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Submission date: 13-Apr-2023 03:02PM (UTC+0700)

Submission ID: 2063311713

File name: Interpretation_of_the_Hadith_on_the_Characteristics_of_Women.pdf (612.13K)

Word count: 8379

Character count: 43699



The Interpretation of the *Hadith* on the Characteristics of Women and Its Implications for Islamic Law

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Abstract: This study discusses an analysis of the *hadith* about the characteristics of women and its implications for Islamic law. This article uses a study of the *sanad* (chain) and *matan* (wording or contents) of a *hadith*. It uses the theory of *ma'anil hadith* or science that discusses the meanings of a *hadith*, which allows the emergence of a textual and contextual understanding of a *hadith*. The understanding of a *hadith* is analyzed from the Islamic law perspective. This study concludes that the *sanad* (chain) and *matan* (wording or contents) of this *hadith* are authentic. The *Sanad* (chain) is authentic because it continues to the Messenger of Allah, the narrators are fair, *dhabit* and there is no *zyudz* or *illat* found. Nevertheless, this *hadith* should be understood contextually or symbolically-metaphorically, although there are scholars who understand it textually or literally. The content of the *hadith* teaches humans that when dealing with women, they should be careful and treat them wisely because their character and nature are like crooked ribs. They should neither be treated harshly because it will break, nor left unnoticed because it will make them go astray. However, the *hadith* cannot be understood textually because it leads to women subordination; the *hadith* should be interpreted contextually instead, and by so doing women will be treated equally and fairly. Therefore, it is important to understand this *hadith* contextually to allow a fair treatment for women and with dignity because it will affect the interpretation of the Islamic law and Islamic teachings in general are maintained.

Keywords: Understanding of The *Hadith*, Women Characteristics, Textual and Contextual Understanding, Islamic Law

Abstrak: Kajian ini membahas tentang pemahaman hadis tentang karakteristik perempuan dalam implikasinya terhadap hukum Islam. Artikel ini menggunakan kajian sanad dan matan hadis, khusus matan memakai teori ilmu ma'anil hadis atau ilmu yang membahas makna-makna hadis, sehingga melahirkan pemahaman hadis yang tekstual dan kontekstual. Pemahaman hadis dianalisis dengan perspektif hukum Islam. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa sanad dan matan hadis ini berkualitas shahih. Sanad shahih karena bersambung sampai kepada Rasulullah Saw., periwayatnya bersifat adil, dhabit dan tidak ada yang zyudz dan illat. Meskipun demikian, hadis ini hendaknya dipahami secara kontekstual atau simbolis-metaforis, walaupun ada ulama yang memahaminya secara tekstual atau literal-harfiah. Kandungan hadis tersebut mengajarkan kepada manusia bahwa ketika bergaul dengan perempuan sepatutnya bersikap hati-hati dan secara cerdas memperlakukannya karena karakter dan sifatnya bagaikan tulang rusuk yang bengkok. Tidak boleh diperlakukan secara keras karena akan patah, tetapi juga tidak boleh dibiarkan karena akan membahayakan. Jika pemahaman tekstual terhadap hadis maka akan menyebabkan perempuan cenderung disubordinatkan dan diperlakukan secara diskriminatif, sedangkan jika dipahami secara kontekstual maka perempuan akan diperlakukan setara dan adil. Pemahaman terhadap hadis ini secara kontekstual penting dilakukan agar perempuan diperlakukan secara adil dan bermartabat karena akan berpengaruh terhadap hukum Islam dan ajaran Islam secara umum tetap terjaga.

Kata Kunci: Pemahaman Hadis, Karakteristik Perempuan, Tekstual, Kontekstual, dan Hukum Islam

Introduction

There are particular strategies and science to understanding of a *hadith*, known as the science of *ma'anil hadith*, which is the science on the understanding meanings of a certain *hadith*. Science to understand the meaning of this *hadith* is important because the wording of a *hadith* contains various meaning: the *Jawami al-kalim* which refers to a short statement but yet contains multiple meanings, which are sometimes in the form of *tamsil* (imagery), *ramzi* (symbolic language), dialogue (conversational language), *qiyasi* (analogy or expression). This all will have implications for the understanding of textual and contextual of a *hadith* that leads to the understanding of the *hadith*, which is universal, temporal and local.¹

According to Muhammad al-Ghazali, in understanding a *hadith* one must meet certain requirements and criteria: the wording of content of the *hadith* must be in accordance with the Qur'an, the content of the *hadith* must be in accordance with other authentic *hadith*, the *hadith* must be in accordance with historical facts, and the content of a *hadith* must be in accordance with scientific truth.² Ahmad al-Adlabi and M. Shuhudi Ismail mentioned the rules of understanding a *hadith*: The *hadith* should not be in conflict with the instructions of the Qur'an; it should not be in conflict with rational truth, it should not be in conflict with sensory reality, it should not be in conflict with historical facts, and it should not be in conflict with the *sunnatullah* of the nature and humans.³

It is indeed important to have a better understanding of the meaning of a *hadith*, since dated back to the early Islamic history, there were some attempts made to falsify a certain *hadith*.⁴ Besides, there were multiple meanings for a certain narration and some errors made in the narration of a *hadith*. In addition, as there are thousands of *hadith* available, the ability to understand the real meaning of a certain narration becomes significant. There is also a possibility that certain *hadith* are more accurately understood textually, while others are better understood contextually. A *hadith* can be understood textually if it is relevant with its *asbab al-wurud*, and it should be understood textually if the narration required so. Likewise, a *hadith* should be understood contextually if it was required to do so by its specific contents.⁵

In line with this argument, Ali Mustafa Yaqub agreed on the importance of understanding the *hadith* textually and contextually. According to Ali Mustafa Yaqub, there are times when a textual understanding is required. If a *hadith* happened to be understood contextually, it should be interpreted in refer to the interpretation of the Qur'an and *Sunnah* through examining several factors; its (*asbab al-wurud*),

Hadis tentang Ajaran Islam yang Universal, Temporal dan Lokal, Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1994, p. 9. Taufan Anggoro, "Analisis Pemikiran Muhammad Syuhudi Ismail dalam Memahami Hadis," *Diroyah: Jurnal Ilmu Hadis* 3, No. 2 (2019), p. 93.

²Muhammad al-Ghazali, *Sunnah Nabi dalam Pandangan ahli Fikih dan Ahli Hadis*, Jakarta: Khatulistiwa, 2008. Mohd. Idris, "Metode Pemahaman Hadis Muhammad al-Ghazali," *Jurnal Ulunnuha* 6, No. 1 (2016), p. 27.

³Salahuddin Ibnu Ahmad al-Adlabi, *Metodologi Kritik Matan Hadis*, Jakarta: Gaya Media Pratama, 2004, p. 25, 210-254. M. Syuhudi Ismail, *Hadis Nabi yang Tekstual dan Kontekstual* ..., p. 79.

⁴Salahuddin Ibnu Ahmad al-Adlabi, *Metodologi Kritik*..., p. 25, 210-254.

⁵M. Syuhudi Ismail, *Hadis Nabi yang Tekstual dan Kontekstual*... p. 7.

temporal locality (*al-makan wa az-zaman*), aspects of causality (*illah al-kalam*), and sociocultural understanding within the (*taqlid*) society.⁶

There are also moderate and flexible understanding of the a *hadith* on women as promoted by Muhammad al-Ghazali, Abou El-Fadhl and Syuhudi Ismail. Al-Ghazali explained that in addition to being a housewife, women are also allowed to carry out activities outside their home, such as going to the mosque, women's testimonies in criminal cases and women are allowed to become judges.⁷ Abou El-Fadhl emphasized on the need for a moderate approach in understanding a *hadith* because the basic principles of Islamic law are justice and equality between women and men. Therefore, if the *hadith* is understood correctly, there will be no *hadith* whatsoever that discredits women.⁸

Therefore, it is indeed important to refer to an appropriate approach in understanding the true meaning of a *hadith*. Shuhudi Ismail has reiterated that it is important for someone to understand a *hadith* both textually and contextually. This suggests that a certain appropriate strategy is needed to interpret the *hadith*, especially those discuss about women and their position within the Islamic community. The basic tenet of using a certain approach in understanding the *hadith* is not to demean the *hadith* itself; it is rather as a central strategy to elevate the status of the *hadith*. For example, there is a *hadith*, which seems to be literally contradictory, the true message in fact suggests otherwise when understood correctly. For that reason, it is indeed a need to refer to the science of *mukhtalif al-hadis* (the science to understand of seemingly contradictory prophetic traditions) or the *al-jam'u wa al-taufiq* method, which is mostly practiced by Imam Shafi'i, Imam al-Sayuthi, Ibn Qutahibah and other scholars.⁹

This kind of strategy used to understand the true message of the *hadith* is referred to as a scientific or philosophical approach to the understanding of a *hadith*. This is so, since the attempt to understand a certain *hadith* was conducted by exploring and using other branches of

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⁶Muhammad Qomarullah, "Pemahaman Hadis Ali Mustafa Yaqub dan Kontribusinya Terhadap Pemikiran Hadis di Indonesia," *Al-Quds: Jurnal Studi Alquran dan Hadis* 4, No. 2, (2020), p. 394. Ali Mustafa Yaqub, *Islam Masa Kini*, Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus, 2006, p. 22. Ali Mustafa Yaqub, *Fatwa-Fatwa Imam Besar Masjid Istiqlal*, Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus, 2008, p. 28.

⁷Muhammad al-Ghazali, *Sunnah Nabi..*, p. 56-91.

⁸Khaled M. Abou El Fadhl, *Atas Nama Tuhan: dari Fikih Otoriter ke Fikih Otoritatif*, Jakarta: Serambi, 2003, p. 318-342. Khaled M. Abou El Fadhl, *Selamatkan Islam dari Muslim Puritan*, Jakarta: Serambi, 2006, p. 300-315.

⁹Daniel Djuned, *Paradigma Baru Studi Ilmu Hadis: Rekonstruksi Fiqh al-Hadis*, Banda Aceh: Citra Karya, 2002, p. 68-112.

sciences to reveal the wisdom and the meaning of the Prophet Muhammad's message in His *hadith*. Sciences such as history, law, psychology, sociology, anthropology, politics and other sciences are of important in the attempt to understand the meaning of a *hadith*. In fact, in the present times, there is a branch of knowledge, known as the living *hadith* approach that requires social sciences such as sociology and anthropology in the attempt to understand the true message of a *hadith*.

In line with this particular perspective, Abou El-Fadhl and Fudhaili suggested that there was no a single *hadith* found to show inferiority position of women. The mispositioning of women is frequently the result of fault interpretation of a certain *hadith*. Islam in fact does not recognize women to be inferior creature whose intelligence was not high, unlucky and not good personals.¹⁰

Tanggareng emphasizes the need for a contextual approach in understanding a *hadith*. This contextual understanding is different from that of textual which tends to be literal. In fact, contexts will provide a more flexible and broad insights on certain issues. For example, it is related to women's leadership which is textually not allowed but contextually it is not a problem for a woman to take a leadership position.¹¹

Meanwhile, Supardin examines the chain (*sanad*) and the contents (*matan*) of a *hadith* using historical and contemporary approaches to understand the position of women. He concluded that women and men are equal and that there is a partnership in all aspects in spite of their natural differences at certain times.¹²

This work emphasizes on the study of *sanad* (chain) and the *matan* (contents) of a certain *hadith*, and in this particular work the attempt to study the contents (*matan*) of a *hadith* is reached through the *ma'anil hadith*, which is the science that examines the meaning of a *hadith* or perspectives of a narration, which relates to the Islamic law. This strategy of understanding the *hadith* results in the emergence of a textual and contextual approach to understanding a *hadith*. This way of understanding the *hadith* is then used to reveal the characteristics of women as portrayed in the *hadith* and their implications for Islamic law.

Study of the *Hadith* about the Characteristics of Women

¹⁰Khaled M. Abou El Fahdl, *Atas Nama Tuhan...*, p. 342. Ahmad Fudhaili, *Perempuan di Lembaran Suci: Kritik Atas Hadis-Hadis Sahih*, Yogyakarta: Pilar Media, 2005, p. 248.

¹¹Tasming Tanggareng, "Kepemimpinan Perempuan dalam Perspektif Hadis," *Karsa: Journal of Social and Islamic Culture* 23, No. 1 (2015), p. 165.

¹²Supardin, "Kajian Gender Perspektif Hadis Nabi," *Jurnal al-Fikr* 17, No. 1, (2013), p. 48.

1. *Takhrij al-Hadith*

The first step in conducting research on a *hadith* is through the use of *takhrij al-hadith* strategy. Etymologically *takhrij* can be interpreted as; 1) *al-istimbath*; something to produce), 2) *al-tadrib*; trained or getting used to and 3) *al-tawjih*; things to confront.¹³

Etymologically the meaning of *takhrij* according to the *hadith* scholars is multiple. However, the meaning used for the purpose of researching a *hadith* is the exploration or the search for *hadith* in the original source of references of the *hadith*, in which all *hadith* are still written in full *matan* (contents) and *sanad* (chain) of the a particular *hadith*.¹⁴

Furthermore, the *hadith* studied in this paper is the *matan hadith* which reads:

إن المرأة كالضلع...

One uses the *takhrij bi al-fadz* method by referring to the *hadith* dictionary *al-mu'jam al-mufakhras li al-fadz al-hadith al-nabawi*, through tracing the word ¹⁵الضلع, the data is strengthened through showing the original *matan* (content) by referring to *al-mausu'ah al-athraf*¹⁶, the work of al-Said bin Basumiy dan *al-jami' al-shagir*¹⁷ the work of al-Suyuthi.

The finding of the research suggests the following data:

1. Bukhari: the book of Marriage No. *Hadith* 79 = 1 history
- and the book of Anbiya: 64 = 1 history
2. Muslim: the book of al-Rida No. 65 = 4 history
3. Turmidhi: the book of Thalaq No. 12 = 1 history
4. Darimy: the book of Marriage No. 45 = 2 history
5. Baihaqi: No. chapter VII, No *hadith* 290 = 2 narrations
6. Ahmad: Juz II, p. 438, 449, 530 and Juz VI: p. 5 = 4 history

¹³M. Syuhudi Ismail, *Kaidah Keshahihan...*, p. 85-86. M. Syuhudi Ismail, *Hadis Nabi Menurut Pembela, Peningkar dan Pemalsunya*, Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 1990, p. 7-20.

¹⁴M. Syuhudi Ismail, *Kaidah shahihan...*, p. 85-86.

¹⁵AJ. Wensick, *Concordance Et Indices De La Tradition Mosulmane* diterjemahkan oleh M. Fuad Abdul Baqiy, *al-Mu'jam al-Mufakhras li al-Fadz al-Hadis al-Nabawi*, Juz III, Leiden: EJ. Brill, 1963, p. 519.

¹⁶Abu Najab Muhammad al-Said bin Basumiy, *al-Mausu'ah al-Athraf al-Hadis al-Nabawiyy*, Juz III, Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1397, p. 246-297.

¹⁷Jalaluddin bin Abu Bakar al-Suyuthi, *al-Jami' al-Shagir fi al-Hadis al-Basyir al-Nazir*, Juz II, Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-Arab, 1976, p. 129.

Here the author will explain some contents of the *hadith* from all the existing narrators:

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a). Narrated by Bukhari

حدثنا عبد العزيز بن عبد الله قال: حدثني مالك، عن أبي الزناد، عن الأعرج، عن أبي هريرة: أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: المرأة كالضلع، إن أقمتهما كسرتها، وإن استمتعت بها واستمتعت بها وفيها عوج.¹⁸

Meaning:

(Al-Bukhariy said), Abdullah bin Fariz bin Abdullah has narrated that Malik suggested that Abu al-Zinad has told us, from al-A'raj, from Abu Hurairah that the Messenger of Allah has said: A woman is like a rib, if you are hard on her she will break and if you are weak she will persist, because she has a tendency to bend (to do something not permissible)

3

حدثنا أبو كريب وموسى بن حزام قالوا: حدثنا حسين بن علي، عن زائدة، عن ميسرة الأشجعي، عن أبي حازم، عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: استوصوا بالنساء، فإن المرأة خلقت من ضلع، وإن أعوج شيء في الضلع أعلاه، فإن ذهبت تقيمه كسرته، وإن تركته لم يزل أعوج، فاستوصوا بالنساء.

b). Narrated by Muslim

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حدثني حرمة بن يحيى. أخبرنا ابن وهب. أخبرني يونس عن ابن شهاب. حدثني ابن المسيب عن أبي هريرة. قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: إن المرأة كالضلع. إذا ذهبت تقيمه كسرتها. وإن تركتها استمتعت بها وفيها عوج.¹⁹

حدثني زهير بن حرب وعبد بن حميد. كلاهما عن يعقوب بن إبراهيم بن سعد، عن ابن أخي الزهري، عن عمه، بهذا الإسناد، مثله سواء.

حدثنا عمرو الناقد وابن أبي عمر. (واللفظ لابن أبي عمر) قالوا: حدثنا سفيان عن أبي الزناد، عن الأعرج، عن أبي هريرة. قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: إن المرأة خلقت من ضلع. لن تستقيم لك على طريقة. فإن استمتعت بها استمتعت بها وبها عوج. وإن ذهبت تقيمه كسرتها. وكسرها طلاقها.

c). Narrated by Turmidzi

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¹⁸ Abu Abdillah Muhammad bin Ismail bin Bardazbah al-Bukhariy, *Shahih al-Bukhariy*, Juz VI, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1992, p. 473.

¹⁹ Abu Husain Muslim bin al-Hajjaj al-Qasim al-Naisabury, *Shahih Muslim*, Juz II, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyah, 1992, p. 190.

3 حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ أَبِي زِيَادٍ. حَدَّثَنَا يَعْقُوبُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَنْ ابْنِ سَعْدٍ. حَدَّثَنَا ابْنُ أَخِي ابْنِ شِهَابٍ عَنْ
3- عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ الْمُسَيَّبِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ "إِنَّ الْمَرْأَةَ
كَالضِّلَعِ إِنْ ذَهَبَتْ تُقِيمُهَا كَسَرَتْهَا. وَإِنْ تَرَكَتْهَا اسْتَمْتَعَتْ بِهَا عَلَى عَوْجٍ." 20

d). Narrated by Ahmad bin Hanbal

4 حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ حَدَّثَنِي أَبِي ثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ جَعْفَرٍ ثَنَا عَوْنٌ قَالَ وَحَدَّثَنِي رَجُلٌ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ سَمْرَةَ يُخْطَبُ عَلَى مِنْبَرِ
الْبَصْرَةِ وَهُوَ يَقُولُ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: إِنْ الْمَرْأَةَ خَلَقْتَ مِنْ ضِلَعٍ وَإِنَّكَ إِنْ تَرَدَّ
إِقَامَةُ الضِّلَعِ تَكْسَرُهَا فَدَارَهَا تَعَشَى بِهَا 21.
4 حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ حَدَّثَنِي أَبِي ثَنَا يَزِيدٌ قَالَ أَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ إِسْحَاقَ عَنْ أَبِي الزِّنَادِ عَنِ الْأَعْرَجِ عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ
قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: لَا تَسْتَقِيمُ لَكَ الْمَرْأَةُ عَلَى خَلْقَةٍ وَاحِدَةٍ إِنَّمَا هِيَ كَالضِّلَعِ إِنْ
تَقَمَّهَا تَكْسَرُهَا وَإِنْ تَتْرَكَهَا تَسْتَمْتَعُ بِهَا وَفِيهَا عَوْجٌ.

2. The scheme of the chain

The next step used in the understanding of the hadith is *i'tibar al-sanad* 22 or *sanad* (chain) scheme. The *sanad* is very important in the understanding of the *hadith* because it becomes a barometer of the authenticity of a certain *hadith*. This is so because the level of validity and accuracy of a *hadith* refers to the continuation of the *sanad* (chain) of the *hadith*. 23

In addition, *i'tibar sanad* serves to obtain clarity about the possibility of witnesses or support (corroboration) who is located at the first level, namely *thabaqat* of companions, while *mutabi'* is a kind of support located at the level below prophet's companions. 24

The following explanation describes the scheme of the *sanad* allowing one to see if the witnesses and *mutabi* exist.

²⁰Abu Isa Muhammad bin Isa Samrah, *Sunan al-Turmidzi*, Juz III, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, t.th., p. 493-494.

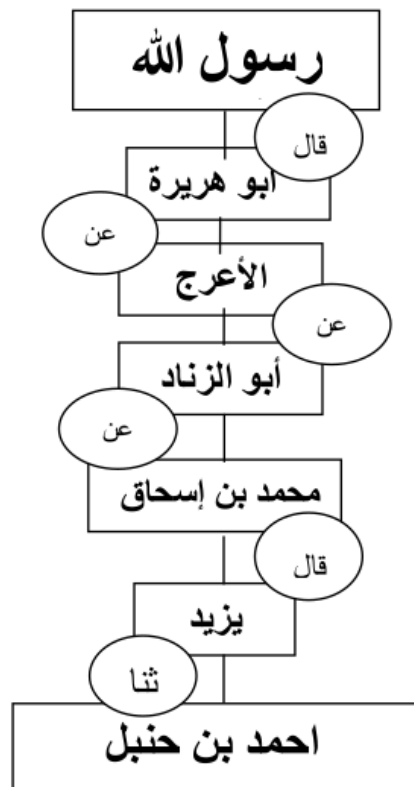
²¹Ahmad bin Hanbal, *Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal*, Juz VI, Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, t.th., p. 5. Sedangkan riwayat yang lain pada Juz II, p. 279, 428, 449 dan 530.

²²Ibnu Manzur al-Anshari, *Lisan al-Arab*, Juz VII, Mesir: al-Mu'assasah al-Misriyah, t.th., p. 202. M. Syuhudi Ismail, *Metodologi Penelitian Hadis Nabi*, Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1994, p. 51. Bandingkan dengan Hasbi Ash Shiddieqy, *Sejarah dan Pengantar Ilmu Hadis*, Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1993, p. 192.

²³M. Mustafa Azami, *Hadis Nabawi Sejarah dan Kodifikasinya*, diterjemahkan oleh M. Ali Mustafa Ya'kub, Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus, 1994, p. 530-537.

²⁴M. Syuhudi Ismail, *Metodologi*, p. 25.

The Scheme of the hadith *Sanad* Narrated from Ahmad bin Hanbal



Based on the *hadith* scheme contained from the narration of Ahmad bin Hanbal, it shows that there were witnesses and *mutabi*, in which Abu Hurairah became the witness or supporter (corroborators) for Abu Zar al-Ghiffari, Aisyah and Sammarah, meaning that there were 4 companions narrated this *thabaqat*.

While in the case of *mutabi*, Al-A'raj become *mutabi* (supporters at the level after the companions) for Abu Yahdits and also Muhammad bin Ishaq is a *mutabi* for Raqaq.

3. The study of the hadith *Sanad*

a. Abu Hurairah (w. 59 H)

The full name of Abu Hurairah is Abu Hurairah al-Dausiy al-Yamani. He is the companion of the Prophet Muhammad.²⁵ Among his teachers were the Prophet Muhammad, Abu Bakr, Umar, al-Fadhil bin Abbas bin Muttalib, Ubay bin Ka'ab, Usamah bin Riyad, Aisyah, Nudrah and Ka'ab bin Akhbar. While some of his students were: Ibn Abbas, Ibn Umar, Anas bin Jabir, Marwan bin Hakam, Said bin Musayyab, Sulaiman al-Aqdar, Qais bin Abi Hazm, Malik bin Abi Umar, Malik bin Amar, Abu Idris al-Haulani and al- A'raj.²⁶

Abu Hurairah was one of the companions of the Prophet Muhammad PbuH. He narrated the *hadith* of the Prophet as many as 5347. He narrated the highest number of the *hadith*. He was an expert in jurisprudence, *mujtahid* and even prayed for by the Prophet Muhammad for him to always memorize the *hadiths* received from the prophet.²⁷

Although there have been criticisms of his personal credibility, he was still considered as the companions who have narrated the *hadith* the most, and in fact various sources suggest that Abu Hurairah was a person who spent his time exploring, learning and conveying the *hadith*. After all, when it is believed that all companions are fair; *kullu sahabah udul* (every companion is fair), then he must be a just person as he was one of the prominent companions of the prophet.

In addition, the other criticism suggests that Abu Hurairah did not have a *shahifah* or a book of the *hadith*. However, this criticism was denied by M. Mustafa Azami citing the narration of Basyir bin Nahik suggesting that Abu Hurairah produced his book of the *hadith*. This concluded that it was very possible that Abu Hurairah wrote the book of the *hadith* at a later time, and then kept it away.²⁸

Therefore, it is difficult to deny the extent Abu Hurairah has engaged himself with the activities that explore and study the *hadith*-and thus he must maintain the relationship (*ittisal al-sanad*) between the Prophet Muhammad SAW and himself, and thus it is difficult to deny the closeness of Abu Hurairah to the prophet, and thus he would be able to narrate from the Prophet, and in his narration, he oftentimes uses the symbol *tahammul qala* (قال) using the *al-qiraah* method.

b. Al-A'raj (w. 110 H)

²⁵Ahmad bin Hajar al-Asqallani, *Tahzib al-Tahzib* (India: Da'irah al-Ma'arif al-Nidzamiyah, 1325 6), Juz XII, p. 237.

²⁶Ahmad bin Hajar al-Asqallani, *Tahzib al-Tahzib*, Juz XII, p. 237.

²⁷Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy, *Sejarah dan Pengantar...*, p. 53.

²⁸M. Mustafa Azami, *Hadis Nabawi*, p. 137-140.

Al-A'raj's full name is Abu Abdurrahman bin Hurmuz al-A'raj. Abu Dawud al-Madani, Maula Rabbiah bin Haris bin Abdul Muttalib. Among his teachers were Abu Hurairah, Abdullah bin Malik bin Habibah, Ibn Abbas, Muawiyah bin Abi Sufyan, Abu Salamah bin Abdul Rahman, Ubaidillah bin Abu Rafi'. While his students were Abu al-Zinad, Zaid bin Aslam, Sahih bin Kisan, al-Zuhry, Ayyub, Ja'far bin Rabi'ah, Zaid bin Ibrahim, Abdullah bin Fadhil and Ubaidillah bin Abi Ja'far.²⁹

There are some opinions of ulama about him 1) Ibn Zaid said that he was a *tsiqah* and had narrated many *hadiths*; 2) al-Muqdanī admits that Dawud and al-A'raj is *tsiqah*; 3) al-Ajaly: praise him that he is *tsiqah*; 4) Abu Zur'ah bin Haris also states that he is *tsiqah* and 5) Abu Uyainah: says that his knowledge is deep and he is *tsaduq*, he narrates many *hadith* from Abu Hurairah..³⁰

It then shows that there is not a single scholar who denounces or plunders Al-A'raj's personal credibility, in which all of them say he is fair and *tsiqah*. He received a *hadith* from Abu Hurairah by using the symbol *tahammul* (عن).

So thus, between al-A'raj and Abu Hurairah there is a continuation of the *sanad* (*ittisal al-sanad*) and it is not interrupted or the history is *marfu'*.

c. Abu al-Zinad (W. 131 H)

Abu al-Zinad's full name is Abdullah bin Zakwan al-Quraish: Abu Abdurrahman al-Qurrasy: Abu Abdurrahman al-Madani, al-Ma'sif, Abu al-Zinad, Maula Ramlah. Among his teachers were Anas, Aisyah bint Aaid, Abu Umammah bin Sahlah, Said bin Musayyab, Abu Salamah bin Abdurrahman, Abani bin Usman, and Al-A'raj. His students; Ibn Umar, Umar bin Abi Salamah, Abu Qasim, Salih bin Qisan, al-A'masy, Ubaidah bin Umar, Mailk bin Anas and Muhammad bin Ishaq.³¹

Here are some views of scholars about him, 1) Abdullah bin Ahmad states that he is *tsiqah*, 2) Abu Zur'ah and Al-Dimasyqi say he is *tsiqah*; 3) Ibn Madani stated that 'I did not find in Medina, after the *tabi'in* the most pious person besides himself'; 4) Al-Ajaly states that he is a *tsiqah tabi'in*; 5) Abu Hatim states that he is *tsiqah*; 6) Al-Bukhari states that the most

²⁹ Ahmad bin Hajar al-Asqallani, *Tahzib al-Tahzib*, Juz VI, p. 257.

³⁰ Ahmad bin Hajar al-Asqallani, *Tahzib al-Tahzib*, Juz VI, p. 257.

³¹ Ahmad bin Hajar al-Asqallani, *Tahzib al-Tahzib*, Juz V, p. 182. Abd. Qadir Sulaiman al-Bandary dan Sayyid Husain, *Mausu'ah Rijal al-Kutub al-Tis'ah*, Juz II, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1993, p. 274.

authentic *sanad* is Abu Al-Zinad, Al-A'raz and Abu Hurairah; and 7) Ibn Said and Razad stated that he is *tsiqah*.³²

This information suggests that that Abu al-Zinad is an undoubtable narrator. There is not a single *hadith* scholar denounced Abu al-Zinad, all *hadith* critics considered him *tsiqah* or pious.

Thus, the chain between Abu al-Zinad and al-A'raj is continuous because Abu al-Zinad is a student of al-A'raj. He narrated the *hadith* from his teacher using the symbol *tahammul* by using the symbol of 'an (عن)

d. Muhammad bin Ishaq (W. 150 H)

His full name is Muhammad bin Ishaq bin Yasar bin Khayar, Kusfan al-Madani, Abu Bakr, Abdullah al-Muttalib. His teachers were among 5 hers: Abu al-Zinad, Ummayah Abdurrahman, Musa, al-A'raj, Ubaidillah bin Abdullah bin Ummar, Ma'bad bin Ka'ab bin Malik, Muhammad bin Ibrahim, Ashim bin Umar bin Qatada. Among of his students are; Yahya bin Said al-Anshary, Yazid bin Abi Habib, Yazid bin Harun, Jarir bin Harun Abdullah bin Said bin Abi Thiad, Ibrahim bin Said al-Hamadany.³³

Scholars all have positive views on him, for example 1) Ibn Main argued that he is *tsiqah*; 2) Ibn Shihab also suggested that he is an intelligent person; 3) Abu Muawiyah stated that Ibn Ishaq is a *hafidz*. 4) Ibrahim bin said also mentioned that he was a resident of Mecca who had many *hadiths* narrated in his day; 5) Abu Zur'ah al-Dimasqhi mentioned that Ibn Ishaq was a great scholar. All the *hadith* scholars believed that he was a good person.³⁴

Almost all *hadith* critics judge Muhammad bin Ishaq as *tsiqah* and intelligent, and not a single scholar considers him to be flawed. Thus the path of the chain between Muhammad bin Ishaq and Abu al-Zinad is continuous in which he narrated the *hadith* using the symbol of *tahammul* 'an (عن).

e. Yazid bin Harun (w. 206 H)

His full name is Yazid bin Harun bin Zadiy, Abu Khalid bin al-Wasith. Among his teachers were Sulaiman al-Taimiy, Humaid al-Tanul, Ahsim al-Ahwal, Ismail bin Abi Khalid, Abi Malik al-Asyajay, Yahya bin Said al-Ansahary, Muhammad bin Ishaq and Sard al-Jariry. Some of his students were Baqiyah bin al-Walid, Adam bin Abi Isya, Ahmad bin Hanbal, Hay bin Rahwaih, Yahya bin Mu'ain, Ali bin al-Madani..³⁵

³² Ahmad bin Hajar al-Asqallani, *Tahzib al-Tahzib*, Juz V, p. 183.

³³ Ahmad bin Hajar al-Asqallani, *Tahzib al-Tahzib*, Juz II, p. 33.

³⁴ Ahmad bin Hajar al-Asqallani, *Tahzib al-Tahzib*, Juz II, p. 33.

³⁵ Ahmad bin Hajar al-Asqallani, *Tahzib al-Tahzib*, Juz XI, p. 320.

All scholars have positive views on him: 1) Abu Talib ibn Ahmad stated that he is a person whose ability to memorize *hadith* was remarkable, he memorized many *hadith* including many of authentic *hadiths*; 2) Ibn al-Nawawi also mentioned that he was *tsiqah*; 3) Ibn Main also stated that he was *tsiqah*; 4) Al-Hayb: states that he is *tsiqah*, and it was recorded in the *hadith*; 5) Muhammad bin Qadamah al-Jauhaniy stated that he memorized 5200 *hadith*. 6) Ibn Said stated that he is *tsiqah* and has a strong memorization of the *hadiths*.³⁶

Scholars in the field of *hadith* stated that Yazid bin Harun was a *tsiqah* and *tsubut* (firm stance), and that he has no reproach or *jarh*, and by contrast, the *hadith* scholars considered him as *ta'dil*.

f. Ahmad bin Hanbal (w. 241 H/855 M)

Ahmad bin Hanbal's full name is Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Hambal bin Hallal bin Asad al-Syaibaniy or Abd. Allah al-Mar⁵ariy and al-Baghdadi were born in Baghdad. His teachers were Al-Shafi'i Sofyan bin Uyainah, Jarir bin Abd. Hamid, Basyar bin Abdullah Hamid, Ismail bin Asyiah, ⁵ahya bin Sari al-Qatthan, Abd. Jamal bin Thalalisd, Abdullah al-Munnir, Abd. Razaq, Abu Bakr bin Ayya⁵ including Yazid bin Harun and many others. His students were Bukhary, Muslim, Abu Dawud, Aswad bin Amir Syahdan, Ibn Mahdi, Abu Yazid bin Harun, Quthaibah, Dawud bin Umar, Ali al-Madani, Husayn bin Mansur and his son Abdullah bin Ahmad.³⁷

The *ulama* have a positive views on him, such as 1) Ibn al-Madani stated that there is no one whose memorization skill is more powerful than Ahmad; 2) Quthaibah stated that Ahmad was the Imam; 3) Al-Ajali stated that he is *tsiqah*, *tsubut* in *hadith*, expert on *hadith* and noble history; 4) Al-Shafi'i stated that "I came out of Baghdad and I did not leave anyone who was more *faqih*", *zuhud* and *wara'* and the most intelligent than Ahmad bin Hambal; 5) Abdullah al-Hurairah suggested that Ahmad bin Hambal was the most pious of his time; 6) Abu Ubaiyah stated that no one can match his intelligence in the Islamic teaching; 7) Yahya bin Adam stated that Ahmad is our Imam; 8) Abu Tsur stated that Ahmad is our teacher and imam as well; 9) Abu al-Zakas stated that "I do not see anyone more eloquent and more sane than Ahmad".³⁸

Ahmad bin Hanbal was given the title of Amir al-Mukminin *fi al-hadis*, a title that is the highest in *hadith*, not a *hadith* scholars have

³⁶ Ahmad ⁶ Hajar al-Asqallani, *Tahzib al-Tahzib*, Juz XI, p. 320.

³⁷ Ahmad ⁶ in Hajar al-Asqallani, *Tahzib al-Tahzib...*, Juz I, p. 66.

³⁸ Ahmad bin Hajar al-Asqallani, *Tahzib al-Tahzib...*, Juz I, p. 66.

denounced Ahmad bin Hanbal had defects and reproaches. On the other hand, Ahmad is considered *ta'dil* and has a very high and noble capacity and credibility.

In addition, he authored the *hadith* book *al-Musnad* and founded a school of jurisprudence, the Hanbali school of thought which is developing in the Middle East, especially in Saudi Arabia in the current context. Thus, between Ahmad bin Hanbal and Yazid bin Harun the chain continues. He narrated his *hadith* using the symbol tahammul حثا.

Thus, when conducting a study on the sanad or the chain (naqd al-sanad), there are several rules for the authenticity of the sanad that must be met. In order to have the authentic sanad, some requirement should be made: 1) the chain is continued, *ittisal*, 2) fair; 3) *dhabith*, 4) not *syadz* and 5) not having *illat*.³⁹

After conducting a thorough examination of all existing narrators, through the chain of Ahmad bin Hanbal, Yazid bin Harun, Muhammad bin Ishaq, Abu Yazid, al-A'raj and Abu Hurairah. None of these narrators, from the first thabaqat to the final ones were considered weak or defective and *illat*. The scholars viewed them to be *tsiqah*, just and *dhabit* and the most important thing was that the chain (sanad) continued up to the Messenger of Allah.

Since the requirements for the quality of a *hadith* were fulfilled, the *hadith* under the narration of Ahmad bin Hanbal is authentic. There were other narrators strengthened the authenticity of the *hadith*, such as Bukhari, Muslim, Turmidhi, Darimi and Baihaqi.

For this reason, it was most likely that the *hadith* from Ahmad was authentic. In fact, Al-Suyuthi in the book *al-jami 'al-Shagir* considers it authentic.⁴⁰ Meanwhile, Turmidhi in his book viewed it as *hasan sahih*, in which the chain of the *hadith* was trustworthy.⁴¹

Hadith on the Characteristics of Women and Their Influence on Islamic Law

M. Syuhudi Ismail suggested three methodological steps of the *hadith* research activities: first, examining *matan* (content) by looking at the quality of the *sanad*; second, examining multiple compositions of the *matan* consisting of similar meaning and third, examining the *content* of the the *hadith*.⁴²

³⁹M. Syuhudi Ismail, *Kaidah Keshahihan....*, p. 13-152.

⁴⁰Jalaluddin bin Abu Bakar al-Suyuthi, *al-Jami' al-Shagir...*, p. 129.

⁴¹Abu Isa Muhammad bin Isa Samrah, *Sunan*, p. 493-494.

⁴²M. Syuhudi Ismail, *Metodologi Penelitian....*, p. 121-122.

On the other hand, one of the objectives of the examination of the *matan* of the *hadith* is the possibility of having *ziyadah*. The *Ziyadah* literally means an addition, while in the terminology, it means that the addition of *lafadz* or sentence (statement) in the *matan* or content of a *hadith*. The addition was narrated by another narrator, but it is not clearly reported.⁴³ Likewise, *idraj*, which means insertion of a certain *matan* into a certain *hadith* indicating that the *matan* was originally from the prophet. This is so since there have been insufficient explanation of the *matan* as narrated by individual narrators.⁴⁴

The examined Hadith is in the following:

4 المرأة على خليفة واحدة إنما هي كالضلع ان تقمها تكسرها وان تتركها تستمتع بها وفيها عوج

My examination of the *hadith* reveals that the *hadith* was narrated through the understanding of its meaning, (*riwayat bi al-makna*). There are 6 *mukharrij* and about 14 narrations

Literally, there are two words used in the *hadith*, *كالضلع ان المرأة* and *المرأة خلقت من ضلع*. The first word means that “women are like a rib” while the second word suggesting that “women were created from a rib”. The first expression was narrated by Ahmad, Darimi, Bukhari, Turmidhi, and Muslim, while the second expression is found in all the narrations of Baihaqy, Muslim, and Ahmad. Although there are some contextual differences, purpose and meaning of the *hadith* are similar.

Of all the *matan*, Muslim and Baihaqi's narrations contain a *ziyadah*, which is the word:

فإذا شهد أمرا فليتكلم بخير أو من كان يؤمن بالله واليوم الآخر and ليسكت واستوصوا بالنساء Although these are *ziyadah*, they do not change any meaning, they strengthen the meaning and the message of the *hadith* instead, since the *hadith* was narrated by the *tsiqah* narrators, and thus the *ziyadah* is accepted.⁴⁵

While *idraj* was found in Ahmad's narration, such as in the word: فان لن تستقيم لك على or in this particular sentence على إقامة تكسره

⁴³M. Syuhudi Ismail, *Metodologi Penelitian ...*, p. 135.

⁴⁴M. Syuhudi Ismail, *Metodologi Penelitian ...*, p. 137.

⁴⁵M. Syuhudi Ismail, *Metodologi Penelitian...*, p. 137.

طريقة and in Bukhari's narration *أعلاه* but the *idraj* does not alter the true meaning of the *hadith*.

Thus, even though there are multiple versions of the *matan*, where *ziyadah* and *idraj* also occur, they do not result in the weakening of the *matan* of the *hadith*, because this *hadith* is authentic, which were narrated by trustworthy individuals, and most important thing is that the meaning is not in conflict with the message of the Qur'an, it is logic, and scientific as well. However, this *hadith* should be comprehended symbolically, since it is full of prophetic messages using metaphorical words, in which ones need to have an in-depth scrutinization to comprehend its meanings (*jawami al-kalim*).

However, Rashid Rida criticized the *ulama* who interpreted it literally as al-Qurtubiy who quoted the *hadith* as is. Rashid Rida argued that if the story of Adam and Eve was not mentioned in the Old Testament, this *hadith* would not be easily interpreted by Muslims. The story of Adam and Eve is found in the Old Testament, Genesis II: 21-22), which described how God created Eve by taking a rib of Adam and covered it with meat. So God made a woman from the bone, which had been removed from Adam.⁴⁶

However, metaphorically, the expression of women like ribs is similar to that suggesting that women are like the full moon in the middle of the dark night or women are like roses with thorns. Some people maintain the literal and textual meaning of the *hadith*, but if it is understood contextually, many people agree that the meaning of the *hadith* is not suggesting that women as really created from the rib.

According to M. Shuhudi Ismail, the *hadith* is clearly a prophetic word that contains deep moral messages. If it is analyzed through the message in the *matan*, it is considered the *Jawami al-Kalim*, which is a short and yet has a meaningful expression, as well as a metaphor (parable) of symbolic-metaphorical language (*ramzi*).⁴⁷

In line with Abou El-Fadl in understanding the *hadith* about women are like ribs, it requires precision and caution to understand *matan* and its narrations⁴⁸ including if one understands this *hadith* textually that women are the same as bent ribs.

Therefore, the actual intention and purpose of the *hadith* is that men should deal with women wisely, because there are different character traits and attitudes between men and women. If men are not aware of these individual differences, they will most likely take unprecedented actions in

⁴⁶ *Perjanjian Lama-Baru*, Jakarta: Lembaga al-Kitab, t.th., p. 9. M. Quraish Shihab, *Wawasan al-Quran*, p. 310.

⁴⁷ M. Syuhudi Ismail, *Hadis Nabi yang Tekstual dan Kontekstual*..., p. 9.

⁴⁸ Khaled M. Abou El-Fadhl, *Atas Nama Tuhan*..., p. 325-335.

their attempt to teach women. If men fail to take wise steps and strategies to teach women, the women will certainly be led astray as it is a bent rib.⁴⁹

This view of M. Quraish Shihab seems to be understood contextually or metaphorically-symbolistically, not literally or textually as understood by many traditional scholars. In line with that, Samih Abbas asserts that the view that Eve was created from a rib was not supported by strong evidence. If there are some evidences however, they may come from the people of the book, so it must be interpreted metaphorically. *Matan* of the *hadith* that equates women with ribs must be understood contextually. There are similarities in nature and character of women and rib. If the husbands do not know the (weakness) of women, they most likely use violence and coercion, which will result in disharmony and even divorce in the household.⁵⁰

Ibn Hajar in *Fath al-Bary* explains that the meaning of *عوج* is something related to the character and tendency to be excessive in matters of worldly life (wealth and pleasure) and religious matters. Al-Nawawi also admits that this *hadith* contains an image, namely the parable of the rib for women, while the word *لقت* in some narrations is like the growth of a tree from the bones of date palms. When it is connected with the creation of Eve, some commentators suggest that Eve was in fact created from the rib of Adam, Al-Nawawi suggests that the scholars indeed differed on this matter.⁵¹

Therefore, one should be gently in giving advice, in which some moderation between too harsh and not too gentle should be carefully applied. This is so because too much violence results in the feeling of oppressed, while too much gentleness will also result in disrespectful.

Some *ulama* refer to the following verse of the Qur'an upon discussing the creation of women. QS. Al-Nisa (4) ayat 1:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً

O mankind! Have piety (taqwa) towards your Lord, Who created you from a single soul (Adam may peace be upon him) and from him created his mate and from the two of them dispersed a multitude of men and women. Have piety towards Allah by

⁴⁹M. Quraish Shihab, *Wawasan al-Qur'an...*, p. 300.

⁵⁰Ahmad Fudhaili, *Perempuan di Lembaran Suci...*, p. 214-215.

⁵¹Muhammad bin Khusfah al-Nawawi Wasath al-Abiy, *Syarh al-Abiy wa al-Masyasu Ala Shahih Muslim*, Juz V, Bairut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ahwis, 1994, p. 178-179.

whose Name you request one of another and be careful of the wombs (the rights of kinship). Surely, Allah is Watcher over you.

The creation of women claimed to have come from Adam come from the word *nafs*, such as al-Suyuti, Ibn Kathir, al-Qurtubi, al-Biq'a'i and even al-Tabarasi interpret the word as such. Meanwhile, Muhammad Abduh and al-Qasimi define the *nafs* as a certain type, the word الطراب and الطين were interpreted land or earth.⁵²

The second opinion seems to be more logical and in line with the true meaning of the *hadith*, which defines the word *nafs* as a type, meaning that the origin of human comes from the soil. However¹⁵ it is agreed upon in the first opinion, it is contrasted to another verse of the Qur'an stating that the position of men and women is equal. QS. Al-Isra '(17) verse 70

وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَحَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا ﴿٧٠﴾

And We have honored the Children of Adam. We carried them in the land and the sea, and We have given them as sustenance of the permissible things, and We have made them to excel by an appropriate excellence over most of those whom We have created

¹² Nasaruddin Umar when interpreting verse¹² about gender suggested that the main mission of the Qur'an was revealed to free people from various forms of discrimination and oppression, including sexual discrimination, skin color, tribe, ethnicity, and other primordial ties. Therefore, if the interpretation results in oppression and injustice, the particular interpretation needs to be re-examined.⁵³

Therefore, it can be understood that this *hadith* should be interpreted contextually rather than textually, or in the sense that it can be understood in a *majazi* and metaphorical way. But one has to be careful with women, because they are sensitive being. One should be too gentle or vice versa in treating women, and in the context of this *hadith*, someone should be gentle at treating women

⁵²M. Quraish Shihab, *Wawasan al-Quran...*, p. 301.

⁵³Nasaruddin Umar, *Argumen Kesetaraan Jender dalam Al-Quran*, Jakarta: Paramadina, 2000.

For that reason, the understanding of the *hadith* if it is associated with Islamic law will have different implications. If it is understood through a textual or literal-literal understanding, it will cause women to be subordinated to men, whereas if it is understood in a symbolic-metaphorical context, women will be treated equally to men. This is so because textual understanding will put women into an inferior being and will result in unfair treatments. In fact, the view of society will cynically perceive women as weak creatures who have many deficiencies. Therefore, this *hadith* should be understood contextually or symbolically-metaphorically otherwise this *hadith* will be wrongly interpreted and cause harm to women socially, culturally and even legally.

Conclusion

Our discussion suggests that the *hadith* can be understood contextually. Through the *hadith*, the messenger of Allah warned and advised men to carefully and intelligently deal with women who have characters and tendencies like ribs. This *Hadith* is indeed authentic in the *sanad* and *matan*, it is a *sahih sanad* because it is continuous to the Messenger of Allah, the narrators are fair, *dhabit* and there is no *zyudz* and *illat* found in all narrators. However, it is necessary to use a contextual understanding method, which can be understood symbolically-metaphorically, even though there are scholars who understand it literally. The content of the *hadith* teaches humans that when they associate with women, they should not be treated harshly because they will break, but the treatment may not need to be too gently as it will disadvantage women themselves. If the *hadith* is interpreted through a textual or literal-literal understanding, it will lead women to be subordinated culturally and legally disadvantaged, whereas if it is understood contextually or symbolically-metaphorically, women tend to be treated as equal to men. Textual understanding will lead to unfair legal treatment for women. By contrast, contextual understanding will actually provide justice in the Islamic law. Understanding this *hadith* contextually is important so that women are treated fairly and with dignity and will have good implications for Islamic law and Islamic teachings in general.

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