



**Childfree in The Perspective of Hadiths Ahkam:
Thematic Study of Hadith on 'Azal with a *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* Approach**

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Abstract: Childless marriage, or an agreement between a husband and wife not to have children after marriage, is currently a trending topic on various social media platforms. Based on this issue, the formulation of this research is how childless marriages are seen from the hadith perspective and what solutions the hadiths offer to overcome this problem. The research method used is a literature study using the theory of hadith hermeneutics. This research was carried out by collecting and analyzing various written sources, such as books, journals and articles as well as Mu'tabar hadith books. The results of the study indicate that the hadiths regarding the permissibility of 'azal studied are of authentic quality and can be accepted as evidence in religion. Regarding understanding, thematic studies, especially from the historical aspects, show that the desire to perform 'azal expressed by a companion to the Prophet Muhammad was related to the condition of his wife who was breastfeeding, so the use of these hadiths as a basis for the permissibility of childfree needs to be reviewed. This shows a significant difference between childfree and the permissibility of 'azal. That the permissibility of 'azal does not mean an attitude or desire to not have children permanently, However, it is only conditional and temporary. This differs from childfree, which actually refuses to have children in a marriage. Meanwhile, a thematic analysis involving other "similar" hadiths shows that Islam places a strong emphasis on having children for its ideological and worshipful values. Therefore, the childfree attitude that is starting to become commonplace among Muslim couples is discouraged, even though having or not having children is the right of every couple. Moreover, if this *childfree attitude* becomes a "movement" and is campaigned extensively, then every Muslim should not make it a "principle" or primary choice in marriage.

Keywords: Childfree, 'Azal, hadith, hermeneutic, Islamic law

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Abstrak: *Pernikahan tanpa anak, atau kesepakatan antara suami dan istri untuk tidak memiliki anak setelah menikah, saat ini menjadi topik yang sedang tren di berbagai platform media sosial. Berdasarkan isu tersebut, formulasi penelitian ini adalah bagaimana pernikahan tanpa anak dilihat dari perspektif hadits dan solusi apa yang ditawarkan hadits untuk mengatasi masalah ini. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah studi literatur dengan menggunakan teori hermeneutika hadits. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan mengumpulkan dan menganalisis berbagai sumber tertulis, seperti buku, jurnal, dan artikel dan kitab hadits mu'tabar. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa hadits-hadits mengenai kebolehan 'azal yang diteliti memiliki kualitas otentik dan dapat diterima sebagai bukti dalam agama. Mengenai pemahaman, studi tematik, khususnya dari aspek historis, menunjukkan bahwa keinginan untuk melakukan 'azal yang diungkapkan oleh seorang sahabat Nabi Muhammad terkait dengan kondisi istrinya yang sedang menyusui, sehingga penggunaan hadits-hadits ini sebagai dasar kebolehan hidup tanpa anak perlu ditinjau kembali. Hal ini menunjukkan perbedaan signifikan antara hidup tanpa anak dan kebolehan 'azal. Bahwa kebolehan 'azal tidak berarti sikap atau keinginan untuk tidak memiliki anak secara permanen, melainkan hanya bersifat kondisional dan sementara. Ini berbeda dengan hidup tanpa anak, yang sebenarnya menolak untuk memiliki anak dalam pernikahan. Sementara itu, analisis tematik yang melibatkan hadits-hadits "serupa" lainnya menunjukkan bahwa Islam sangat menekankan pentingnya memiliki anak untuk nilai-nilai ideologis dan ibadahnya. Oleh karena itu, sikap hidup tanpa anak yang mulai menjadi hal umum di kalangan pasangan Muslim tidak dianjurkan, meskipun memiliki atau tidak memiliki anak adalah hak setiap pasangan. Terlebih lagi, jika sikap tidak memiliki anak ini menjadi sebuah "gerakan" dan dikampanyekan secara luas, maka setiap Muslim seharusnya tidak menjadikannya sebagai "prinsip" atau pilihan utama dalam pernikahan.*

Kata Kunci: *Perkawinan tanpa anak, 'azal, hadits, hermeneutika, hukum Islam*

Introduction

Childfree phenomenon, or the decision of married couples not to have children after marriage, has been one of the most hotly debated social and religious issues in recent years.¹ In the context of modern society increasingly open to the idea of individual freedom, the decision not to have children is seen by some as a personal right worthy of respect. On the other hand, for the majority of Indonesian Muslims, this lifestyle choice has sparked controversy because it is considered contrary to religious values and human nature. The idea of childfree itself originated in the Western world and is part of the reproductive

¹ Sutasna et al., *Panorama Book of Maqashid Syariah*, Jawa Barat: Media Sains, 2021, p. 1–177.

rights movement and third-wave feminism, which emphasizes full autonomy over one's body and life choices.² With the development of digital technology, this idea has spread rapidly through social media platforms such as Twitter, TikTok, and YouTube, influencing the views of some young Muslims on the meaning of marriage, family, and children.

From an Islamic perspective, marriage holds a noble position because it serves not only to fulfill biological needs but also to preserve offspring (*hifz al-nasl*), build a harmonious family, and preserve the continuity of humanity.³ The Prophet Muhammad emphasized the importance of having children as part of his worship and humanitarian mission in numerous hadiths. In a hadith narrated by *Abu Dawud*, He said:

تَزَوَّجُوا الْوُدُودَ الْوُلُودَ، فَإِنِّي مُكَاتِّرٌ بِكُمْ الْأُمَمَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

Marry a loving and fertile woman, because I will be proud. with many of you in front of other people on the Day of Resurrection. (Narrated by *Abu Dawud*, no. 2050; *an-Nasa'i*, no. 3227).

This hadith provides the theological basis for Islam's high regard for children as the next generation.⁴ Children are not only a symbol of family happiness but also a sustainable spiritual investment, as the Prophet said:

إِذَا مَاتَ الْإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلَّا مِنْ ثَلَاثٍ: صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ، أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ، أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ.

If a child of Adam dies, then his deeds are cut off except for three things: charity, useful knowledge, and pious children who pray for him. (Narrated by *Muslim*).

Thus, having children not only has social value, but also has religious value and blessings. However, Islam also recognizes a concept of birth control called '*azal*', which involves shedding semen outside the uterus to prevent fertilization. A hadith narrated by *Muslim* states :

كُنَّا نَعْزِلُ عَلَى عَهْدِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَالْقُرْآنُ يَنْزِلُ

We performed 'azal during the time of the Prophet Muhammad, while the Koran was still being revealed (but he did not forbid it). (Narrated by *Muslim*, no. 1440)

² Ahmad Sarwat, *Maqashid Syariah*, Jakarta: Rumah Fiqh Publishing, 2019.

³ Mazen Hashem, *Stages in the Development of the Discourse on Maqāshid Al-Sharī'ah, Maqāshid Al-Sharī'ah: A Civilizational Perspective*, 2023.

⁴ A Hermanto, *Maqashid Al-Syari'ah: Metode Ijtihad dan Pembaharuan Hukum Keluarga Islam*, Malang: Literasi Nusantara Abadi, 2022, p. 1–148.

This hadith is the basis for some who believe that Islam does not prohibit birth control. However, upon closer examination, the context of *'azal* during the Prophet's time differs from the modern *childfree* phenomenon.⁵ *'Azal* is performed under certain circumstances, such as when the wife is breastfeeding, when the husband is concerned about the dangers of the pregnancy, or for temporary socio-economic reasons. This means that *'azal* is temporary and contextual, not a permanent decision to refuse children. Childfree, on the other hand, is a final, ideological decision in which a couple consciously decides not to have children for the rest of their lives.⁶

The modern social context that gave rise to the childfree phenomenon needs to be understood within the framework of changing values and lifestyles. Modernity has given rise to an individualistic culture that values personal freedom over social responsibility. Many young Muslim couples believe that having children will limit their career opportunities, financial freedom, and personal happiness.⁷ Furthermore, economic factors, concerns about the future, environmental issues, and climate change are also frequently cited as reasons. As a result, marriage is no longer understood as a means of reproduction and social responsibility, but rather simply as a form of emotional commitment between two individuals. Yet, in Islam, married life holds immense spiritual value, as it embodies the meaning of worship, devotion, and the continuity of generations.

In classical Islamic literature, scholars of hadith and jurisprudence have discussed the issue of *'azal* in considerable depth. *Imam an-Nawawi*, in his *Sharh Sahih Muslim*, explains that *'azal* is permissible provided the wife's consent is obtained and it is performed for a justified Islamic reason. *Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani*, in his *Fath al-Bari*, asserts that *'azal* is not a form of rejection of Allah's decree, but rather an *endeavor* permitted under certain conditions.⁸ Meanwhile, Imam al-Ghazali, in his *Ihya 'Ulum al-Din*, views *'azal* as a permissible act, but is reprehensible if performed without a clear reason because it contradicts the primary purpose of marriage, namely having children.

In a modern context, Yusuf al-Qaradawi in *Halal wa Haram fi al-Islam* asserts that Islam permits family planning as long as it does not eliminate the possibility of having children altogether. This means that this permissibility is situational, not a principle of life. Similarly, Muhammad Abu Zahrah in *Uṣūl al-Fiqh* explains that birth control is permissible for the benefit of the family, but

⁵ Ahmad Imam Mawardi, 'Book of Maqasid Shari'ah in Renewal', *Radja Library Books*, May 2018 (2018).

⁶ Nailis Shofita, et.al., 'Childfree Problems And Their Solutions From An Islamic Perspective', *Eduvest - Journal of Universal Studies* 1, No. 12 (2021), p. 1389–96.

⁷ Nailis Shofita, et.al., 'Childfree Problems and Their Solutions.

⁸ Herwan Herwan and others, *Childfree in Islamic Perspective* (Atlantis Press SARL, 2024).

prohibited if it is intended to eliminate a generation.⁹ From this, it can be understood that Islam allows for human endeavor, but still rejects any form of thinking that negates the continuity of offspring.

Based on the literature review, it can be seen that the discussion about childfree has not been studied much from the perspective of legal hadith (*ahadith al-ahkam*). The majority of previous studies were sociological and normative without exploring the context of the hadith which is often used as justification. Therefore, this research offers a thematic approach (*mawdhu'i*) to the hadiths of the permissibility of 'azal to assess the extent to which these hadiths can be used as a basis for the childfree view. The thematic approach allows the reviewer to collect all history related to one theme, understand *the asbab al-wurud*, and carry out a comprehensive interpretation of the meaning of the hadith.

Methodologically, this research also uses a hadith hermeneutic approach as developed by Musahadi. This approach emphasizes dialogue between text, context, and reader.¹⁰ In hadith hermeneutics, understanding the Prophet's words does not stop at the literal meaning, but involves the social and historical context in which the hadith emerged. Musahadi believes that every hadith must be understood through three horizons: first, the text horizon which is related to the language structure and editorial of the hadith; second, the author's horizon relating to the context of the life of the Prophet and his companions; and third, the reader's horizon which is the social context of today's Muslims. In this way, the meaning of the hadith regarding 'azal can be read dynamically and relevant to contemporary issues such as childfree.

In addition to hadith hermeneutics, this research is also based on the theory of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*. The main objective of Islamic law is to safeguard the five basic principles of human life; religion (*hifẓ al-dīn*), soul (*hifẓ al-nafs*), reason (*hifẓ al-aql*), descendants (*hifẓ al-nasl*), and property (*hifẓ al-māl*). In this context, childfree needs to be assessed based on its impact on safeguarding descendants. If this decision leads to the rejection of the birth of a new generation, then it is contrary to *maqāṣid sharia*.¹¹ However, if pregnancy arrangements are made to maintain the health or benefit of the family, then this is included in the permitted *ijtihād* space. This *maqāṣid* theory is important so

⁹ Desi Rahman and others, 'Childfree in Islamic Perspective: Solution or Controversy?', *Journal of Women and Families* 4, No. 1 (2023), p. 1–14.

¹⁰ Miwa Patnani, Bagus Takwin, and Winarini Wilman Mansoer, 'Happy Without Children? The Importance of Children for the Involuntary Childless', *Scientific Journal of Applied Psychology* 9, No. 1 (2021), p. 117.

¹¹ Muhammad Zainuddin Sunarto and Lutfatul Imamah, 'The Phenomenon of Childfree in Marriage', *Darussalam Journal: Journal of Education, Communication and Islamic Legal Thought* 14, No. 2 (2023), p. 181–202. Solahuddin Al-Ayyubi, et.al., "Maqasid Sharia in Tabarru' Contract Laws," *Jurnal al-Dustur* 6, No. 1 (2023).

that understanding hadith cannot be separated from ethical orientation and the benefit of the people.

'Azal hadiths indicates that the Prophet Muhammad tolerated the practice as long as it was carried out for the benefit of the family and not with the intention of permanently rejecting children.¹² In a hadith narrated by Bukhari and Muslim, the companion *Jabir ibn Abdillah* said:

كُنَّا نَعْزِلُ عَلَى عَهْدِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَبَلَغَ ذَلِكَ نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَلَمْ يَنْهَنَا

We used to do 'azal during the time of the Messenger of Allah, and he knew about it, but did not forbid us. (Narrated by Muslim).

The Prophet's attitude of not prohibiting 'azal is understood by the ulama as a form of *taqirirī* (tacit agreement) to an act that is permissible. However, this permission is conditional, not a principle that can be used as the basis for a living ideology such as childfree. Thus, linking the hadith of the permissibility of 'azal as a justification for childfreedom is a form of deviation in meaning because it ignores the context and purpose of the Shari'a.¹³

In the context of Islamic social life, the emergence of the childfree movement also requires criticism because it has the potential to weaken family structures and social values. Islam views the family as a moral institution that functions to produce a faithful and knowledgeable generation. If childfree *views* become widespread, the values of compassion, responsibility, and intergenerational solidarity will be eroded. From a demographic perspective, the widespread childfree phenomenon could also negatively impact the balance of the Muslim population in the future. Therefore, studying the hadith on 'azal and its relevance to the childfree phenomenon is not only theoretical but also has practical urgency in maintaining the social morality of the community.¹⁴

Academically, this research aims to reaffirm that the Prophet's hadith are a contextual and universal source of law and ethics for life. Through a thematic and hermeneutic approach, the hadith are understood not only as normative texts but also as life guidance that remains relevant to current developments. This approach allows for the integration of classical Islamic heritage with the

¹² Ahmad Saogi, et.al., "Analysis of the Childfree Phenomenon from the Perspective of Maqāsid Al-Syāri'ah as the Legal Basis of Islamic Families in Indonesia", *Al-Mustaqbal: Jurnal Agama Islam* 2, No. 3 (2025), p. 157–176.

¹³ Afrianto Afrianto, et.al., "The Childfree Phenomenon in Indonesia from the Perspective of Maqasid Al-Syariah," *International Journal of Islamic Studies* 4, No. 1 SE- (2024), p. 69–84.

¹⁴ Moh Rafiqil Ulum, 'Childfree Perspective of Maqasid Syariah Muhammad At-Thahir Ibnu Asyur', *Nusantara Islamic Law Journal* 7, No. 2 (2024), p. 2

challenges of modernity without losing its spiritual values. Thus, this research is expected to contribute to the development of legal hadith studies and enrich contemporary Islamic ethical discourse.

Overall, this introduction emphasizes that the issue of childfree requires critical and proportionate examination in light of Islamic teachings. The decision not to have children is not merely a personal matter, but also concerns humanitarian values and social responsibility.¹⁵ The hadiths on *'azal* provide an important lesson that Islam does not exclude human endeavor in managing household life, but still emphasizes the importance of maintaining the continuity of generations. Therefore, any interpretation of the hadith that is used to justify the childfree ideology must be reviewed based on the principle of *maqāṣid al-shari'ah*, so that Muslims remain within the corridor of teachings that balance individual freedom and collective responsibility. It is at this point that this research finds its relevance, namely to return the understanding of hadith to its authentic, contextual and *rahmatan lil 'alamin* meaning.

This research uses a qualitative approach with a library research approach. This approach was chosen because the objects studied are the texts of the Prophet's hadith and the scholars' interpretations of them, rather than empirical field data.¹⁶ The main objective of this research is to trace, interpret, and understand the meaning of the hadiths concerning the permissibility of *'azal* then relate them to the contemporary social phenomenon in the form of the decision to live a childfree life. Due to its qualitative nature, this research emphasizes in-depth analysis of the meaning and context of the text, rather than data quantification. This literature review was conducted by examining various relevant primary and secondary sources to obtain a comprehensive and argumentative understanding.

Primary data sources in this research are classical hadith books, especially *Shahih Muslim*, *Sunan Abu Dawud*, and *Sunan an-Nasa'i* because they contain narrations about the permissibility of *'azal*.¹⁷ These hadiths were then compared and criticized through *sharah* works such as *Syarh Sahih Muslim*, *Fath al-Bari*, and *Ihya' Ulum al-Din* which discusses the ethical values behind pregnancy control. Meanwhile, secondary sources come from contemporary research, scientific journals, and the works of modern Islamic thinkers such as Yusuf al-Qaradawi who discuss issues of reproductive ethics, *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*, and hadith hermeneutics. All of these sources are studied in an

¹⁵ Fatmawati Fatmawati, 'Childfree in Marriage from the Perspective of Maqoshid Syariah', *Tabsyir: Journal of Da'wah and Social Humanities* 2, No. 3 (2021), p. 26–36

¹⁶ Moh. Rifan Roi, et.al., "Methodology of Ulumul Tafsir and Ulumul Hadith," *JlIP - Scientific Journal of Educational Sciences* 7, No. 8 (2024), p. 9293–9301.

¹⁷ Miqdam Dinajan A, "Pendekatan Kontekstual dalam Memahami Hadis," *Tammat: Journal of Critical Hadith Studies* 1, No. 2 (2023). p. 185–93.

integrative manner to obtain a complete understanding from various perspectives.

The first stage in this research is the inventory and interpretation of hadith. This process is carried out to find all hadith related to the theme of 'azal in various mu'tabarah books.¹⁸ After the hadiths are collected, the sanad is identified by tracing the names of the narrators, the transmission routes, and the frequency of the appearance of the hadiths in various books. The validity of the sanad is assessed based on the science of jarh wa ta'dil, examining the credibility and continuity of the narrators. The results of this stage provide an epistemological basis for the authenticity of the hadith used in the research. Next, a textual analysis is conducted to test the consistency of the wording, terminological meaning, and context of the hadith's use during the Prophet's time.

The next step is to apply the thematic analysis method (*mawdu'i*) to the collection of hadith that have been verified. In this method, all hadiths related to the theme of 'azal are collected, classified and thoroughly analyzed to find their collective meaning.¹⁹ Thematic analysis allows researchers to identify relationships between various narratives, both in terms of editorial and historical context. From the results of this classification, it was found that the permissibility of 'azal in the hadith is conditional, not a permanent principle. The results of this thematic analysis serve as a basis for researchers to compare the values of the permissibility of 'azal with the childfree phenomenon that is developing in modern society, which in substance have fundamental differences in intention, orientation, and sharia values.

In addition to the thematic approach, this study also uses a hermeneutic approach to hadith that emphasizes the dialogue between text, context, and reader. In this approach, hadith is not understood literally, but through the exploration of the meaning that lives in the social context of the Prophet Muhammad and its relevance to modern society. The hermeneutics of hadith as initiated by Musahadi contains three horizons of meaning: the horizon of the text (*nass*), which involves linguistic analysis and sentence structure; the horizon of the author (*as-siyaq at-tārīkhī*), which traces the social context of the companions and the reasons for the emergence of hadith (*asbāb al-wurūd*); and the horizon of the reader (*al-qāri'*), namely the context of contemporary Muslims.²⁰ This approach is important to avoid the misuse of hadith texts which

¹⁸ Suryani Suryani, 'The Urgency of Hermeneutics as a Method in Understanding Hadith', *AL QUDS: Journal of Quran and Hadith Studies* 6, No. 2 (2022), p. 779.

¹⁹ Hani Zahrani and Rubini, 'Hermeneutical Approach in Islamic Studies', *SALIHA: Journal of Islamic Education & Religion* 6, No. 2 (2023), p. 171–96.

²⁰ Alma'arif Alma'arif, "Hermeneutics of Hadith Ala Fazlur Rahman," *Journal of Studies of the Sciences of the Qur'an and Hadith* 16, No. 2 (2017), p. 243

are often understood regardless of their context, as is the case with some parties' justification of the childfree idea by citing the '*azal*' hadith.

Furthermore, this study also integrates the theoretical framework of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* as a normative basis in assessing the results of hadith interpretation. In the *maqāṣid* theory, every Islamic law has the main objective of preserving five aspects of human life: religion (*hifẓ ad-dīn*), soul (*hifẓ an-nafs*), reason (*hifẓ al-'aql*), descendants (*hifẓ an-nasl*), and property (*hifẓ al-māl*). The focus of this study lies in *hifẓ al-nasl*, namely preserving the continuity of generations as part of human moral responsibility.²¹ Therefore, an understanding of the hadiths on the permissibility of '*azal*' must be placed within the framework of this *maqāṣid* so that it is clear that the permissibility is temporary and does not conflict with the aim of the Shari'ah to preserve offspring. The integration between hermeneutics and *maqāṣid* makes this research analysis more contextual and normative.

Analysis of the Authenticity and Substance of the Hadith on the Permissibility of '*Azal*'

The study of hadith on the permissibility of '*azal*' is an important part of the discussion of Islamic family law because it is directly related to the issue of reproductive ethics and social responsibility in domestic life.²² *Azal*, in Islamic jurisprudence, is defined as the act of ejaculating semen outside the wife's uterus to prevent pregnancy. In the context of the hadith, this discussion becomes interesting because the Prophet Muhammad, PBUH said, "I am a virgin." Neither explicitly forbids nor commands it, but rather places it within the realm of conditional permissibility. Therefore, a study of the authenticity of the '*azal*' hadith is necessary to determine the legal basis and substance of its teachings to prevent it from being misunderstood as justification for the childfree ideology that permanently rejects offspring.

The results of research through the *takhrij* process show that the hadith regarding '*azal*' is narrated in a number of main hadith books, including Sahih Muslim, Sunan Abu Dawud, Sunan an-Nasa'i, and Sunan Ibn Majah.²³ The most authoritative narration is found in Sahih Muslim, through a chain of transmissions from Imam Muslim to credible narrators. One complete narration is as follows:

²¹ Andris Nurita and Masruhan Masruhan, "Analysis of the Concept of Hermeneutics of Hadith from the Perspective of Muhammad Arkoun," *UNIVERSUM: Journal of Islam and Culture* 15, No. 2 (2021), p. 1–24

²² Imam Supriyadi, 'Azl Law: A Study of Mukhtalaf Al-Hadith', *Al-Qanun: Journal of Islamic Legal Thought and Reform* 24, No. 1 (2021), p. 225–50.

²³ Muchlis Bahar, 'Marriage Agreement Not to Have Children According to Islamic Law', *Baltic Journal Of Law & Politics* 15, No. 3 (2022), p. 389–402.

حدثنا عبد بن حميد، حدثنا عبد الرزاق، أخبرنا معمر، عن الزهري، عن أبي سلمة بن عبد الرحمن، عن جابر بن عبد الله، قال: كنا نعزل على عهد رسول الله ﷺ، والقرآن ينزل (رواه مسلم في صحيحه، كتاب النكاح، باب حكم العزل، رقم الحديث: 1440)

Abdu bin Ḥumayd narrated it to us, Abdur-Razzāq narrated it to us, Ma'mar narrated it from az-Zuhri, from Abu Salamah bin Abdirrahman, from Jabir bin Abdillah, he said: 'We did the 'azal during the time of Rasulullh Saw, while the Qur'an was still being revealed (revelation was still coming down). (Narrated by Muslim, Kitāb an-Nikāḥ, no. 1440)

This hadith is narrated with a continuous sanad without any reprehensible narrator. Imam Muslim took this narration through the path of Abdu bin Ḥumayd, a renowned narrator among the hadith scholars of Kufa, from Abdur-Razzaq bin Hammam ash-Shan'ani, a great narrator from Yemen who is famous for his monumental work *al-Mushannaf*. Then, from Ma'mar bin Rasyid, a senior tabi'in who became the main student of az-Zuhri, then passed on to Muhammad bin Muslim az-Zuhri, a pioneering figure in the codification of hadith during the tabi'in era. This sanad chain then reached Abu Salamah bin Abdirrahman bin 'Auf, a Medina scholar from the tabi'in circle who narrated directly from the companion Jabir bin Abdillah ra. There is no dispute regarding the veracity of any narrator in this chain of narrators. Imam Yahya ibn Ma'in and Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani considered all narrators in this chain to be trustworthy and trustworthy. Therefore, the chain of this hadith is of a *ṣaḥīḥ li-dhātihī quality*.

From the perspective of matan criticism, the wording of the hadith “*wal-Qur'ānu yanzil*” has very important legal significance. This expression shows that the practice of 'azal done by the companions when the revelation was still coming down, which means Rasulullah PBUH. Knowing the practice but not forbidding it. In the principles of *ushul fiqh*, the Prophet's silence regarding the known actions of his companions is called *taqrīr nabawī*, which is a form of agreement that has legal force equal to his words and actions.²⁴ Thus, this hadith is a proof of the permissibility of 'azal as long as it is not carried out with the intention of completely rejecting offspring. Imam *an-Nawawi* in *Syarḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* interpreted that this permissibility is *ibāhah* (permissible), but can change to *makrūh* if done without the wife's permission, because the right to have sexual intercourse and have children is a shared right.

²⁴ Aldo Muhamad Derlan and Romlah Abubakar Askar, 'The Takhrij Hadith Method in Measuring the Quality of the Prophet's Hadith', *KAMALIYAH: Journal of Islamic Religious Education* 2, No. 2 (2024), p. 234-45

Apart from the history above,²⁵ there are also other hadiths that strengthen the theme of the permissibility of 'azal, narrated by Abu Dawud and al-Nasa'i with an equally strong sanad:

حدثنا القعنبي، عن مالك، عن ربيعة بن أبي عبد الرحمن، عن محمد بن يحيى بن حبان، عن ابن محيريز، عن جابر بن عبد الله، قال: جاء رجل إلى رسول الله ﷺ فقال: إن لي جارية وأنا أطوف عليها وأكره أن تحمل، فقال: اعزل عنها إن شئت، فإنه سيأتيها ما قدر لها. فلبث الرجل ثم أتاه فقال: إن الجارية قد حملت، فقال رسول الله ﷺ: قد أخبرتك أنه سيأتيها ما قدر لها.

(رواه أبو داود في سننه، كتاب النكاح، باب في العزل، رقم الحديث: 2173)

A man came to the Messenger of Allah. And said: 'I have a slave girl whom I am courting, but I don't want her to get pregnant.' Rasulallah ﷺ said: 'Perform 'azal if you wish, because if Allah has determined that she will become pregnant, then she will definitely become pregnant.' The man did so, then came again and said: 'O Messenger of Allah, my slave girl is pregnant.' So Rasulallah PBUH Said: 'Didn't I say that he will get what has been appointed for him. (Narrated by Abu Dawud, no. 2173)

This hadith reinforces the understanding that *destiny* does not reject God's decree. In Islamic *theology*, every soul that will be born has been determined by God's knowledge, so that human prevention efforts will not change destiny.²⁶ The Prophet's statement, " *Sayu'tihā mā quddira lahā* " (He will get what has been destined for him) demonstrates the harmony between human *endeavor* and the principle of *al-qadar*. This means that Islam does not reject family planning or arrangement as long as it is done with the right intention and does not deny God's role in life. Imam al-Ghazali considers this hadith as a form of spiritual education: humans are allowed to make efforts, but must remain aware that the results are in the hands of Allah.

From the perspective of sanad criticism, Abu Dawud's line of narration is also considered strong. All narrators, such as Imam Malik, Rabi'ah ibn Abī 'Abdirrahman, and Ibn Muḥairīz, are included in the *tsiqah* category. Imam Ibn Hajar, in *Taqrīb at-Tahdzīb*, considers this sanad to be *ṣaḥīḥ isnādihī* because there are no flaws in the narrators or breaks in the sanad. Therefore, the scholars

²⁵ Shivi Mala Ghummiah and Lisna Mualifah, 'Islam and Gender Issues: Women's Reproductive Health in Marital Relations', *Syakshiyah: Journal of Islamic Family Law* 4, No. 1 (2024), p. 73–92. Zia Thahira and Dwini Handayani, "The Impact of Mother's Gender Preference on Children's Cognitive Ability in Indonesia," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 11, No. 3 (2023).

²⁶ Medical and Sharia Ethics, 'Islamic Perspective on IVF: Between Needs', *Tambusai Health Journal*, 5 (2024), p. 13739–49.

of hadith agree that the '*azal* hadiths have authentic status and can be used as a legal basis (*hujjah syar'iyah*).²⁷

From a substantive perspective, these hadith demonstrate the balance between human freedom to manage a family and acknowledging *divine destiny*. The Prophet Muhammad PBUH granted his companions permission to perform '*azal* (predestination), but at the same time emphasized that all decisions regarding birth are subject to God's will. In the social context of Medina society, this permissibility is closely related to the wife's health condition, family responsibilities, and the dynamic social situation. Many friends have wives who are breastfeeding or live in limited economic circumstances.²⁸ Therefore, '*azal* is understood as a form of moral responsibility, not as a rejection of the natural heritage of heredity. Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani explained that the Prophet's attitude in these hadiths shows the wisdom of sharia which is not rigid, but rather considers the interests of humanity (*jalb al-maṣlahah*).

'*Azal* hadiths proportionally. Imam an-Nawawi emphasized that the permissibility of '*azal* applies as long as it is not accompanied by the intention of eliminating offspring and is carried out with the wife's permission. Meanwhile, according to *al-Ghazali*, '*azal* is part of *tadbīr an-nasl* (regulation of offspring) which is permitted to maintain the mother's health or avoid family difficulties. Yusuf al-Qaradawi, in his modern work, *al-Halāl wa al-Harām fī al-Islām*, asserts that the permissibility of '*azal* is the basis for the concept of Islamic family planning, but differs in principle from the childfree idea that ideologically rejects birth.²⁹ Thus, all views of scholars lead to one conclusion: the permissibility of '*azal* is a form of Islamic tolerance for human needs, not a justification for the total rejection of offspring.

From the overall analysis, it can be emphasized that the hadiths about '*azal* have a valid sanad, consistent text, and meaning that supports the balance between freedom and moral responsibility in the family. This hadith shows that Islam does not reject family planning, but rejects the permanent rejection of human reproductive function. Therefore, the '*azal* hadith must be understood as part of the principle of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* in protecting offspring (*hiḍz an-nasl*), not as a legitimation for rejecting offspring as in the modern childfree concept.

²⁷ Putri Eka Wulandari et.al., 'Marriage and Reproductive Rights of PLWHA in Islamic and Health Perspectives', *Innovative: Journal of Social Science Research* 5, No. 3 (2025), p. 6553–62.

²⁸ Abdul Aziz, 'Development of Hadith Studies, Contemporary, Digitalization', *El-Mizzi: Jurnal of Hadith Sciences Development* 3, No. 2 (2024), p. 14–29.

²⁹ Fakhurrizi M. Yunus, et.al., 'Childfree and Its Relevance To 'Azl From the Perspective of Taqiyuddin an-Nabhani,' *Petita: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Hukum Dan Syariah* 8, No. 2 (2023), p. 219–34.

Thematic and Hermeneutic Analysis of Hadith on the Childfree Phenomenon

Mawdu'i approach or thematic analysis is a scientific method in the study of hadith which attempts to collect various narrations with similar themes, then examines them thoroughly to find a complete collective meaning. Through this approach, each hadith is not understood in isolation, but rather placed within a network of complementary meanings.³⁰ In the context of this study, the theme being examined is the permissibility of 'azal (coitus interruptus), namely the act of ejaculating semen outside the wife's uterus to prevent pregnancy. This analysis is important because 'azal hadiths are often used by some modern groups, including adherents of the childfree ideology, to justify the view that children should not be born. In fact, if examined thematically and hermeneutically, these two phenomena are different in principle, both from a theological, moral and social perspective.

The thematic analysis method requires researchers to examine all hadith in various primary texts and then group narrations that share similar meanings.³¹ Within the theme of 'azal, relevant hadiths are found in Sahih Muslim, Sunan Abu Dawud, Sunan an-Nasa'i, Musnad Ahmad, and Sunan Ibn Majah. All of these hadiths indicate that 'azal was practiced by the Companions during the time of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH with his knowledge, without any explicit prohibition. However, this permissibility is always associated with certain intentions, permission and conditions which confirm that 'azal is not intended to absolutely reject offspring. One important hadith was narrated by Abu Sa'id al-Khudri in *Sunan Ibn Majah*:

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدِ الْخُدْرِيِّ، قَالَ: جَاءَ رَجُلٌ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَقَالَ: إِنَّ لِي جَارِيَةً وَأَنَا أَعْرِضُ عَنْهَا، وَأَكْرَهُ أَنْ تَحْمَلَ، وَأَنَا أُرِيدُ مَا يُرِيدُ الرَّجَالُ، وَالْيَهُودُ يَقُولُونَ: الْعِزْلُ الْمَوْءُودَةُ الصُّعْرَى. فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: كَذَبَتْ الْيَهُودُ، لَوْ أَرَادَ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَخْلُقَهَا مَا اسْتَطَاعَتْ أَنْ تَمْنَعَهَا (رواه ابن ماجه، كتاب النكاح، رقم الحديث: 1928)

From Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, he said: A man came to the Messenger of Allah PBUH and said, 'I have a slave girl with whom I have intercourse, but I do 'azal because I do not want her to become pregnant. I only want pleasure like other men, while the Jews say that 'azal is like burying a baby alive in its small form.' So, the Messenger of Allah PBUH said,

³⁰ Nurkholis Hauqola, 'Hermeneutics of Hadith: An Effort To Break The Text's Icy Silence', *Jurnal Theologia* 24, No. 1 (2016), p. 261–84.

³¹ Dayan Fithoroini, 'Contextual Analysis of Syuhudi Ismail's Thought', *Nabawi*, 2.September 2021 (2021), p. 116–40.

'The Jews have lied. If Allah wills to create (a child from her), you will not be able to prevent it.

This hadith illustrates the moderate position of Islam. The Prophet Muhammad PBUH rejected the *extreme* Jewish view that equated 'azal with the killing of live babies (*wa'd al-banāt*), a heinous practice that occurred during the period of *ignorance*. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized that the act of 'azal is not identical to murder, because it is carried out before life occurs.³² In the theological view of Islam, life begins after the blowing of the soul (*nafkh al-rūh*), not during the process of *ejaculation*. Therefore, 'azal is a human *endeavor* that is still within the realm of moral responsibility, not a form of rejection of God's creation. The Prophet's statement, "*law arāda Allāhu an yakhlūqahā mā istaṭa'ta an tamna'ahā* " shows that human efforts will not change divine decree.³³

If all the hadiths about 'azal are analyzed thematically, a common normative message will be seen: that the permissibility of 'azal is conditional, temporary, and requires consideration of the benefit. In Sahih Muslim, it is narrated from Jabir bin Abdillah, that the companions performed 'azal during the time of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH and the Prophet did not forbid it.³⁴ In *Sunan Abu Dawud*, the Prophet Muhammad PBUH emphasized that even if someone performs 'azal, if Allah wills a pregnancy, then it will still happen. Meanwhile, in *Musnad Ahmad*, it is narrated that Umar bin Khattab once asked the Prophet Muhammad PBUH for permission to perform 'azal because of his wife's weak condition, and the Prophet Muhammad PBUH Allow it.

To clarify the relationship between these narrations, the following table presents a thematic analysis of the hadiths regarding the permissibility of 'azal:

Table 1: Thematic Analysis of Hadiths on the Permissibility of 'Azal

No	Source of Hadith	Narrator	Historical Context	Key Message	Legal Status
1	<i>Sahih Muslim</i> (no. 1440)	Jabir bin Abdullah	Companions perform 'azal at the time of the revelation	Rasulullah PBUH. Does not prohibit, indicates conditional	permissible

³² Abdur Rahman Adi Saputera and Muhazir Muhazir, 'Critical Comparative Study of the Hermeneutics Method of Hadith from the Perspective of Khaled M. Aboe Fadl and M. Syuhudi Ismail', *Al-Wajid: Journal of Quranic Sciences and Interpretation*, 4, No. 1 (2023), p. 43–60

³³ Latifah Anwar, 'Hermeneutics of the Hadith of Muhammad Syahrur', *Tajdid* 20, No. 1 (2021), p. 116–43.

³⁴ Burhanuddin Burhanuddin, 'Methods in Understanding Hadith', *Al-Mubarak Journal: Journal of Al-Qur'an Studies and Interpretation* , 3, No. 1 (2018), p. 1–11.

				permissibility	
2	<i>Sunan Abu Dawud</i> (no. 2173)	Jabir bin Abdullah	A man is worried that his slave is pregnant.	Prophet PBUH. Affirms God's power over creation	Yes, it does not violate qadar.
3	<i>Sunan Ibn Majah</i> (no. 1928)	Abu Sa'id al-Khudri	Prophet PBUH. Rejects Jewish analogies	'Azal is not a little infanticide	Yes, with permission
4	<i>Musnad Ahmad</i> (no. 14555)	Umar bin Khattab	Wife's health considerations	The Prophet PBUH gave temporary permission for 'azal	Temporarily permitted
5	<i>Sunan an-Nasa'i</i> (no. 3408)	Jabir bin Abdullah	The practice of the companions was widespread and known to the Prophet PBUH.	Prophet PBUH Letting go (<i>taqrīr</i>)	It is permissible if it is beneficial

Based on the table above, it can be seen that all the hadith about 'azal show a consistent pattern. Not a single history contains an explicit prohibition.³⁵ On the contrary, these hadiths emphasize the importance of intention, conditions, and agreement in carrying out 'azal. Thus, it can be concluded that 'azal is permitted as temporary birth control, not as an effort to absolutely reject offspring.

Hermeneutic approach is then used to interpret the meaning of the 'azal hadiths in a modern context. Musahadi's hadith hermeneutics emphasizes the importance of dialogue between three horizons: text (*nass*), author (*as-siyāq at-tarīkhī*), and reader (*al-qāri'*). Through this approach, hadith are not only understood as documents of the past, but also as living messages that can be reinterpreted in accordance with social developments, without violating their

³⁵ Ana Rita Garcia and others, 'Understanding The Hadith About Isbal (Hermeneutics of Imam Al-Nawawi's Hadith in the Book of Sahih Muslim Bi Sharh Al-Nawawi)', *Jurnal KACA*, 10, No. 2 (2020), p. 133–54.

original meaning.³⁶ In the textual *horizon*, the term '*azal*' comes from the root '*azala*–*ya'zilu*–'*azlan*', which means to separate or distance.³⁷ In the hadith, the *verb mudhari* '*na'zilu*' (we do) indicates a habit or repeated practice carried out by the Companions with the knowledge of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. This form indicates that the act was not incidental, but rather a social practice recognized by sharia. In a semantic context, the words *nasl* (descendant) and *wulad* (child) frequently appear in other hadiths related to '*azal*', illustrating the importance of descent in Islam. '*Azal*' hadiths show that Islam still encourages its followers to have children, but with wise and responsible arrangements. The Prophet Muhammad even said:

تَزَوَّجُوا الْوُدُودَ الْوُلُودَ، فَإِنِّي مُكَاثِّرٌ بِكُمْ الْأُمَّمَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ (رواه أبو داود، رقم الحديث: 2050)

Marry a woman who is loving and fertile, for I will be proud of the multitude of my people on the Day of Resurrection.

Horizon or historical context shows that the '*azal*' hadiths were born in a dynamic social situation.³⁸ After migrating to Medina, Muslims faced economic challenges, war, and family responsibilities. Many companions practiced '*azal*' to protect their wives' health or to accommodate limited economic conditions. The Prophet Muhammad understood this context and offered tolerance. In other words, '*azal*' was not born from an ideology of rejecting children, but rather from the human need to balance moral and biological responsibilities.

Meanwhile, the reader's perspective focuses on the context of modern society, which is now confronted with the phenomenon of childfreedom.³⁹ This phenomenon is rapidly growing among urban youth, particularly through social media, citing individual freedom, economics, and lifestyle. Childfree people refuse to have children not for medical or temporary reasons, but as an ideological choice to live without dependents. From a hermeneutic perspective, childfree is the result of a modern reinterpretation of the secular and individualistic function of the family.⁴⁰ The problem arises when childfree adherents try to legitimize their choice by citing the '*azal*' hadiths, even though the two have fundamentally different horizons of meaning.

³⁶ Safrizal, "National Family Planning Program in Indonesia: A Comparative Review of the Principle of Maslahat in Islamic Law and Public Health Recommendations," *Jurnal El-Thawalib* 6, No. 2 (2025), p. 187–201.

³⁷ Muhammad Iqbal Abdussalam and Zezen Zainul Ali, 'Family Planning According to the Indonesian Islamic Propagation Institute and Nahdlatul Ulama Bandar Lampung City', *Al-Qisthu: Journal of Legal Studies* 20, No. 1 (2022), p. 27–41.

³⁸ M. Yusran. S, et.al., 'Family Planning in Islamic Law', *Al-Fiqh: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 3.1 (2025), p. 23–35.

³⁹ Al Furqon, 'Hermeneutics of Hadith: Historical Review, Methods, and Applications to the Interpretation of the Quran and Hadith', *Al-'Adalah* 14, No. 1 (2011), p. 61–78.

⁴⁰ Hani Zaharani and Rubini, 'Hermeneutical Approach in Islamic Studies.

To clarify this difference, the following is a hermeneutic analysis table comparing *'azal* and childfree:

Table 2: Comparison of 'Azal and Childfree

No	Aspect	'Azal in the Hadith	Modern Childfree Phenomenon	Hermeneutic Implications
1.	Objective	Temporary control for the benefit (health, economic, psychological)	Permanent denial of reproductive function	Difference between intention and moral orientation
2.	Legal Status	Conditional change, with permission and good intentions	It is not permitted according to Sharia	Different from <i>maqāsid syarī'ah</i> (<i>ḥifẓ an-nasl</i>)
3.	Theological Basis	Recognition of God's destiny, "If God wills, you cannot prevent it."	Secular, based on human free choice	The text of the hadith rejects the absolutism of human will.
4.	Social Context	The reality of Muslim families in Medina	Urban lifestyle and modern consumerism	The interpretation of hadith needs to be contextual but normative.
5.	Moral values	Responsibility and wise management	Individualism and hedonism	Modern interpretation must reject the misuse of hadith

From the table above it appears that *'azal* and childfree are ontologically different. *'Azal* is a practice of temporary control born from the spirit of responsibility and balance in life.⁴¹ On the other hand, childfree is a form of permanent rejection of one of the maqasid of sharia, namely protecting offspring (*ḥifẓ an-nasl*). Therefore, the hermeneutic approach emphasizes that the *'azal* hadiths cannot be used as justification for the childfree movement.

Hermeneutic understanding of the *'azal* hadiths also has important social implications. In the digital age, religious interpretations are often simplified into short video clips or text excerpts that are detached from scientific context. This

⁴¹ Hibatul Wafi, et.al., "Hermeneutics of hadith about music: Fazlur Rahman dan Khaled M. Aboue el Fadl," *Al-Quds: Jurnal al-Quran dan Hadis* 8, No. 2 (2024).

phenomenon opens up opportunities for misuse of hadith.⁴² When the hadith '*azal*' is understood literally without considering the horizon of the text and history, then its moral message can be reduced to legitimizing anti-descent ideology. Therefore, digital religious literacy efforts are needed that place hadith within a contextual hermeneutic framework.⁴³

Furthermore, the hermeneutic approach teaches that understanding hadith does not stop at textual knowledge, but must involve moral and social awareness. In the case of '*azal*' and childfree, the difference in horizons of meaning requires modern readers to not only read the text, but also interpret its meaning according to the objectives of the sharia. Islam teaches a balance between human freedom and obedience to God's will.⁴⁴ Thus, the hadith '*azal*' is not a justification for childfree, but rather a reminder for humans to manage their lives responsibly, without rejecting the natural nature of creation.

Overall, the integration of thematic and hermeneutic analysis shows that the '*azal*' hadiths contain a high value of flexibility in Islamic law. Islam does not close the space for family planning, but rejects extreme views that eliminate offspring.⁴⁵ Through Musahadi's hermeneutic approach, it can be understood that the meaning of hadith is dynamic and must be read in the context of social change, while remaining based on the *maqasid* of sharia. Therefore, the study of the '*azal*' hadiths is important not only to answer legal questions, but also as a contribution to the formation of Muslim family ethics in the digital era.

With this understanding, Muslims can place the hadith in its proper place: as a moral guide that balances individual freedom and social responsibility. This study demonstrates that hadith hermeneutics can bridge classical texts with modern realities, while simultaneously preventing the misuse of religious texts in the digital space.⁴⁶ Ultimately, a contextual understanding of hadith that is oriented towards the values of *maqāsid* not only protects the sanctity of the text, but also enriches the religious practices of Muslims in facing the challenges of the contemporary era such as the childfree phenomenon.

⁴² Muh Ilham and R Kurniawan, 'Application of Hans-Georg Gadamer's Hermeneutic Theory to the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad', *Jurnal Mutawatir* 15, No. 1 (2021), p. 1–16.

⁴³ Abdul Majid, "Hermeneutics of Gender Hadith (A Study of Khaled M. Abou El Fadl's Thought in the Book Speaking in God's Name; Islamic Law, Authority and Women)," *Al-Ulum* 13, No. 2 (2013), p. 293–320.

⁴⁴ Mahmudin Hasibuan, et.al., "Family Planning (KB) in the Perspective of Maqashid Syariah," *Journal of Islamic Law El Madani* 3, No. 1 (2024), p. 65–74.

⁴⁵ Dina Novita Sari and Tajul Arifin, 'Family Planning in the Perspective of Hadith', *El-Ghiroh* 21, No. 1 (2023), p. 23–35.

⁴⁶ Wely Dozan and Mitha Mahdalena Efendi, 'Hermeneutics of Sa'Duddin Al-Utsmani Hadith (Study of the Book of Al-Manhaj Al-Wasth Fi Al-Ta'Amul Ma'a Al-Sunnah Al-Nabawiyah)', *TAJDID: Journal of Ushuluddin Science*, 19, No. 1 (2021), p. 1–29.

The Perspective of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* and the Ethical Implications of the Childfree Phenomenon

The concept of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* is the core of Islamic legal philosophy which emphasizes that every provision of the Shari'a has a moral and beneficial purpose that is to be realized. Imam al-Syathibi in *al-Muwāfaqāt* explains that *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* includes five main goals (*al-kulliyāt al-khamsah*: guarding the religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), guarding the soul (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), guarding the mind (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*), guarding the offspring (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), and guarding wealth (*ḥifẓ al-māl*). In the context of the hadiths regarding the permissibility of 'azal and the childfree phenomenon, the most relevant is the goal of *ḥifẓ al-nasl* or maintaining the continuity of human generations. Islam places offspring as part of the trust and continuity of civilization. Allah says:

وَاللّٰهُ جَعَلَ لَكُم مِّنْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَزْوَاجًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُم مِّنْ اَزْوَاجِكُمْ بَنِيْنَ وَحَفَدَةً وَرَزَقَكُم مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ ؕ

And Allah has made for you wives of your own kind, and from your wives He has given you sons and grandsons, and has provided you with good things. (QS an-Naḥl 16:72).

This verse shows that having children is part of the sunnatullah and a sign of Allah's love for humans.⁴⁷ Therefore, preserving the continuity of generations is not merely a biological issue, but also a moral and social responsibility. Within the framework of the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (the principles of Islamic law), permanently rejecting offspring, as in the childfree ideology, is a rejection of one of the fundamental objectives of sharia, as it eliminates the potential for the continuity of the community and social responsibility for the future.

On the other hand, the permissibility of 'azal discussed in authentic hadith remains within the *maqāṣid* framework because it is temporary, rational, and benefit-oriented. The Prophet Muhammad did not prohibit 'azal because he saw the benefits in it, including maintaining the wife's health, adjusting the family's economic situation, and regulating the spacing of children.⁴⁸ Thus, 'azal is not a form of rejection of *ḥifẓ al-nasl*, but rather an expression of responsibility towards the balance of family life.

In the *maqāṣid* view, 'azal law reflects the principle of balance between individual freedom and the social goals of the Shari'a.⁴⁹ Islam does not deny human freedom to plan a family, but this freedom is limited by the value of

⁴⁷ Tasya Nailul Fikriya, 'Family Planning in The Social Fiqh Perspective of KH Sahal Mahfudh', *Indonesian Journal of Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies* 4, No. 2 (2021), p. 17–34.

⁴⁸ Taufiq Ramadhan and Wahida Aulia Fahrani, 'The Childfree Phenomenon in the View of Islamic Law from the Perspective of Maqashid Al-Syari'ah and Its Relevance to Inheritance', *Sahaja: Journal Shariah And Humanities* 3, No. 2 (2024), p. 335–43

⁴⁹ Nur Kamilia, 'Childfree Marriage (Perspective of Jaser Audah's Maqasid Syariah Thought)', *Hakam: Journal of Islamic Law and Islamic Economic Law Studies* 8, No. 2 (2024).

moral responsibility towards oneself, one's partner and generations. Herein lies the superiority of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*: it does not reject modernity and rationality, but guides them so that they do not erode the values of blessings and humanity.

To emphasize this position, it can be seen in the following table which compares the suitability between the permissibility of *'azal* and the phenomenon of childfree within the framework of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*:

Table 3: *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* analysis of *'Azal* and Childfree

No	The Objectives of Sharia (<i>Maqāṣid</i>)	'Azal (Temporary Control)	Childfree (Permanent Refusal)	Assessment of <i>Maqāṣid</i>
1.	<i>ḥifẓ al-nasl</i> (Guarding offspring)	Postponing pregnancy temporarily for the benefit of	Rejecting offspring forever	'Azal is in line with <i>maqāṣid</i> , <i>childfree</i> is the opposite
2.	<i>ḥifẓ al-nafs</i> (Guarding the soul)	Protecting maternal and child health	Neglecting family social responsibilities	'Azal has beneficial values, <i>childfree</i> is detrimental to society
3.	<i>ḥifẓ al-'aql</i> (Keeping reason)	Based on rational and ethical considerations	Based on the ideology of secular individualism	'Azal is rational within the limits of sharia, <i>childfree</i> is excessive
4.	<i>ḥifẓ al-dīn</i> (Guarding religion)	Done with manners and the permission of the partner	Ignoring the Prophet's sunnah regarding offspring	'Azal is in accordance with the Shari'a, <i>childfree</i> is deviant
5.	<i>ḥifẓ al-māl</i> (Guarding wealth)	Managing family finances in a balanced manner	Consumer-oriented and materialistic	'Azal maintains stability, <i>childfree</i> prioritizes worldly pleasures

The table above shows that *'azal* supports *maqāṣid* values, while childfree opposes them. *'Azal* protects *maqāṣid* because it is done in a spirit of responsibility and planning, while childfree removes the moral dimension of generational continuity.⁵⁰ Thus, the childfree phenomenon can be seen as a form

⁵⁰ Ikhwanuddin Harahap, et.al., "Understanding The Rise of Childfree Marriage: Avoiding Toxic Family, Being Happy and Well Without Children Despite Contradiction With Maqashid Al-Sharia', *Al-Istinbath: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 10, No. 1 (2025), p. 302–29.

of *ta'arud al-maṣlahah* (conflict of interests) that rejects one main maqāṣid for the sake of personal gain. The Islamic jurisprudence principle states: “The public interest must be prioritized over personal interests.”⁵¹

The views of classical and contemporary scholars also reinforce this difference.⁵² Imam al-Ghazali in *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm ad-Dīn* explains that '*azal* is *makruh* if it is done without a clear sharia reason, because denying the potential for offspring without urgent need means rejecting part of the wisdom of marriage. However, if it is done for reasons of benefit, such as maintaining the wife's health, then it is permissible.⁵³ Imam *an-Nawawi* in *Syarḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* is of the view that '*azal* may be carried out provided that he obtains permission from the wife, because the right to have offspring is a joint right of husband and wife.⁵⁴ Meanwhile, Yusuf al-Qaradawi in *al-Ḥalāl wa al-Ḥarām fī al-Islām* provides a more contextual explanation; '*azal* may be done as part of family planning, as long as it is not used as a life principle or anti-heredity ideology.⁵⁵

A comparison of the views of these scholars can be seen in the following table:

Table 4: Scholars' Views on 'Azal and Its Implications

No	Scholars	Views on ' <i>Azal</i>	Terms and Conditions	Relevance to the Childfree Phenomenon
1.	Imam al-Ghazali	<i>Makruh</i> if there is no syar'i reason; yes, if there are benefits	Not to reject offspring, but to protect the family's interests	Rejecting childfree because it is contrary to the wisdom of marriage
2.	Imam an-Nawawi	Yes, but you must have your wife's permission.	Maintaining shared rights in reproduction	Childfree violates the principles of deliberation and family rights.
3.	Yusuf al-	Maybe for health	It cannot be used	Emphasizing the

⁵¹ Dania Nalisa Indah and Syaifuddin Zuhdi, 'The Childfree Phenomenon in the Perspective of Human Rights and Maqashid Al-Shari'ah', *Proceedings of the International Conference on Community Empowerment and Engagement (ICCEE 2021)*, (2022), p. 222–31

⁵² Alfa Syahriar, et.al., “Childfree Dalam Perspektif Islam Dan Sosial, Dan Implikasinya Terhadap Ketahanan Keluarga,” *Isti'dal: Jurnal Studi Hukum Islam* 17, No. 1 (2023), p. 302.

⁵³ Muhammad Syarif and Furqan Furqan, 'Maqashid Al-Syariah Agreement of Married Couples Not to Have Children (Childfree) in the Perspective of Islamic Law', *Jurnal Al-Ijtima'iyah* 9, No. 1 (2023), p. 51.

⁵⁴ Ahmad Maulidizen, et.al., 'The Concept of Child-Free Lifestyle in the Context of Maqasid Shariah: Ethical Considerations and Social Implications', *Journal of Islamic Law and Legal Studies* 1, No. 2 (2024), p. 55–61.

⁵⁵ Nailis Shofita, et.al., 'Childfree Problems and Their Solutions.

	Qaradawi	or economic purposes	as a living ideology	difference between family planning and <i>childfree</i>
4.	Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani	Recognizing 'azal as a practice of companions	Not prohibited, but not absolutely recommended	Affirming Islam's middle position
5.	Sheikh Wahbah az-Zuhaili	'Azal is a form of family planning that is permitted.	It cannot be permanent or without consideration of <i>maqāṣid</i>	<i>Childfree</i> is a form of social moral deviation.

This comparison appears that all scholars reject the extreme view that denies offspring completely. They view that the permissibility of 'azal is only relevant in the context of maintaining welfare, not rejecting generations. Thus, childfree has no theological legitimacy in Islam because it contradicts the principles of *maqāṣid* and the consensus of scholars.⁵⁶

From a social ethics perspective, childfree creates a crisis of collective responsibility. Islam emphasizes that the existence of humans on earth carries a social mandate to continue life, prosper the earth, and uphold the values of goodness. Rejecting descendants means rejecting the continuation of the caliphate's mission. In Surah al-Baqarah, verse 30, Allah says:

وَأَذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰئِكَةِ اِنِّيْ جَاعِلٌ فِى الْاَرْضِ خَلِيْفَةً

(Indeed, I will create on earth a caliph). Descendants are a concrete form of preserving the mandate of the caliphate.

More than that, the childfree phenomenon has the potential to erode the value of togetherness (*ukhuwah insāniyyah*) which is the basis of life in Islamic society.⁵⁷ When the younger generation rejects family and reproductive responsibilities, the sustainability of social structures, education and civilization will be threatened. From a *maqāṣid* perspective, this is a form of *mafsadah* (damage) that must be prevented. Therefore, the attitude towards childfree should not be limited to moral condemnation, but needs to be accompanied by religious literacy education and strengthening awareness of *maqāṣid* among modern society.

Ethically, Muslims are required to position themselves wisely between two extremes: individual freedom that rejects social responsibility and

⁵⁶ Arbanur Rasyid, et.al., "The Indonesian Journal of the Social Sciences Dynamics of Childless Marriage Through the Lens of Maqasid Al-Shari'a", *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 12, No. 2 (2024).

⁵⁷ Dwi Arini Zubaidah, 'Childfree Marriage in the Perspective of Maqashid Asy-Syari'ah', *Al-Qadha: Journal of Islamic Law and Legislation* 10, No. 1 (2023), p. 79–93

conservative views that reject legal flexibility. Islam does not reject the use of reason and rationality in determining the number of children, but emphasizes that such decisions must be based on the values of blessing (*barakah*) and responsibility.⁵⁸ The family in Islam is not just a biological institution, but also a place for the formation of morals, civilization and good deeds. Prophet PBUH Said: "If a child of Adam dies, then his deeds are cut off except for three: charity, useful knowledge, and pious children who pray for him." (Narrated by Muslim). This hadith emphasizes that descent is part of the continuity of human deeds.

In a modern context, reading *the maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* on the childfree phenomenon opens up a wider space for ethical reflection. Muslims need to understand that blessings are not always synonymous with the number of children, but rather with the educational, moral, and spiritual quality of the children born. Therefore, Islam allows for family planning based on the benefit of others, but rejects the rejection of children as a lifestyle.⁵⁹ The *maqāṣid* approach not only protects legal texts, but also guides people to maintain human values in every life choice.

The practical implication of this discussion is the importance of strengthening *maqāṣid* awareness in facing social change in the digital era. People need to understand that modern freedom is not a reason to reject moral responsibility. Social media should be an educational tool to reaffirm the meaning of family and the continuity of generations, not a place to spread ideologies that weaken the institution of the family.⁶⁰

Thus, the integration of *the maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (objectives of Islamic law) and modern ethics can be a solution to address the phenomenon of childfreedom. Islam offers a paradigm of balance: rational freedom accompanied by spiritual responsibility.⁶¹ The permissibility of *'azal* in authentic hadiths shows the breadth of sharia in providing space for benefits, while the rejection of childfree confirms Islam's commitment to the values of sustainability and blessings of life.

In the end, understanding hadith and *maqāṣid* is integral will guide Muslims to live in balance between reason and revelation, between individuals

⁵⁸ Siti Nurjanah and Iffatin Nur, 'Childfree: Between the Sacredness of Religion, Law, and the Social Reality', *Al-'Adalah* 19, No. 1 (2022), p. 1–28

⁵⁹ Mohammad Fauzan Ni'ami Ni'ami and Tutik Hamidah, 'Contemporary Reformulation of Maqāṣid Al-Syarī'Ah: Value System as Jasser Auda's Offer Towards Humanist Islamic Law', *Bidayah: Study of Islamic Sciences* 14, No. 1 (2023), p. 1–19

⁶⁰ Syarif Kasim, et.al., "Implication of Childfree on Inheritance Rights in Islamic Families: Normative Analysis Based on Maqashid Shari'ah," *Madinah: Jurnal Studi Islam* 12, No. 1 (2025), p. 224–43.

⁶¹ Fathul Mu'in et.al., 'Childfree in Modern Muslim Communities of Lampung and West Java Provinces: A Maqāṣid Al-Sharī'ah Perspective', *El-Usrah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga* 7, No. 2 (2024), p. 860–77.

and society, between this world and the hereafter. *'Azal* is a symbol of wisdom in planning life, while childfree is a warning about the danger of losing the meaning of humanity. By reviving *maqāṣid* values, Muslims not only safeguard the text of the Shari'a, but also safeguard the future of a civilized and blessed civilization.

Conclusion

Comprehensive analysis of the hadiths on the permissibility of *'azal* and the phenomenon of childfree concludes that Islam views family planning as part of a moral responsibility based on the value of benefit. Sahih hadiths narrated by Jabir bin Abdillah, Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, and other companions show that the practice of *'azal* has been known since the time of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH and is not prohibited as long as it is done with the right intention, the permission of the spouse, and consideration of benefit. This permissibility is not a form of rejection of offspring, but a reflection of the flexibility of sharia that pays attention to the balance between the biological, social, and spiritual needs of the people. Through thematic analysis (*mawḍu'i*), it was found that all the hadith of *'azal* contain a consistent moral message: permissibility is temporary and conditional. The Prophet Muhammad never interpreted *'azal* as a form of murder or rejection of life, as the Jews accused, but rather taught self-control and awareness of God's will. Therefore, *'azal* is part of human endeavor that remains within the corridor of monotheism, not a form of resistance to Divine destiny. Hermeneutic approach to hadith extends the meaning of this teaching into a modern context. By reading the text, the author's context, and the reality of today's readers, it can be understood that *'azal* and childfree are fundamentally different. *'Azal* was born from a spirit of responsibility and balance, while childfree emerged from an individualistic ideology that rejects the social and spiritual function of offspring. In this way, hadith are not misused to legitimize modern ideologies that contradict the *maqāṣid* of Islam. Meanwhile, from the perspective of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*, *'azal* is in line with the goals of preserving offspring (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), preserving the soul (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), and preserving reason (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*), because it is done for the benefit of the family. Conversely, childfree contradicts *maqāṣid* because it rejects the continuity of generations and ignores social responsibility. Islam gives its followers the freedom to plan their families, but this freedom is limited by the values of blessings and moral responsibility. Therefore, childfree has no theological legitimacy in Islam because it eliminates one of the main objectives of sharia, namely the continuation of human life and civilization. The hadiths about *'azal* prove that Islamic law is adaptive and relevant throughout the ages, as long as it is interpreted with a scientific and contextual approach. This integration between classical texts and modern reality is an important model for the development of hadith studies in the digital era. Finally, it can be

emphasized that Islam places family and descendants as the center of civilization and a source of blessings. '*Azal*' is a symbol of wisdom in managing household life, while childfree is a warning of the potential loss of the meaning of humanity due to excessive modernity. By reviving the values of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, Muslims can build a balance between freedom and responsibility, between this world and the hereafter, and between rationality and spirituality. Thus, this study concludes that the '*azal*' hadiths cannot be used to justify childfree ideology. Instead, they should be understood as the basis of Islamic ethics that guide humans to live with full awareness, responsibility, and blessings in carrying out their mandate as caliphs on earth.

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