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Reconstruction of the Hadith's Understanding of Women's Reason and Religion through Criticism of the Qur'an-Hadith Intertextuality

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Abstract

The hadith concerning *nuqṣān al-ʿaql wa al-dīn* (deficiency in intellect and religion) is often interpreted as a general statement regarding women's intellectual and religious inferiority; however, the text's structure, historical context, and the evolution of its *sharḥ* (commentary) reveal a more complex range of meanings. This study aims to reconstruct the hadith's historical context and semantic structure, trace the evolution of its interpretation within the commentary tradition, map its relationship with the normative horizon of the Qur'an, and formulate boundaries for interpretation that are textually and historically justifiable. The research employs a qualitative approach based on a literature review, utilizing a textual-historical reconstruction design. The primary corpus draws on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, with the four Sunan

collections serving as a control corpus. The analysis incorporates linguistic study, rhetorical structure, Qur'anic intertextuality, and classical commentaries. The findings indicate that *nuqṣān al-ʿaql* is explained textually through a specific configuration of testimony, making it insufficient to generalize women's intellectual inferiority. *Nuqṣān al-dīn* relates to the reduced observance of prayer and fasting during menstruation, thereby pointing to a specific ritual condition rather than a permanent spiritual quality. Elements such as *kathrat al-laʿn* (frequent cursing), *kufrān al-ʿashīr* (ingratitude toward one's spouse), and *adhab li-lubb al-rajul al-ḥāzim* (swaying the mind of a prudent man) reveal a field of moral, legal, biological, and rhetorical evaluation that cannot be collapsed into a single anthropological category. Qur'anic intertextuality tests and limits generalizations, while historical reconstruction distinguishes the original meaning from receptive expansions within the interpretive tradition. In conclusion, the hadith maintains the evaluative meaning of *nuqṣān* (defect) within specific domains. In contrast, claims of universal intellectual, moral, or spiritual inferiority require additional premises not provided by the text itself.

Keyword: *Nuqṣān al-ʿaql wa al-Dīn, Hadith* on Women, Intertextual Critique, Hadith Hermeneutics, Historical Reconstruction

A. Introduction

The Prophetic hadith describing women as *nāqiṣāt al-ʿaql wa al-dīn* (reduction in intellect and religion) is among the most debated texts in Islamic studies on women's intellectual, spiritual, and social capacities. Narrations found in sources such as *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* contain the phrases *nuqṣān al-ʿaql* and *nuqṣān al-dīn*, popularly translated as "deficiency in intellect and religion." Such

translations easily foster the impression that the Prophet was establishing a universal intellectual and religious inferiority of women. In reality, according to al-Nawawī, the hadith's structure reveals the Prophet's own explanation of this "deficiency" through two specific conditions: testimony and menstruation, which affect the performance of certain acts of worship.[1] The Prophet also made this statement during interactions with women on an Eid festival, in the context of encouraging increased charity and virtuous deeds.[2] Therefore, the issue is not merely determining the hadith's authenticity, but rather understanding how the term *nuqṣān* (deficient) functions semantically, rhetorically, and contextually, and whether the Prophet's situational explanation can be transformed into an ontological proposition about women as a whole.

The social consequences of differing interpretations must be viewed in proper perspective. The hadith cannot automatically be positioned as the cause of all forms of violence or discrimination against women, as processes of interpretation, religious authority, educational institutions, legal culture, and societal reception mediate the relationship between text and social practice.[3] A more specific issue lies in the potential for a literal reading of the hadith to legitimize assumptions about the limitations of women's rationality, authority, or capacity. This situation renders the critique of hadith interpretation relevant to contemporary Islamic studies, particularly as concepts of gender, religious

[1] Abū Zakariyyā Muḥy al-Dīn Yaḥyā ibn Sharaf Al-Nawawī, *Al-Minhāj Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim Ibn Al-Ḥajjāj* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1996), 2: 66.

[2] Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn Ḥajar Al-'Asqalānī, *Fatḥ Al-Bārī Bi-Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī* (Egypt: al-Maktabah al-Salafiyyah, 1990), 1: 484.

[3] Rahmah Eka Saputri et al., "The Role of Women in Marital Dynamics: Hadis Interpretation of Amina Wadud's Hermeneutic," *MIQOT: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 48, no. 2 (2024): 282–300, https://doi.org/10.30821/miqot.v48i2.1180.

authority, testimony, leadership, and public participation continue to evolve.

The interpretive challenge becomes even more apparent when the hadith is read alongside the Qur'an. Several verses position men and women as moral subjects who share equal religious responsibility; these include Q. 33:35, which places men and women side by side across various categories of virtue, and Q. 9:71, which describes believing men and women as *awliyāʾ* (allies/protectors) to one another in upholding goodness. Q. 16:97, Q. 4:124, and Q. 40:40 likewise link righteous deeds to divine reward without making gender a basis for differentiating moral worth. While these verses do not necessarily eliminate all legal distinctions between men and women, they provide a crucial normative horizon for examining whether *nuqṣān al-ʿaql wa al-dīn* (deficiency in intellect and religion) can be interpreted as a universal statement about female inferiority.

Literature on gender and the Qur'an has provided several important tools for addressing this issue. Wadud (2021) developed a reading of the Qur'an that grounds the principles of *tawḥīd* (monotheism) and justice in evaluating how gender relations are constructed.[4] Barlas (2023) critiqued patriarchal readings by analyzing the hermeneutic structures that attribute male superiority to the Qur'an.[5] Marcotte (2022) highlighted the text's historicity and the process of meaning production, while also criticizing the tendency of authoritative readings to lock the text into a

[4] Amina Wadud, "Reflections on Islamic Feminist Exegesis of the Qur'an," *Religions* 12, no. 7 (2021): 497, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12070497.

[5] Asma Barlas, "When Gender Is a Problem in Islamic Theology and Qur'anic Tafsir," *Forum* 2, no. 1 (2023): 3–15, https://doi.org/10.5771/2748-923X-2023-1-3.

single interpretation.[6] These three studies provide a crucial foundation for re-examining gender relations through the Qur'an's normative framework; however, their primary focus remains on Qur'anic *tafsīr* (exegesis) and gender construction, rather than on an intertextual reconstruction of the *nuqṣān al-ʿaql wa al-dīn* hadith.

Contemporary hadith studies have shifted toward a more contextual approach. Imroni et al. (2024) view the phrase *nuqṣān al-ʿaql wa al-dīn* as a rhetorical expression linked to the context of the Prophet's communication, arguing that it is inappropriate to treat it as a universal doctrine regarding women.[7] Sattar et al. (2026) focus on hadith transmission and the social context of narration by studying *rijāl* (narrators) and the historical conditions accompanying the dissemination of reports.[8] Yahya and Zainuddin (2021) combine *sanad-matn* (two core structural components of a hadith) criticism, a socio-historical approach, and gender hermeneutics, concluding that the concept of *nuqṣān al-ʿaql* possesses a contextual dimension and rejecting its interpretation as innate female inferiority.[9] While these studies broaden the scope of hadith interpretation, they have not yet used the systematic relationship between hadith and the Qur'anic corpus as a

[6] Roxanne D. Marcotte, "New Trends in Qur'anic Studies: Text, Context, and Interpretation," *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations* 33, no. 1 (2022): 99–101, https://doi.org/10.1080/09596410.2022.2031656.

[7] Mohamad Arja Imroni et al., "The Disqualification of Women's Witness: Early, Classical and Modern Qur'anic Exegesis on Women's Intellectual Capacity (Naqiṣāt Al-'Aql)," *International Journal of Religion* 5, no. 11 (2024): 3550–61, https://doi.org/10.61707/yqmsge69.

[8] Abdul Sattar et al., "Event Contextualization in Hadith Interpretation: A Framework for Reassessing Problematic Hadith Narratives," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis* 27, no. 1 (2026): 127–54, https://doi.org/10.14421/qh.v27i1.6418.

[9] Agusni Yahya and Muslim Zainuddin, "The Interpretation of the Hadith on the Characteristics of Women and Its Implications for Islamic Law," *Samarah* 5, no. 1 (2021): 276–96, https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v5i1.9593.

primary tool to examine the semantic structure of *nuqṣān al-ʿaql wa al-dīn*.

Other studies critique patriarchal constructs and textualist tendencies. Mokhtarzadeh et al. (2026) emphasize the importance of a gender-justice-based reading of the Qur'an for understanding the relationship between men and women.[10] Elewa (2026) positions the Qur'an as an ethical horizon for evaluating patriarchal constructs.[11] Mufid et al. (2023) employ the thought of Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd to critique the hermeneutic authoritarianism that arises when religious texts are read literally and detached from their meaning-production processes.[12] Irsad, Mustaqim, and Qudsy (2024), through an analysis of *Tafsīr al-Ibrīz*, show how textualist tendencies can yield different interpretations of gender issues, including forms of subordination in specific matters.[13] This body of research highlights the importance of critiquing interpretive constructs; however, it still focuses primarily on Qur'anic exegesis or Qur'anic hermeneutics theory and has not yet produced a specific model for interpreting the intertextual relationship between the *nuqṣān al-ʿaql wa al-dīn* hadith and Qur'anic verses.

Intertextual Qur'anic studies offer a methodological avenue for addressing unresolved areas of inquiry.

[10] Yaghoob Mokhtarzadeh et al., "Women's Stories in the Quran as Models of Social Agency and Gender Justice," *Arba: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 2, no. 2 (2026): 159–76, https://doi.org/10.64691/mr9fqd57.

[11] Abdelhamid Elewa, "Re-Presenting Women in the Qur'an Translated: Sociocultural Re-Contextualization From a Feminist Perspective," *Digest of Middle East Studies* 35, no. 1 (2026): 70011, https://doi.org/10.1111/dome.70011.

[12] Abdul Mufid et al., "Rereading Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd's Method of Interpreting Religious Texts," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 79, no. 1 (2023): 1–6, https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v79i1.8102.

[13] Muhammad Irsad, Abdul Mustaqim, and Saifuddin Zuhri Qudsy, "Paradigm Shifts in Gender Narratives of Tafsīr Al-Ibrīz through Oral Exegesis on Youtube," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis* 25, no. 1 (2024): 141–60, https://doi.org/10.14421/qh.v25i1.5416.

Gyllenhaal and Zuckier (2024) demonstrate intertextual hermeneutics by examining the relationship between the Qur'an and earlier textual traditions through Muqātil ibn Sulaymān's work, underscoring the importance of historicity and context in interpreting intertextual connections.[14] Safitri (2024) applies Julia Kristeva's concept of intertextuality to analyze narratives of women's creation across the Qur'an and the Bible, showing the approach's capacity to identify differences and shifts in meaning between texts.[15] Pratiwi et al. (2026) also use intertextual analysis to interpret the term *qawwām* (caretaker) through relationships between verses, showing how cross-referencing shapes meaning around justice and the reciprocal relationship between men and women.[16] A mapping of the literature reveals four primary trends. Qur'anic gender studies offer a normative perspective on moral equality; Qur'anic critiques of patriarchy; hermeneutical studies emphasize historicity and the process of meaning construction; contextual hadith studies examine the interplay between text, communicative context, and gender construction; and intertextual research demonstrates the potential to interpret meaning through intertextual relations. No analytical framework currently integrates these four elements to examine the shift in meaning from the Prophet's situational utterances to generalizations about women's capacity. This study identifies that absence as a primary focus of the research.

[14] David Gyllenhaal and Shlomo Zuckier, "In Search of a Sinful Pun : A Granular Analysis of Q 2:58–59," *Der Islam* 101, no. 2 (2024): 301–31, https://doi.org/10.1515/islam-2024-0018.

[15] Fazida Safitri, "Humans' Relationship With Nature in the Qur'an and Al-Kitab: Julia Kristeva's Intertextual Analysis," *An-Nubuwwah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 3, no. 1 (2024): 15–30, https://doi.org/10.65345/anjis.v3i1.30.

[16] Eka Ayu Sandi Pratiwi et al., "Women's Leadership in the Quran: A Critical Analysis of Contemporary Muslim Interpretation and Social Practice," *Arba: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 2, no. 2 (2026): 120–40, https://doi.org/10.64691/ms4sxm74.

This study employs a qualitative, library-based research approach utilizing a textual-historical reconstruction design for hadith. The object of study is the construct of *nuqṣān al-ʿaql wa al-dīn*, along with its transmission networks, contexts, and reception. The primary corpus comprises narrations identified through a systematic search of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* that contain the *nuqṣān al-ʿaql wa al-dīn* formula. At the same time, Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, and al-Nasā'ī serve as a control corpus to examine variations in *sanad* (chain of transmission), *matn* (textual content), and narrative context. *Sharḥ* (commentaries) by al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ, al-Māzirī, al-Nawawī, Ibn Ḥajar, al-ʿAynī, al-Qasṭallānī, and al-Ṭībī are used as sources for reception. In contrast, the *tafsīr* (exegesis) works of al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, and Ibn ʿĀshūr map interpretive horizons regarding the Qur'an. The search employs terms such as *nāqiṣāt ʿaql wa dīn*, *nuqṣān al-ʿaql*, and *nuqṣān al-dīn*, as well as terms related to testimony, menstruation, the Eid sermon, *ṣadaqah* (charity), and women's responses. Each narration is recorded by its source, *sanad*, narrator, wording, narrative elements, and textual variations; *sharḥ* and *tafsīr* sources are recorded according to the relevant Hadith unit or Qur'anic verse. Data is included if it directly relates to the *nuqṣān* construct, the event context, transmission variations, or interpretive reception.

The analysis proceeds sequentially to preserve the distinct epistemic functions of each approach. The first stage maps the *sanad* and *matn* variants to identify transmission patterns, textual stability, and narrative differences. The second stage analyzes the lexical and semantic meanings and the rhetorical structure of the terms *ʿaql*, *dīn*, *nuqṣān*, and *kufrān al-ʿashīr*. The third stage reconstructs the historical context from elements consistent across narrations,

distinguishing them from details that appear only in specific transmission lines. The fourth stage applies Kristeva's concept of intertextuality in a limited manner, focusing on textual and conceptual proximity, the transformation of meaning functions, and reception. The final stage examines classical hadith commentaries to trace the evolution of interpretations regarding the "deficiency in intellect and religion" and the boundaries of their meaning. The results from all these stages are then compared integratively to distinguish meanings directly indicated by the text from meaning extensions that require additional assumptions—particularly in determining whether the concept of a deficiency in intellect and religion can be generalized into a claim about women's overall inferiority.

B. Historical Context and Rhetorical Structure of the Hadith on the *Nuqṣān al-ʿAql wa al-Dīn*

The primary corpus for reconstructing the events behind the *nuqṣān al-ʿaql wa al-dīn* hadith is Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī's narration in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. Al-Bukhārī's narrator, the Prophet, went out to the *muṣallā* (prayer ground) on the occasion of "*Aḍḥā* or *Fiṭr*," passed by a group of women and said, "O assembly of women, give charity, for I have been shown that you constitute the majority of the inhabitants of Hell."[17] The phrasing "*Aḍḥ*" or *Fiṭr*" does not provide sufficient basis to definitively identify the occasion as either Eid al-Fiṭr or Eid al-Aḍḥā, as the uncertainty stems from Abū Saʿīd's own transmission; another narration by al-Bukhārī presents a more complete sequence of events. After

[17] Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, ed. Muṣṭafā Dīb Al-Bugā (Damascus: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1993), no. 304.

the prayer, the Prophet delivered a sermon to the crowd and enjoined charity, then approached the women and reiterated the call to give.[18] The differing emphases of the two narrations reveal distinct narrative functions. The first narration highlights the Prophet's encounter with a group of women. In contrast, the second situates that encounter within a broader sequence of instruction and exhortation regarding charity on the day of the festival.

The historical context of the hadith is supported by more than just the Abū Saʿīd chain of transmission. Muslim preserves the Ibn ʿUmar chain—via Muḥammad ibn Rumḥ–al-Layth–Ibn al-Hād–ʿAbd Allāh ibn Dīnār[19]—and also records another chain via Ibn Wahb–Bakr ibn Muḍar–Ibn al-Hād.[20] Abū Dāwūd retains the Ibn ʿUmar chain with more concise wording.[21] At the same time, al-Tirmidhī narrates it via Abū Hurayrah, explicitly describing the Prophet as having "addressed the people and exhorted them."[22] Ibn Mājah also includes the Ibn ʿUmar chain and adds a detail about a woman described as *jazlah*[23]—a term denoting a woman who is resolute, mature, or capable. The diversity of these transmission chains demonstrates that the core teaching regarding *nuqṣān al-ʿaql wa al-dīn* does not rely on a single line of transmission. At the same time, variation in narrative frameworks requires careful historical

[18] Al-Bukhārī, no. 1462.

[19] Abū al-Ḥusayn Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj al-Qushayri Al-Naysābūrī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, ed. Muḥammad Fuād ʻAbd Al-Bāqī (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1995), no. 79.

[20] Al-Naysābūrī, no. 61.

[21] Abū Dāwud Sulaymān ibn al-Ash'ath ibn Isḥāq ibn Bashīr ibn Syaddād ibn ʻAmr al-Azdī Al-Sijistānī, *Sunan Abī Dāwud*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥy al-Dīn ʻAbd Al-Ḥamīd (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-Iṣriyah, 1993), no. 4679.

[22] Muḥammad ibn ʻĪsā ibn Sawrah ibn Mūsa ibn al-Ḍaḥḥāk Abū ʻĪsa Al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan Al-Tirmidhī*, ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir and Muḥammad Fuād ʻAbd Al-Bāqī (Egypt: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1975), no. 2613.

[23] Abū ʻAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Yazīd Ibn Mājah, *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, ed. Muḥammad Fuād ʻAbd Al-Bāqī (Riyadh: Dār al-Ṣadīq, 2014), no. 4003.

reconstruction that distinguishes elements consistent across multiple chains from those appearing only in specific accounts.

The narrations found in Muslim (no. 79 and 61) reinforce the Eid context evident in the Abū Saʿīd chain as recorded by al-Bukhārī. Ibn ʿAbbās reported that the Prophet performed the Eid prayer before the sermon; afterwards, he approached the group of women because they had not adequately heard the general address. The Prophet admonished and counselled them, then urged them to give charity.[24] Jābir ibn ʿAbd Allāh, in the narration recorded by al-Nasā'ī, provides a similar account: following the prayer and sermon, the Prophet walked toward the women, offered counsel, and requested charity, whereupon they handed over their jewellery to Bilāl.[25] These two accounts provide crucial context for interpreting the Abū Saʿīd hadith, as they reveal a space for religious communication that factually included women as the audience. Thus, the Prophet's encounter with women was not a conversation detached from acts of worship, but rather part of a sequence of religious instruction during the Eid observance.

Women's role as the audience in this event also illustrates a tangible form of participation. The narration in Muslim depicts women present at the *muṣallā*, receiving counsel directly, responding to the Prophet's words, and receiving the Prophet's rings, earrings, and other jewellery as charity.[26] Al-Bukhārī's narrator episode of Zaynab—the

[24] Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, no. 964.

[25] Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān Aḥmad ibn Syu'ayb Al-Nasā'ī, *Sunan Al-Nasā'ī*, ed. Muḥammad Riḍwān 'Arqaswaī (Beirut: Dār al-Risālah al-'Ilmiyyah, 2018), no. 1557.

[26] Al-Naysābūrī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 884.

wife of Ibn Masʿūd—who approached after the sermon to seek clarification about donating her jewellery to her husband and children.[27] This episode reveals two forms of agency traceable directly to the source material: women as participants in religious communication and women as decision-makers regarding the use of their assets. This fact prevents the hadith from being read merely as a one-way statement from the Prophet to a passive recipient. The event's structure reveals the women's communication, responses, questions, and economic action.

The hadith's rhetorical structure reveals a sequence of messages far more complex than the mere presentation of two claims about "intellect" and "religion." The exhortation "*taṣaddaqna* (give charity)" appears at the beginning of the sequence, followed by the primary reason for the admonition—namely, "*takthurna al-laʿn wa takfurna al-ʿashīr* (cursing frequently and being ungrateful to one's spouse)"—and only then does the phrase "I have not seen anyone more capable of robbing a sensible man of his reason than you" appear. This sequence indicates that charity is positioned as a practical response to a moral admonition. The Prophet first directs attention to the required course of action, then explains the behaviour prompting the rebuke, and finally employs the expression regarding the "*nuqṣān al-ʿaql wa al-dīn* (deficiency of intellect and religion)" as part of a rhetorical argument to reinforce the warning. This structure makes it inappropriate to reduce the hadith to a mere descriptive proposition about women's intellectual capacity. The message conveyed is part of a series of counsels linking moral conduct, religious response, and eschatological consequences.

[27] Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, no. 1466.

The structure of the narration itself also defines the meaning of *kufrān al-ʿashīr* (ingratitude toward one's spouse). The term does not denote *kufr* (theological disbelief), but rather ingratitude toward one's partner. Al-Tirmidhī's narration, featuring the phrase "*yaʿnī wa-kufrkunna al-ʿashīr* (and your ingratitude toward your spouses)",[28] demonstrates that the term *kufr* in this context describes the denial of or ingratitude for a spouse's kindness, rather than a change in religious status. Ibn ʿUmar's narration in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* also presents the variation "*akthurna min al-istighfār* (seek forgiveness frequently)" alongside "give charity."[29] This variation shows that the response prescribed for women encompasses two forms of rectification: social action through charity and spiritual action through *istighfār* (seeking forgiveness). Consequently, the opening section of the hadith establishes a moral framework for the expression regarding the "deficiency of intellect and religion" that follows.

Ibn Fāris explains the root *ʿ-q-l* as fundamentally denoting the meaning of *ḥabsah* (restraining or limiting), subsequently applying this to *al-ʿaql* as that which restrains a person from blameworthy speech and actions; he also cites al-Khalīl, who defines *al-ʿaql* as the opposite of ignorance—specifically, the capacity to comprehend something previously unknown or to refrain from an action one might otherwise have performed.[30] Al-Rāghib al-Aṣfahānī distinguishes *al-ʿaql* as the faculty prepared to receive knowledge, rather than the knowledge itself that humans

[28] Al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan Al-Tirmidhī*, no. 2613.
[29] Al-Naysābūrī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 79.
[30] Abū Ḥusayn Aḥmad Ibn Farīs, *Muʿjam Maqāyīs Al-Lughah* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1999), 4: 70.

acquire through that faculty.[31] In *Lisān al-ʿArab*, the root *n-q-ṣ* signifies loss or diminution, while *al-nuqṣān* can refer to the specific amount lost from the object undergoing reduction.[32] While these lexical meanings convey a general concept of reduction, they do not independently define the specific sense of *nuqṣān* intended in the hadith; rather, the semantic parameters are established by the Prophet himself: *nuqṣān al-ʿaql* is linked to the testimony of two women being equated to that of one man, whereas *nuqṣān al-dīn* is associated with the state of women who, during menstruation, do not perform prayers or observe fasting.

C. The Intertextual Relationship between Hadith and the Normative Horizon of the Qur'an

The relationship between the hadith on *nuqṣān al-ʿaql wa al-dīn* and the Qur'an requires examining points where semantic units share genuine textual or normative proximity. The first point of contact lies in the relationship between the explanation of *nuqṣān al-ʿaql* and Q. 2:282, both of which address testimony. The second point relates to *nuqṣān al-dīn* and verses that portray women as subjects of religious responsibility. The third point concerns the capacity for understanding and the measure of human nobility, as addressed in Q. 29:43 and Q. 49:13. Q. 4:34 and Q. 4:11 serve as counter-texts to ensure the analysis does not selectively focus only on verses that support equality. The intertextual framework employed here is a limited

[31] Al-Rāghib Al-Iṣfahānī, *Mufradāt Alfāẓ Al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2009), 577.

[32] Muḥammad ibn Mukarram ibn 'Alī Abū al-Faḍl Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān Al-ʿArab* (Beirut: Dār al-Ṣadr, 1999), 7: 100.

adaptation of Julia Kristeva's concept of the text as a space for the relationship, absorption, and transformation of meaning across texts. This adaptation does not claim that the hadith historically depended on specific verses. Still, it traces shifts in function and the limits of inference when a hadith proposition is situated within the relevant network of Qur'anic texts.

Q. 2:282 represents the textual counterpart most closely aligned with the Prophet's explanation regarding *nuqṣān al-ʿaql*. This verse regulates the recording of debt transactions and establishes a configuration for testimony involving either two men or one man and two women (should two male witnesses be unavailable). The rationale is that one woman might err, allowing the other to remind her. The hadith draws upon this issue of testimony to provide context when the Prophet links *nuqṣān al-ʿaql* to the testimony of two women being equivalent to that of one man. This connection reveals a significant thematic proximity that cannot be overlooked, while the functional differences between the two texts matter as much. Q. 2:282 governs evidentiary procedures in specific transactions, whereas the hadith employs the rules of testimony to illustrate the term *nuqṣān al-ʿaql*. The crucial element in the relationship between these two texts lies in the distinction between "error in testimony" and "deficiency of intellect" as a general category. Q. 2:282 cites the possibility of error or forgetfulness during the testimony process as the rationale for the prescribed composition of witnesses. The verse does not formulate a general theory regarding women's intellectual inferiority, nor does it establish gender as the sole determinant of cognitive capacity. Conversely, the hadith mentions the specific configuration of testimony only after employing the term *nuqṣān al-ʿaql*. The intertextual

relationship at this juncture results in a functional shift: a specific legal provision serves as an illustration for the category of *nuqṣān* within the hadith. This shift must not be reversed by treating the category of *nuqṣān* as a premise to explain the entirety of women's intellectual capabilities. Ibn Ḥajar explicitly places the hadith concerning women's testimony within a chapter that opens with Q. 2:282; he cites the portion of the verse addressing the possibility of *ḍalāl* (error/forgetfulness) and mutual reminding as part of his explanation, thereby establishing a clear basis for the connection between the hadith and the verse within the tradition of hadith commentary.[33]

The relationship between the concept of *nuqṣān al-dīn* and the Qur'an is distinct, as no verse directly reiterates the hadith formula regarding women who do not pray or fast during menstruation. Q. 9:71 offers a point of comparison regarding religious function. This verse positions believing men and women as *awliyā' baʿḍuhum min baʿḍ* (allies/protectors of one another) and links them both to enjoining good, forbidding evil, prayer, *zakāt* (almsgiving), and obedience to Allah and the Messenger. Asma Afsaruddin interprets this verse as an affirmation of shared moral-religious agency between men and women, particularly through the concept of *wilāyah* as a relationship of partnership and mutual responsibility.[34] The hadith addresses the reduction of certain rituals due to specific biological conditions. In contrast, the verse addresses women as agents of religious responsibility. The two texts

[33] Al-'Asqalānī, *Fatḥ Al-Bārī Bi-Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, 5: 316.

[34] Asma Afsaruddin, "Modern Rereadings of the Qur'ān through a Gendered Lens," in *The Oxford Handbook of Islam and Women*, ed. Asma Afsaruddin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), 105–108, https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190638771.001.0001.

do not yield the same proposition; rather, they reveal a distinction of domains. Women may experience a suspension of specific ritual obligations without losing their status as moral and religious subjects. This relationship is better described more normative-contrapuntal than as direct textual correspondence. The verse tests whether the concept of *nuqṣān al-dīn* can be extended from a reduction in ritual practice under specific conditions to a general assessment of a woman's religiosity.

Q. 16:97 reinforces this inquiry at the level of moral evaluation. According to al-Ṭabarī, the verse sets an equal standard for men and women for attaining a good life and the reward for righteous deeds, with faith and action as the basis for evaluation.[35] This structure decouples an individual's moral worth from the volume of rituals performed under any given circumstance. A woman whose biological condition necessitates the suspension of certain acts of worship is not thereby relegated to a lower moral standing. The relationship with the hadith is not one of direct explanation, as Q. 16:97 makes no mention of menstruation or *nuqṣān al-dīn*; instead, the connection functions as a check against the expansion of meaning. If "religious deficiency" is understood as a limited description regarding the reduced performance of specific acts of worship, that construct can still be situated within the normative framework of the Qur'an. If the same term is expanded into a claim regarding the low spiritual worth of women as a group, that extension finds no support in Q. 16:97.

[35] Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ Al-Bayān ʿan Taʾwīl Āy Al-Qurʾān* (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥijr, 2001), 17: 281.

Q. 29:43 offers a test regarding the epistemic dimension, yet its relevance must be viewed in proper proportion. The verse states that God's parables are understood by those who possess knowledge. The categories employed are *al-ʿālimūn* (the knowledgeable) and the act of understanding, rather than a division of capacity based on gender. This verse cannot serve as direct evidence for the equality of all intellectual capacities between men and women, as its context pertains to knowledge and the comprehension of Divine parables. Its function is better understood as a negative control: the Qur'anic text does not construct the capacity for understanding as a category inherently tied to men. This position matters when the hadith is interpreted by linking *nuqṣān al-ʿaql* (deficiency of intellect) to testimony. The hadith provides an explanation regarding a specific form of deficiency within the domain of testimony, whereas Q. 29:43 utilizes knowledge as an epistemic category unconstrained by gender. This relationship does not negate the hadith's meaning, but it limits treating it as a general theory of women's cognitive capacities.

Q. 49:13 extends the scope of inquiry from epistemic capacity to human dignity. The verse traces humanity's creation from a male and a female, describes the formation of peoples and tribes, and establishes *taqwā* (God-consciousness/piety) as the criterion for nobility in God's sight. Ibn ʿĀshūr explains that citing a common origin—a single male and female—affirms human equality in creation; thus, human differences do not serve as a basis for superiority, save through moral excellence pleasing to God,

with *taqwā* as the measure.[36] Its relationship to the hadith is not direct, nor can it override legal rulings that operate within specific domains. Its significance lies in examining the potential to transform the category of *nuqṣān* into a hierarchy of human worth. Q. 49:13 provides a normative check, ensuring that a category used to explain a specific situation is not expanded into a general measure of human nobility. Consequently, the relationship between Q. 49:13 and the hadith functions as an evaluative principle: gender cannot serve as the sole basis for determining the degree of human nobility when the Qur'an provides a more fundamental criterion.

Q. 4:34 and Q. 4:11 demonstrate clear normative differentiation within the Qur'an regarding family relations and the division of inheritance, respectively. Q. 4:34 employs the concept of *qiwāmah* within the structure of family responsibility, while Q. 4:11 establishes an inheritance distribution configuration that, under certain conditions, assigns different shares to men and women. Neither verse addresses *ʿaql* (intellect); thus, they cannot be cited as evidence that women possess lower intellectual capacity. Both remain significant as a counter-check against the tendency to conflate moral equality with total legal uniformity. This structure highlights three categories that must be distinguished: equality of moral worth, equality of epistemic capacity, and equality regarding all legal consequences. Q. 16:97 and Q. 9:71 pertain to the first two categories, whereas Q. 4:11 and Q. 4:34 indicate the existence of differentiation in specific legal areas.

[36] Muḥammad al-Ṭāhir Ibn ʻĀshūr, *Al-Taḥrīr Wa Al-Tanwīr* (Tunis: al-Dār al-Tūnisiyyah, 1985), 26: 258.

This Qur'an–Hadith network shows that the meaning of *nuqṣān al-ʿaql wa al-dīn* cannot be determined solely by a literal extension of the word "deficiency." Q. 2:282 provides the normative context closest to the *nuqṣān al-ʿaql* component. Yet, that context relates to the administration of testimony and does not, in itself, yield a theory regarding women's intellectual inferiority. Q. 9:71 and Q. 16:97 position women as subjects of moral responsibility and recipients of divine evaluation regarding faith and deeds; thus, *nuqṣān al-dīn* cannot automatically be extended into a sweeping judgment on the quality of their religiosity. Q. 29:43 and Q. 49:13 serve as a check against linking the capacity for understanding and human dignity to gender, while Q. 4:34 and Q. 4:11 ensure that findings regarding moral equality do not morph into a claim that all legal differentiation has been nullified.

D. Classical *Sharḥ* and the Development of the Meaning of Hadith *Nuqṣān al-ʿAql wa al-Dīn*

The tradition of *sharḥ* (commentary) regarding the hadith on *nuqṣān al-ʿaql wa al-dīn* reveals an interpretive evolution that extends beyond mere linguistic explanation; it addresses the nature of *ʿaql* (intellect), the relationship between female testimony and precision or memory, the status of menstruating women, and the function of the Prophet's statement within the broader structure of his counsel. Al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ, for instance, argues that the disparity in the required number of female versus male witnesses does not, in itself, prove an intellectual deficiency. In his view, this relationship must be understood in light of the Qur'anic explanation that a woman may err or forget—allowing the other to remind her—as outlined in Q. 2:282.

Al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ further explores the essence of *ʿaql* through various perspectives, defining it variously as knowledge, necessary knowledge, or the faculty for distinguishing the nature of different forms of knowledge.[37] These explanations show that, for al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ, *ʿaql* is not simply a measure of a woman's overall intellectual capacity. He links the term to *nisyān* (forgetfulness) and *qillat al-ḍabṭ* (a lack of precision) in testimony, thereby necessitating a conceptual distinction between legal rulings on testimony and anthropological propositions about women's intellectual capacity.

Al-Nawawī expands the discourse by synthesizing al-Māzirī's explanation of *ʿaql* with his own analysis of *nuqṣān al-dīn*. Al-Māzirī explains that the Prophet's statement regarding *nuqṣān al-ʿaql* relates to the requirement that the testimony of two women be treated as equivalent to that of one man, linking this to the Qur'anic verse concerning the possibility of one female witness forgetting and needing to be reminded by the other.[38] Al-Nawawī subsequently clarifies the connection between the hadith phrase "*fa-hādhā nuqṣān al-ʿaql* (this is the deficiency of intellect)" and the rules of testimony, while associating *nuqṣān al-dīn* with the suspension of prayer and fasting during menstruation. According to him, acts of worship are integral to religion and faith; thus, an increase in the performance of worship corresponds to an increase in religion, whereas a decrease in such performance signifies *nuqṣān al-dīn*. However, *nuqṣān al-dīn* does not invariably imply sinfulness; al-Nawawī distinguishes between deficiencies accompanied by sin and one that is not, as well as situations where a person is

[37] Al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ, *Ikmāl Al-Muʿlim Bi-Fawāʾid Muslim* (Egypt: Dār al-Wafāʾ li-l-Ṭibāʿah wa-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzīʿ, 1998), 9: 138.

[38] Abū ʾAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn ʾAlī Al-Māzirī, *Al-Muʾlim Bi Fawāʾid Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Tunis: al-Dār al-Tūnisiyyah li al-Nashr, 1988), 6: 211.

actually commanded to forgo specific acts of worship. He specifically categorizes menstruating women—who abstain from prayer and fasting—within this latter group.[39]

Ibn Ḥajar offers a more explicit formulation of the relationship between *nuqṣān al-ʿaql* and women's innate nature. In his discussion on testimony, he links the requirement of a second woman to corroborate testimony with *qillat ḍabṭ* (a lack of precision or retentive accuracy), noting that this condition reflects *nuqṣān al-ʿaql*. His explanation extends beyond the legalities of testimony; Ibn Ḥajar emphasizes that citing this deficiency in women is not intended to disparage them, as it is an inherent aspect of their creation. This deficiency is a condition that does not, in itself, entail moral culpability; rather, reproach and the threat of punishment are directed at specific behaviours mentioned in the hadith—such as *kufrān al-ʿashīr* and frequent cursing—rather than at the state of deficiency itself.[40] His analysis of *nuqṣān al-dīn* also illustrates a relative application of the concept of deficiency. He concurs with al-Nawawī, stating that a menstruating woman incurs no sin for omitting prayer, even though—when compared to someone actively performing prayer—she is described as being in a state of *nāqiṣah* (deficiency).[41]

Al-ʿAynī focuses on the function of the hadith expression describing a woman's ability to influence a man who is steadfast and competent in managing his affairs. In his view, the mention of a "deficiency in intellect and religion" depicts a situation that evokes astonishment: specifically, a woman's capacity to influence a man who is

[39] Al-Nawawī, *Al-Minhāj Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim Ibn Al-Ḥajjāj*, 2: 68.
[40] Al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ Al-Bārī Bi-Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, 1: 406-407.
[41] Al-ʿAsqalānī, 1: 415.

characteristically viewed as resolute and self-controlled.[42] Al-Qasṭallānī's explanation follows a similar line of reasoning. He characterizes the man in question as someone who can manage and control his affairs. In contrast, the expression regarding women highlights their ability to influence men to yield to their wishes. Whether those wishes pertain to matters that are right or wrong,[43] both scholars' analyses focus primarily on the meaning and function of the hadith expression in a rhetorical context, as well as the interplay between male character and female influence. These explanations show no attempt to use the expression as an independent basis for establishing new legal rulings concerning women.

Al-Ṭībī explains the expression's rhetorical function through the concept of *uslūb al-ḥakīm* (the "wise style"), which a response does not stop at directly answering the question but includes an addition serving a specific rhetorical purpose. According to al-Ṭībī, the phrase "I have not seen anyone more capable of robbing a resolute man of his senses than one of you" serves as an addition following the answer "you curse frequently and are ungrateful to your husbands," given that the latter part was already sufficient as a response. This addition introduces another noteworthy point: a man with steadfastness and self-control can lose his resolve when confronted by a woman described as having the aforementioned deficiencies.[44] Ibn Ḥajar subsequently critiqued this opinion held by al-Ṭībī. After citing al-Ṭībī's

[42] Badr al-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn Aḥmad Al-ʿAynī, *ʿUmdat Al-Qārī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1993), 3: 272.

[43] Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Al-Qasṭallānī, *Irshād Al-Sārī Li-Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1996), 2: 221.

[44] Sharaf al-Dīn al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAbd Allāh Al-Ṭībī, *Sharḥ Al-Ṭībī ʿalā Mishkāt Al-Maṣābīḥ Al-Musammā Bi-Al-Kāshif ʿan Ḥaqāʾiq Al-Sunan*, ed. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Hindāwī (Riyadh: Maktabat Nizār Muṣṭafā al-Bāz, 1997), 2: 465.

view as an explanation of *istitbāʿ* (concomitance), Ibn Ḥajar remarked "*wa-fīhi naẓar* (this view is open to question)" and then proposed that the expression could be understood as a factor contributing to women being the majority of Hell's inhabitants; for if a woman causes a resolute man to lose his composure—leading him to commit an improper act or utter inappropriate words—then, according to Ibn Ḥajar's line of reasoning, she shares in the sin and even compounds it.[45]

A comparison of the commentators reveals a shift in emphasis regarding the term *ʿaql*. Al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ begins by questioning the nature of *ʿaql* and then links the term to precision in testimony. Al-Nawawī maintains the connection between *nuqṣān al-ʿaql* and testimony, while also explaining *nuqṣān al-dīn* in detail through the lens of menstrual regulations. Ibn Ḥajar upholds the link between testimony and imprecision. Al-ʿAynī, al-Qasṭallānī, and al-Ṭībī place greater emphasis on the rhetorical construction of the statement regarding women's influence on men. The evolution of the commentaries also highlights the importance of distinguishing between three usages of the term *nuqṣān*: a deficiency in capacity regarding testimony; a deficiency in performing acts of worship due to menstrual regulations; and a deficiency in a relative sense that does not automatically imply moral culpability. Al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ associates *nuqṣān al-ʿaql* with precision, as explained in the Quranic verse concerning testimony. Al-Nawawī and Ibn Ḥajar link *nuqṣān al-dīn* to the non-performance of prayer and fasting during menstruation, while affirming that no sin is incurred due to this state. Ibn Ḥajar even employs the principle of relativity when explaining *nuqṣān*, noting that a

[45] Al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ Al-Bārī Bi-Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, 2: 306.

person may be described as "deficient" compared to a more perfect state without having committed a transgression.

E. Limits of the Meaning of *Nuqṣān al-ʿAql wa al-Dīn* in Integrative Reading

The issue of interpreting the hadith concerning n*uqṣān al-ʿaql wa al-dīn* does not ultimately hinge on whether a meaning of "deficiency" exists, since the text explicitly employs the term *nuqṣān* and the Prophet himself explained the two forms of deficiency in question. The more decisive issue is the extent to which the propositions contained in that explanation can be generalized. At least three levels of assertion must be distinguished: deficiency in a specific aspect, deficiency in a broader capacity, and deficiency as an inherent anthropological characteristic of women. The first level is directly supported in the structure of the hadith. The second level requires additional argumentation regarding the relationship between the aspect explained by the Prophet and human capacity as a whole. The third level requires an even broader premise: that the legal configuration and biological conditions mentioned in the hadith serve as fixed indicators for all women across all contexts.

Nuqṣān al-ʿaql is best understood through the Prophet's explanation regarding testimony, as the link between the term and its explanation is textual. Consequently, the deficiency in question is tied to a specific configuration of legal proof. Problems arise when that configuration is treated as a premise to assert the inferiority of women's cognitive abilities in their entirety. This leap assumes that the ability to provide testimony equals overall intellectual capacity. Neither the hadith itself nor the context

of the Qur'anic verse can substantiate such identity to which it intertextually refers. The abilities to remember, comprehend, reason, learn, weigh evidence, and reach decisions encompass a cognitive realm far broader than a single form of participation in legal proceedings. Therefore, the term *ʿaql* cannot simply be transposed into the category of "intelligence" in the modern psychological sense. A more restrained reading maintains *ʿaql*'s connection to the specific aspect explained by the text, without expanding it into a comprehensive measure of women's intellectual capacity.

A literalist objection must still be acknowledged where the text provides support. The hadith does not merely speak of a "difference in ways of thinking"; rather, it employs the term *nuqṣān* and links it specifically to testimony. Dismissing the notion of deficiency entirely would disregard linguistic structure and the Prophet's own explanation. A more defensible conclusion is to retain the evaluative sense while limiting the scope of that evaluation. *Nuqṣān* signifies a reduction in a specific aspect characterized by a certain degree or level of perfection; the term does not inherently imply that every dimension potentially associated with *ʿaql* undergoes such a reduction. This semantic principle is crucial because an evaluative term may apply to a specific object. If the object described by the Prophet is the configuration of testimony, then any demonstration of deficiency must remain within the parameters established by the text.

The concept of *nuqṣān al-dīn* presents a distinct inferential pattern yet yields a commensurate outcome. The Prophet's explanation links it to menstruation, which causes women to forgo prayer and fasting during specific periods. This textual connection suffices to establish a reduction in the performance of certain ritual obligations under specific

circumstances; however, it does not establish low religiosity as an inherent, permanent trait. The differing legal consequences for prayer and fasting further show that the issue lies in the procedural rules of worship rather than in determining an individual's spiritual standing. Prayers missed during menstruation need not be *qaḍā* (made up), whereas missed Ramadan fasts entail an obligation to make them up.[46] This legal pattern indicates that the *nuqṣān* operates through specific conditions and types of worship. A menstruating woman is not choosing to diminish her obedience, as the cessation of certain acts of worship is a requirement of Sharia law. Consequently, interpreting *nuqṣān al-dīn* as evidence of a deficiency in faith, piety, or closeness to God requires an additional premise that contradicts the legal structure treating menstruation as a normative state.

The rhetorical structure of the hadith also resists collapsing all of the Prophet's statements into a single category regarding female inferiority. The references to *kathrat al-laʿn* and *kufrān al-ʿashīr* serve an evaluative function regarding moral behavior; the explanation concerning testimony relates to legal matters; the mention of menstruation pertains to a biological condition with ritual consequences; and the phrase *adhab li-lubb al-rajul al-ḥāzim* (robbing the prudent man of his reason) speaks to a woman's power of influence over men during social

[46] According to al-Kāsānī, a menstruating woman is not required to make up the prayers she missed; this is because menstruation recurs monthly and lasts for several days, meaning that the obligation to make up all missed prayers would result in a large number of prayers and cause hardship. Unlike prayer, fasting during Ramadan is obligatory only once a year; consequently, the number of fasts missed due to menstruation is limited, making it feasible to make them up without causing the same level of difficulty. See, Abū Bakr Al-Kāsānī, *Badāʾiʿ Al-Ṣanāʾiʿ Fī Tartīb Al-Sharāʾiʿ* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1986), 1: 80.

interaction. Distinguishing these functions is crucial for determining the overall meaning. If every element is treated as evidence for a single anthropological thesis, a moral critique of specific behaviors transforms into a characterization of all women; evidentiary rules become a measure of intelligence; the state of menstruation becomes a gauge of religiosity; and the power of influence becomes proof of male weakness. Such a structure fails to respect the functional distinctions inherent in the text itself. The hadith actually integrates various forms of counsel into a single religious communication; consequently, each proposition must be maintained within its specific evaluative domain. This reading also explains why the presence of a moral element should not be used to extend the meaning of *nuqṣān al-ʿaql* into realms the Prophet did not address.

The hermeneutic consequence of this limitation lies in distinguishing the hadith's historical meaning, from its expansion within the tradition of reception, and its application as a normative proposition. Historical meaning can be determined by examining the relationship between the Prophet's utterance, the questions that arose, the context of delivery, and the direct explanation regarding *nuqṣān*. The evolution of hadith *sharḥ* (commentary) shows that later generations explained of intellect, testimony, religion, and menstruation through their own respective frameworks. This distinction in levels explains why the claim that "women are inherently intellectually inferior" cannot be treated as an automatic conclusion derived from the hadith. That claim rests on a generalization that goes beyond the explicit propositions and requires independent substantiation. Contemporary normative readings can derive a broader principle from the hadith's structure: namely, that differences in legal rulings and human

conditions must be interpreted in light of their underlying rationale, subject matter, and scope of applicability.

The final reconstruction thus preserves two facets of the hadith simultaneously: the evaluative meaning of *nuqṣān* remains acknowledged, while its anthropological extension is circumscribed. *Nuqṣān al-ʿaql* finds its clearest textual basis in the configuration of testimony cited by the Prophet as an illustration; from this, one may conclude specific aspects of legal participation, but one cannot directly infer a universal intellectual inferiority of women. *Nuqṣān al-dīn* is textually grounded in the reduced observance of prayer and fasting during menstruation; this allows conclusions about the curtailment of ritual practice under specific conditions, but not about a permanent state of diminished faith or spiritual quality in women.

F. Conclusion

The *nuqṣān al-ʿaql wa al-dīn* hadith encompasses two specific forms of deficiency: testimony as an explanation for deficiency in intellect, and the suspension of prayer and fasting during menstruation as an explanation for deficiency in religion. Historical reconstruction, an analysis of *sharḥ* (commentaries), the intertextual relationship between the Qur'an and hadith, and hermeneutic examination show that these two forms of deficiency do not provide an adequate basis for establishing a universal intellectual or spiritual inferiority of women. An intertextual critique situates legal rulings, biological conditions, moral evaluations, and human dignity within distinct domains; consequently, legal distinctions cannot be directly translated into a hierarchy of human capabilities. These findings have implications for the development of hadith studies, advocating for an

interpretive approach that preserves the text's evaluative meaning while curbing anthropological generalizations that extend beyond the hadith's actual propositions. As this study is limited to textual sources and primary commentaries, it does not yet examine the hadith's reception through empirical data on contemporary Muslim social practices. Future research should combine textual and reception-history critiques with reception studies, discourse analysis, and fieldwork to assess how the boundaries of the *nuqṣān al-ʿaql wa al-dīn* concept are understood, negotiated, and utilized across various social contexts.

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