I have found a woman who is of good lineage and beautiful, but she is infertile. Can I marry her?'" He answered, "No." Then he came again for the second time, and the Prophet repeated the prohibition. After that, he came again for the third time, and then the Prophet said, "Marry women who are fertile (produce many offspring), for I will take pride in having a large number of followers among other nations because of you." (HR. Sunan Abu Daud:1757) (Jawami' Al Kalim, n.d.).*

A hadith can be considered authentic (shahih) when it fulfills the condition of having a continuous chain of narrators, either through riwayat bi al-ma'na (narration by meaning) or riwayat bi al-lafadz (narration by wording). The hadith with the narration from Imam Abu Daud No. 1757 as the mudawwin or mukharrij has six narrators, namely Ma'qil bin Yasar bin 'Abdullah, Mu'awiyah bin Qurrah bin Iyas bin Hilal, Manshur bin Zadzan, Mustalim bin Sa'id, Yazid bin Harun, and Ahmad bin Ibrahim. According to the tracking information in the Jawami' Al-Kalim software application, not all narrators in the chain of the hadith from Sunan Abu Daud have known birth and death years, such as Musta'lim bin Sa'id, for whom the birth and death years are unknown. Similarly, the narrators Manshur bin Zadzan and Ma'qil bin Yasar, whose birth years are unknown but their death years are known, are also part

of this hadith. According to information from the Jawami' Al-Kalim software application, all the narrators in this hadith are rated as *tsiqoh* (trustworthy), *alim amil* (knowledgeable and practicing), *tsiqoh ma'mum* (reliable and trusted), *tsiqoh ahli ibadah* (reliable in worship), *hafidz* (memorizer), and *tsiqoh hafidz* (reliable memorizer), except for one narrator named Mustalim bin Sai'id. According to the comments of the scholars, he is considered *shaduq*, which means he has an equal chance of being correct or incorrect compared to *tsiqoh*, and he is deemed to have some uncertainty in his narrations. However, the term "shaduq" is not considered a negative comment but rather an explanation. Therefore, based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that the chain of narration (*sanad*) of this hadith is of the *hasan* quality.

After conducting the analysis of the *riwayah bi al-lafadz* that originates from the keyword *al-wadud al-walud* and continued with the *maudu'i* method, several variations of the hadith *matan* were found. Among them, some use the wording *tazawwaju al-wadud al-walud, inni mukathirun al-anbiya' yawm al-qiyamat* (Ibn Hanbal, n.d.). Then, the same wording is also narrated in Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal No. 13157, Sahih Ibn Hibban No. 4118, and Sunan Sa'id bin Manshur No. 477. Another variation of the hadith *matan* is found in the same wording but with different phrasing *tazawwaju al-wadud al-walud, inni mukathirun bikum*. The same wording is also found in the narration of Sahih Ibn Hibban No. 4148 (Ibn Habban, n.d.). In the narration of Musnad Ibn Hanbal No. 12373, it is found the phrase *inni mukathirun al-anbiya' yawm al-qiyamat* which means that the Prophet will take pride in front of the other prophets on the Day of Judgment. However, it differs from the narration found in Sahih Ibn Hibban No. 4147 which states *fainni mukathirun bikum*, indicating that the Prophet will take pride in his *ummah*. As for the *matan* of the hadith narrated by Sunan Abu Daud, it is classified as *shahih lighairihi* (authentic due to supporting evidence),

and both variations of the matan also have the same level of authenticity, which is shahih lighairihi. The existence of these variations in the matan can strengthen and clarify the hadith narrated by Sunan Abu Daud.

### *Eidetic Criticism*

After ascertaining the authenticity of the hadith regarding the recommendation to increase offspring, the next step is for the writer to conduct eidetic criticism through a linguistic study aimed at understanding the textual, historical, and contextual meaning of the Hadith concerning the encouragement to increase offspring. In terms of redaction, there are two segments of sentences that state two things, namely prohibition and command. The first excerpt is found in the phrase *wainnaha la talidu afaatazawwajuha qala la*. According to the Mu'jam Al Ma'ani Arabic dictionary, the word *talidu* is derived from *wa-la-da, ya-li-du* which means to give birth or to bear children. This phrase contains a prohibition against marrying infertile women. The background behind this prohibition is that at that time, the Prophet Muhammad was approached by a man who asked three times whether it was permissible to marry a wealthy woman who did not have children. However, the Prophet responded with a negative answer.

Similarly, in the second part, there is the phrase *tazawwaju al-wadud al-walud fainni mukathirun bikum al-umam*. According to the Mu'jam Al Ma'ani Arabic dictionary, the word *tazawwaju* is derived from *tazawwaja* which means to marry, to wed, or to take a spouse. Meanwhile, the word *al-wadud* is derived from *wadda-yawaddu* which means extremely affectionate or compassionate, and *al-walud* is derived from *wa-la-da, ya-li-du* which means offspring or children. In this phrase, it contains a teaching that serves as the Prophet's solution or recommendation regarding the prohibition of marrying infertile women, as explained in the first part of this hadith. The Prophet's command is

to marry women who are affectionate and fertile, meaning those who are kind and capable of producing offspring. By doing so, the Prophet would take pride in having many children. Furthermore, the background behind this teaching is that at that time, the condition of the Muslim community in Arabia was very small in number. Therefore, the Prophet advised them to increase their offspring so that he could take pride in front of his community.

As a reinforcement of the above hadith, there is another hadith that is in line with the mentioned hadith. This hadith is narrated in Musnad Ahmad No. 12373, which explains that the Prophet Muhammad emphasized and commanded his ummah to get married. The narration of this hadith is as follows:

حَدَّثَنَا حُسَيْنٌ، وَعَفَّانُ، قَالَا: حَدَّثَنَا خَلْفُ بْنُ خَلِيفَةَ، حَدَّثَنِي حَفْصُ بْنُ عُمَرَ، عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ:  
كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ يَأْمُرُ بِالْبَاءَةِ، وَيَنْهَى عَنِ التَّبْتُلِ نَهْيًا شَدِيدًا، وَيَقُولُ: ” تَزَوَّجُوا الْوَدُودَ الْوَلُودَ، إِنِّي مُكَابِرٌ  
الْأَنْبِيَاءَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

*Translation: “Meaning: Huasin and Affan narrated to us, saying Khalaf bin Khalifah narrated to us, and he narrated from Hafs bin Umar, who heard Anas bin Malik saying, ‘The Messenger of Allah commanded us to get married and strongly forbade us from remaining single. He, the Messenger of Allah, said, ‘Marry someone who is affectionate and will produce many offspring, for I will boast about the great number of my followers on the Day of Judgment in comparison to the other prophets.’” (HR. Musnah Ahmad No. 12373) (Ibn Hanbal, n.d.)*

From the perspective of tracing through the method of takhrij sanad hadith in the Jawami’ Al-Kalim software application, there is another hadith that is in line with this hadith, besides the narration by musnad Ahmad no. 1757, which is the narration from Sunan Said bin Manshur No. 490. This hadith is transmitted by five narrators, with Imam

Ahmad as the mudawwin or mukharrij. The narrators are Al Husain bin Muhammad bin Bahram, Khalaf bin Kalifah, Hafsh bin Umar bin Sa'ad Al Qarzh, and Anas bin Malik bin An Nadlir bin Dlamdlom bin Zaid bin Haram. According to the information in the Jawami' Al-Kalim software application, this hadith has one narrator, Khalaf bin Khalifah bin Sha'id, whose memorization is considered poor. However, there are several other narrators who are rated as good, such as maqbul, shaduq, and tsiqoh. Some scholars consider the hadith to be classified under weak narrators in terms of memorization. However, some also argue that the narrator is reliable (tsiqah) in terms of truthfulness and trustworthiness. Therefore, the quality of this hadith is considered hasan.

The interpretation of the text in this hadith also includes two teachings. In the first segment, it contains the prohibition of remaining single, as mentioned in the phrase *wayanha 'an at-tabattuli nahyan shadidan*. When examined individually based on the Mu'jam Al Ma'ani Arabic dictionary, *yanha* comes from the word *na-ha-y*, which means to prevent, forbid, or prohibit, while *at-tabattuli* means remaining single, and *shadidan* means extremely firm or severe. The overall meaning of the first phrase is "and (the Prophet) prohibits staying single with a firm prohibition." The explanation of the meaning of this text is supported by the emphatic term *yanha*, which signifies the strong prohibition by the Prophet against his followers remaining single. This is also elucidated in the Quranic verse that Allah created every human being to marry as in QS. al-Zariyat:49.

The second teaching can be found in the phrase *tazawwaju al-wadud al-walud, inni mukathirun al-anbiya' yawm al-qiyamat*, which contains the command to marry women who are loving and have children. Consequently, the Prophet will compete in increasing his followers on the Day of Judgment. According to the Arabic language dictionary, the word *mukathirun* derived from *kath-tha-ra, yu-kath-*



*thi-ru* means to multiply, increase, or procreate. This confirms that the Prophet indeed commanded his followers not only to marry but also to increase their offspring. Meanwhile, in the phrase *al-anbiya'*, it can serve as an argument for the Prophet that he will take pride in front of the other prophets on the Day of Judgment. Thus, when translated in its entirety, the meaning of the wording in this hadith text bears a striking similarity to the narration in Sunan Abu Daud No. 1757 mentioned above. Both emphasize the command to marry productive women or, in other words, those who can bear many children. According to information from the application Jawami' Al Kalim, this hadith is of high quality and is classified as shahih lighairi (authentic due to supporting evidence).

Furthermore, there is also a hadith that explicitly explains the command to marry and increase offspring, which is narrated by Al-Tsaqofi No. 340 as follows:

تَنَاقَحُوا تَنَاسَلُوا أَبَاهِي بِكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

This hadith is an authentic hadith that can be used as evidence (hujjah). Not only that, the meaning behind the term *tanakahu* is “get married,” which reinforces the command for his followers to hasten their marriages. Furthermore, the meaning behind the term *tanasalu* is to “procreate” or “increase offspring,” and the phrase *ubahi bikum yawm al-qiyamat* indicates that the Prophet Muhammad will take pride in his followers on the Day of Judgment. According to the Mu'jam Al Ma'ani Arabic dictionary, the word *tanakahu*, which is derived from *na-ka-ha, yan-ki-hu* means to marry or wed. On the other hand, the word *tanasalu*, originating from *tanasala-yatanasalu*, means offspring or procreation. Furthermore, based on the word *ubahi*, which is derived from *baha, yubahi*, it means to compete, to vie with one another, or to take pride in oneself.

In the Quran, in Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 187, it is also explained

that: “It has been made permissible for you the night preceding fasting to go to your wives [for sexual relations]. They are clothing for you and you are clothing for them. Allah knows that you used to deceive yourselves, so He accepted your repentance and forgave you. So now, have relations with them and seek that which Allah has decreed for you [offspring].” This verse elucidates that Allah has granted Prophet Muhammad (SAW) the concession to fulfill his desires solely for the purpose of complying with what Allah has determined, which is the effort to procreate offspring. This can serve as the ‘illah (reason) behind the wording of this hadith, as these prohibitions and encouragements can strengthen the Prophet’s argument in taking pride in the number of his followers in front of other prophets. Moreover, the increase in the quantity of the Prophet’s followers will bolster the ranks of Islam in confronting the polytheistic forces and other religions during that time.

According to scholars who understand the hadith related to the encouragement of marriage and the prohibition of remaining single, which subsequently sets the condition for a person to marry in order to increase offspring, it can be affirmed that Islam is a religion that facilitates its followers. It even serves as an intermediary between excellence and negligence that may come to its followers, leading to the happiness of individuals both in this world and in the hereafter. Islam regulates marriage for its followers to bring forth love and mercy within it. This hadith shows the virtue of marriage, especially for a woman who will become a mother, and that becomes the excellence of marriage. However, in this hadith, the Prophet Muhammad does not impose his followers to enter into marriage; rather, he commands them to marry only when they are capable of doing so.

The imperative command to get married in this hadith does not contain any other intention apart from the encouragement to procreate (have children) promptly. Because fundamentally, the

Prophet Muhammad will take pride in the presence of other prophets in having a large community that procreates. However, the intention behind taking pride in having a large community does not solely revolve around the quantity of followers. Therefore, another meaning behind the various variations of these hadiths is related to the quality that these communities provide to humanity in terms of knowledge, civilization, and achievements. Thus, the sense of pride here is understood because of the presence of good qualities that create a balance between the quality and quantity of a community.

### *Critique of Practice*

After conducting an analysis of the textual, historical, and contextual meaning of the hadiths, the next step is to critique the practice with the aim of understanding the contextualization of the meaning of the hadith regarding the encouragement to procreate offspring. Based on the examination of several variations of the hadiths above, it can be observed that the interpretations of the hadith regarding the encouragement to procreate offspring share similarities in terms of understanding the meaning of the hadith. These hadiths contain exhortations to marry and have children (increase offspring). Moreover, in other variations of hadiths that have been previously explained explicitly, it is stated that the Prophet Muhammad strongly forbade his followers from remaining single and encouraged them to get married promptly. He also commanded them to marry fertile and affectionate women, as through this, they would be blessed with numerous offspring. These various hadith variations can further reinforce the notion that marriage serves as one of the means to procreate descendants and, in fact, it is one of the primary objectives of the Shariah, which is *Hifdzun nasl* (preservation of lineage) (Mahasiswa Pesantren Tebuireng, 2022).

Indeed, the importance of having a clear lineage is not only

beneficial in this worldly life but also holds significance for the afterlife. Secondly, preserving lineage in al-hajiyah, such as the necessity of having witnesses during a marriage contract (akad) who mention the specified dowry (mahar) at the time of the contract, and then the obligation of granting the husband the right of divorce (talaq). If these requirements are not fulfilled, it will complicate the relationship of the marriage and have an impact on the offspring. Thirdly, preserving lineage in al-tahsiniyah, as mandated by the shariah, involves the process of khitbah, which permits a prospective groom to see the woman he intends to propose to, as well as conducting a walimah (wedding feast) during the marriage celebration.

In contrast to its relevance in the contemporary era, the hadith concerning the recommendation to increase progeny may not directly indicate behavioral essence but has influenced practices carried out by individuals, often justified by worldly concerns. Moreover, when comparing the number of Muslims in the past and present, there is a significant disparity. In the past, it was known that the Muslim population was relatively small, whereas in the present, the number of Muslims has significantly increased (Warsito, 2018). Likewise, it can serve as a reason for the emergence of the phenomenal issue regarding childfree, which has also sparked numerous debates. There are many reasons that can support the emergence of this phenomenon. One of the currently widely discussed phenomena in society is the concept within a marriage that is deemed highly concerning.

Therefore, in this research, the author employs the hermeneutical method offered by Hasan Hanafi as a liberating approach to interpret the meaning of hadith related to the current phenomenal issue (Warsito, 2018). In order to reconstruct such thinking, it is essential to reconsider the factors influencing the choice of childfree, particularly when these factors stem from fears related to parenting or worldly concerns such

as careers, jobs, and others (Warsito, 2018). Furthermore, based on such thinking, some members of society believe that childfree will become a lifestyle choice for millennial couples in the current era. As described in the Quran, marriage is considered the completion of half of one's religion as in QS. al-Nur:32. Marriage is also considered one of the longest-lasting forms of worship and is intended for the acquisition and multiplication of offspring. This has been elucidated in the Quran, which metaphorically describes the birth of a child within the bond of marriage as an adornment within the family, simultaneously enhancing the happiness within the marital union as in QS. al-Imran:14. This reaffirms that the decision to choose a childfree lifestyle generates pros and cons, especially within the Muslim community in Indonesia. For a significant number of couples, whether they have children or opt not to, they will be held accountable in the afterlife for their choices.

It can be concluded that in Islam, marriage is highly encouraged in order to have numerous offspring. This is not only mandated by Islamic law, but it is also believed that by marrying and having many children, one upholds the cultural value inherited from ancestors known as "more children, more blessings." Essentially, children are not only considered a trial for their parents in this world, but they are also believed to bring blessings and lead their parents to Allah's paradise. Therefore, in order to avoid such thinking, couples who choose to embrace a childfree lifestyle should carefully reconsider the reasons that guide their decision. Considering that such a choice contradicts Islamic teachings and the guidance set forth by Prophet Muhammad in the past, it is crucial to reflect upon the underlying motivations.

## **Conclusion**

The hadith concerning the recommendation to increase progeny holds a status of "sahih lighairihi" (authentic due to external supporting

evidence), as confirmed through the process of hadith verification (takhrij hadis) using the Jawami' Al Kalim software application. The existence of various hadiths urging the increase of offspring, in their textual context, bears a striking resemblance to other supportive hadiths which encompass two teachings: the prohibition of remaining celibate or marrying barren women (those unable to have children), and the commandment to marry, especially to wed productive and compassionate women. In the contextual meaning of the hadith, it signifies the sense of pride felt by the Prophet due to the large number of his followers, thereby leading him to take pride among other prophets. Based on the contextualization of the hadith's meaning, preserving one's progeny is not solely assessed in terms of quantity but also in terms of the quality of the offspring. Preserving one's progeny through providing them with a proper education, thereby transforming them into assets or investments in both the worldly life and the hereafter, holds significant relevance in the current era where the childfree phenomenon contradicts Islamic teachings, as elucidated in the Quran and Hadith.

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