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Beyond the Margin: Juridical Authority and Educational Transmission of the Sahabiyyat

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Abstract

This study investigates the foundational legal and pedagogical contributions of the female companions (Sahabiyyat) of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to the formation and preservation of early Islamic knowledge. Utilizing a multidisciplinary analysis of Qur'anic exegesis, Hadith corpora, and biographical dictionaries (kutub al-rijāl), this paper demonstrates that prominent figures such as Aisha bint Abi Bakr, Umm Salama, Hafsah bint Umar, Asma bint Abu Bakr, and Umm Atiyyah functioned not merely as

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passive transmitters of tradition, but as active jurists (muftiyāt), educators, and methodological authorities. Their juridical verdicts (fatāwā) and analytical interpretations directly shaped subsequent legal doctrine across diverse domains, including ritual law (ibādāt), family law, and economic jurisprudence. Furthermore, the study examines their institutional and informal educational roles—ranging from domestic and mosque-based study circles to advanced methods of transmission like samāʿ, qirā'ah, and ijāzah—which established a durable paradigm for female scholarship in Islamic history. By challenging historical narratives of female marginality in early Islam, this research highlights the indispensable role of the Sahabiyyat in shaping the epistemological architecture of Islamic civilization. The study concludes that the intellectual, educational, and legal achievements of the female companions formed the bedrock of Islamic jurisprudence and scholarship, serving as an enduring inspiration for contemporary Muslim women and affirming the importance of women's participation in preserving Islamic tradition and culture.

Keywords: *Sahabiyyat, Islamic Jurisprudence, Hadith Transmission, Female Scholarship, Legal Authority, Islamic Education, Women in Islam*

1. The Legal Authority of Female Companions in Early Islam

Female Companions of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) have contributed immensely in terms of developing and preserving Islamic laws and knowledge. Women are recognized as moral agents by both the Qur'an and the Sunnah. The contributions of female companions to early Muslims through their knowledge, courage, and involvement within the society have been considerable. In this essay, the Qur'anic basis for legal power of women is discussed. Also, actions of the female companions have enabled women to be regarded as scholars and transmitters of knowledge.

1.1 Female Companions as Legal Authorities

The females who followed Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) played a pivotal role in the establishment of Islamic jurisprudence. Apart from being devout followers, they were also tutors, narrators of hadiths, and religious counselors. The legitimacy of their authority derived from the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah, in which women were considered to be equally moral and religious beings in front of Allah.[1]

1.2 The Authority of Women in the Qur'an and Sunnah

According to the Qur'an, there is equality between man and woman in terms of their spiritual status and accountability before God. There is no mention anywhere in the Qur'an of women being evil by nature or that they are more morally corrupt than men. The Qur'an speaks about both men and women when defining the attributes of a believer (Qur'an 33:35). The Qur'an further goes on to say that the commandments of Allah and His Messenger apply to both men and women (Qur'an 33:36). Besides this, Allah grants equal rewards for good deeds performed (Qur'an 3:195; 16:97; 4:124). Islamic law also offers legal rights to

women. The Quran acknowledges the right of women to acquire property, inherit property, and make marriage contracts. She maintains the ownership of her property, which includes her dower (mahr). It is she who is not responsible for meeting the family's economic requirements. This proves that Islam acknowledges that women have an independent status and can take their decisions.[2]

1.3 Women's Authority Through Their Actions

The power and influence of the female Companions were not just theoretical; they had been proven by what they did. In the early days of Islam, acceptance of the religion meant persecution, ostracization, and suffering. The women endured all of this with as much determination as the men. Many Muslim women adopted Islam on the strength of their own convictions and not as a result of their husbands or other male relatives**.**

Fatimah bint al-Khattab (RA), for instance, is an example of a strong Muslim woman whose sister is the fourth caliph of Islam, Umar ibn al-Khattab (RA). Fatimah (RA) converted to Islam during the early years when Muslims were persecuted heavily in Makkah. Upon learning that his sister was a Muslim at a time when he was vehemently against Islam, Umar (RA) reacted angrily, beating up Fatimah (RA). In spite of this, she continued reciting the Qur'an. Umar (RA) was impressed by her determination, and he eventually converted to Islam.[3]

An equally significant incident involves **Umm Salamah** (RA), who was known for her intelligence and good judgment. In the case of Treaty of Hudaybiyyah, while many of the Companions were reluctant to obey the orders of the Prophet (PBUH) after concluding the treaty, Umm Salamah (RA) suggested to the Prophet (PBUH) that he should sacrifice and shave his head without saying anything to others. The Prophet (PBUH) agreed to take her advice and on seeing him, the Companions also followed his example.

Another excellent instance of the power of women in Islam is provided by **Aisha** (RA). More than two thousand hadiths were narrated by her. She was known to be one of the great scholars from the companions of the Prophet. Even senior companions would consult her on issues related to Islamic laws and worship, as well as inheritance and family matters. Another similar instance is that of **Al-Rubayyi' bint Mu'awwidh** (RA), who is renowned for her narrations of hadiths of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Many scholars and students from the city of Madinah have narrated from her. Her work assisted in preserving the Sunnah for future generations to come. In the same way, **Salma bint Qays** (RA) was one of the early Muslim women who took Bay'ah from the Prophet (PBUH). Salma bint Qays (RA) participated actively in the Muslim society and was always devoted to practice and support the religion of Islam. This example shows the active

participation of women in the religious and social life of the early Muslim community.[4] The Muslim women also proved their authority through worshipping activities and religious participation. They used to attend the mosque regularly, receive guidance from the Prophet (PBUH) about various aspects of Islam, and teach others whatever they have learned. The Prophet (PBUH) used to encourage their participation in religious activities saying:

"When your women ask permission to go to the mosque at night, allow them."

These examples clearly show that the authority of the female Companions was established through their faith, knowledge, courage, wisdom, and public service. They preserved the teachings of Islam, advised the Prophet (PBUH), narrated hadith, issued legal opinions, and educated later generations. Their practical contributions confirm that women held respected positions in the religious and intellectual life of early Islam.

2. Legal Opinions (Fatwas) of Hazrat Aisha (RA): An Analytical Overview

Hazrat Aishah (RA) is one of the best jurists amongst the companions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). She narrated thousands of hadiths related to religious practices like acts of worship, purification, prayers, and social transactions. Her knowledge became an important source of Islamic jurisprudence, and she gave religious opinions that many of the companions followed.

2.1 Miswak

Hazrat Aisha (RA) is known for the fact that she established the regular use of miswak among the people. According to Hazrat Aisha (RA), whenever the Holy Prophet (PBUH) used to enter his house, he would first use the miswak. Hazrat Aisha (RA) stated that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) so much emphasized the importance of miswak that the people feared that it might be made obligatory.[5]

2.2 Wudu (Ablution)

Several Ahadith were narrated by Hazrat Aisha (RA) about wudu. It was narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) did wudu with little water and advised the Muslim ummah not to waste the precious commodity. She narrated that he used to do complete wudu by thoroughly washing his feet and passing water through his beard. These narrations of Hazrat Aisha (RA) were a valuable source for the jurists in comprehending the Sunnah of ablution.[6]

2.3 Ghusl (Ritual Bath)

Guidance for doing ghusl was also given by Hazrat Aisha (RA). The process of performing ghusl as narrated by her included washing hands, doing wudu, washing the head thrice and then the whole body. She gave rulings of menses wherein she said that sexual intercourse was forbidden during menses but other types of lawful intimacy were allowed. These narrations of hers were a valued legal source for the laws of purification.[7]

2.4 Salah (Prayer)

A number of essential rules about prayer have been related by Hazrat Aisha (RA). According to her, a prayer done by a person with one rak'ah of Fajr before sunrise will be considered valid. Besides, she also mentioned that Prophet used to perform two rak'ah of Sunnah before Fajr. Moreover, she said that travellers should pray shortened prayers (qasr), which was the mercy of Allah.[8]

2.5 Transactions of Trade & Finance (Bay')

Hazrat Aisha (RA) also provided significant rulings regarding transactions of trade and business. She stated that it is permissible to purchase goods on deferred payments and being honest while conducting business transactions. She provided the Prophetic principle where whoever benefits from something has to take up the burden of that thing too, and the principle became famous as "Al-Ghunm bil-Ghurm". She provided the ruling regarding prohibition of sale of unripe fruits before harvest and prohibited the act of purchasing and selling of wine completely.[9]

There are numerous domains of the Sharia which have been covered by the legal opinions of Hazrat Aisha (RA), such as purification, prayer, ablution, cleanliness, and commercial dealings. It was her profound knowledge of the Quran and Sunnah that made her one of the best jurists of her time. Through her narration and legal opinions, she left an everlasting impact on the field of Islamic jurisprudence.[10]

3. Juridical Contributions of Other Female Companions

The female Companions of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) have been an important factor in the emergence and development of Islamic law. Due to their profound knowledge of the Qur'an and Sunnah, their role in the transmission of hadith, as well as the exercise of ijtihad, they came to be known as reliable guides for the Muslims.

3.1 Umm Salama (RA): A Distinguished Jurist

One of the Mothers of the Believers, Umm Salama (RA), was one of the most prominent female scholars of early Islam. She was among the other two women who had good knowledge about Islamic Shariah along with Hazrat Aisha (RA). The Senior Companions of the Prophet, such as Ibn Abbas (RA) and Abu Hurairah (RA), used to take decisions according to her legal opinions.[11]

About 378 hadiths were related to her name, and many of them played a very important role in establishing Islamic jurisprudence. Another feature that Umm Salama (RA) possessed was ijtihaad, that is the power of giving independent legal opinion. Sometimes, she would remove misinterpretations about the laws by making people aware of the true Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH). Umm Salama (RA) possessed legal acumen and knowledge of the Sunnah. One example of this

is her explanation about the problem of optional prayers offered after the Asr prayer. Some Muslims considered all prayers after the Asr prayer unlawful. Umm Salama (RA) informed them of the incident where she saw that the prophet offered two rak'ah prayers after the Asr prayer because he could not do it earlier because of a visiting delegation. She made it clear that it was an exception to the rule. This clarification enabled the jurists to differentiate between the exceptional practice of the prophet and his legal practice.[12]

Another instance of this is the matter of fasting when in a condition of janabah. In company with Hazrat Aisha (RA), Umm Salama (RA) rectified the belief of Abu Hurairah (RA) about the practice of the Prophet (PBUH) to start fasting before doing ghusl. This served as proof for the law to be followed by Muslims.[13]

3.2 Hafsah bint Umar (RA): Guardian of the Qur'an

Hazrat Hafsah (RA) made one of the greatest contributions to the history of Islam in preserving the manuscript of the Qur'an that was compiled during the caliphate of Abu Bakr (RA). The caliphate of Uthman ibn Affan (RA) saw the use of the manuscript in preparing the copies of the Qur'an. Through her contributions, the integrity of the Qur'anic text was preserved for future generations. In addition, Hafsah (RA) narrated about sixty hadiths, some of which appear in the collection of Sahih al-Bukhari among others**.[14]**

The second great service that Hazrat Hafsah (RA) rendered to Islam is that of compilation of the Qur'an. The compilation of the Qur'an took place after the battle of Yamamah in the time of Abu Bakr (RA). The original version of the Qur'an had been compiled and kept by Hafsah (RA). During the time of Caliph Uthman ibn Affan (RA), some differences in the recitation of the Qur'an came out among Muslims living in different places. Caliph Uthman (RA) then asked for this original copy from Hafsah (RA) and used it as the authentic source in making the copies of the Qur'an. After that, the original copy was again returned to Hafsah (RA). This service of Hafsah (RA) played an important role in preserving the Qur'anic text. This is one of the greatest services to Islamic law because the Qur'an is the basis of all Islamic laws**.[15]**

3.3 Asma bint Abu Bakr (RA): Scholar and Hadith Narrator

Hazrat Asma bint Abu Bakr (RA) was famous for her piety, wisdom, and love of Islam. She was a source of narration of about 56 hadiths that have been recorded in Sahih al-Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, and other authentic hadith compilations. She was among many notable companions and Tabi'un who sought knowledge from her, thus becoming an important chain in transmitting the traditions of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Asma (RA) enjoyed great fame regarding her knowledge and her honesty as narrators of hadith. For instance, she had narrated a hadith about the clothes of

women in the state of Ihram. According to this narration, women who are in the state of Ihram should not wear niqab and gloves but should cover themselves properly following the directions of the prophet. This narration was considered to be among the main pieces of evidence in the discussion of the rulings of women's Ihram. She had narrated various hadiths on purification, zakat, sawm, and worship which were narrated by many scholars including her son, Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr, and her step-brother Urwah ibn al-Zubayr.[16]

3.4 Umm Atiyyah al-Ansariyyah (RA): Authority on Women's Jurisprudence

Umm Atiyya (RA) was an esteemed scholar amongst the Ansar and has narrated around forty Hadiths, many of which have been compiled in both Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim. One thing that she is known for is narrating the instructions of the Prophet (PBUH) regarding the washing of the dead bodies, which was later recognized by scholars as one of the most reliable sources on the subject. Also, Umm Atiyyah narrated some rulings about the Eid prayers, according to which women, including the menstruating women, should participate in the Eid congregation, but not in the actual prayer.[17]

Hazrat Umm Atiyyah (RA) was considered the most reliable source for the Islamic funeral rites of washing of the dead female (ghusl al-mayyit). According to her, during the death of the daughter of the Prophet Zaynab (RA), the Prophet (PBUH) directed that his daughter must be washed three or five or any number of times required by starting from the right side, using water and lotus leaves together. For the last ghusl, camphor must be included. This hadith was considered the most reliable one regarding the funeral rites of washing. Another significant example is about the prayers performed on Eid day. According to Umm Atiyyah (RA), the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) ordered that all females, married or unmarried, should attend the Eid gathering, even those who were menstruating.[18] Women who were menstruating should refrain from attending the prayer session but could take part in the gathering. The hadith was later used as a major source of law regarding women's participation in religious activities. The contributions made by Umm Salama (RA), Hafsah bint Umar (RA), Asma bint Abu Bakr (RA), and Umm Atiyyah (RA) reveal that women companions were also part of the formation of Islamic jurisprudence. Through hadith narrations, ijtihad, safeguarding the Qur'an and being scholars, they played a key role in safeguarding Islamic law. This knowledge still serves Muslim scholars today and is an important aspect of Islamic law.[19]

4. Women's Role in Shura (Consultation): Female Companions in Islamic Governance

Consultation is a key concept in Islamic governance. According to the Qur'an, consultation should be carried out in collective decisions and Muslims should engage in consultations in their dealings. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) practiced this principle all throughout his life by consulting both males and females. Female Companions such as Khadijah (RA), Umm Salama (RA), and Umm Sulaym (RA) were key advisors in religious, social, and political matters. This shows that women were valued as decision-makers in the Prophetic period.[20]

4.1 Consultation as a Principle of Islamic Governance

Islam brought the concept of Consultation, Shura, as one of the most important principles of governing and leading. In contrast to previous systems that followed authoritarianism, Islam advised its leaders to consult others on matters that require decision-making. [21]God instructed Prophet Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him) as follows:

"And consult them in the matter." (Qur'an 3:159)

Moreover, Muslims are addressed in the following verse of Qur'an:

"Who conduct their affairs through mutual consultation." (Qur'an 42:38)

4.2 Women's Participation in Consultation

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) acknowledged the sagacity and wisdom of the women and always considered their views. The women companions did not confine themselves only to household activities; rather, they were involved in deliberations concerning religion, society, and politics. Their opinion was always valued when it benefited the Muslim community.[22]

4.3 Khadijah (RA): The First Advisor of the Prophet

The early form of consulting women can be seen from the case of Khadijah (RA). After receiving the first revelation in the cave of Hira, the Prophet (PBUH) was so worried and troubled. Then Khadijah (RA) calmed him down and gave him hope by telling him that Allah does not disgrace someone who keeps family relations, supports the poor, respects guests, and helps people in need. Khadijah (RA) later wisely took him to her knowledgeable cousin Waraqah ibn Nawfal, who told him that he had received revelation from the very angel who revealed the message to Prophet Musa (AS). This counseling played an important role in this eventful period of Islam, hence making Khadijah (RA) one of the early and most important counselors of the Prophet (PBUH).[23]

4.4 Umm Salama (RA): Wisdom During the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah

Hazrat Umm Salama (RA) displayed great sagacity in the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah. On being directed by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) to sacrifice and shave the hair of their heads, the companions were left astonished to the extent that they could not

say anything at that very moment. The Prophet (PBUH) consulted Hazrat Umm Salama (RA), who recommended the Prophet (PBUH) to do it himself before talking to anyone else. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) adopted her suggestion; upon seeing the act of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), the companions also did what the Prophet had done.[24]

4.5 Umm Sulaym (RA): Participation in Public Decision-Making

An example can be Hazrat Umm Sulaym (RA). She offered her view when there was an attack on Makkah. She recommended that some of the people taken captive be dealt with because they had always been opposing the Muslims. While Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) didn't accept her view, he heard her respectfully and told her why he thought that way wisely and mercifully. This is another instance where it is clear that the women's opinions were valued but the ultimate decision was for the leader. It is evident from the example of Khadijah (RA), Umm Salama (RA), and Umm Sulaym (RA) that women were actively engaged in the process of consultation during the time of the Prophet (PBUH). They provided valuable advice that played an important role in making decisions concerning religion and politics, which shows that according to Islam, good judgment and wisdom cannot be restricted on the basis of gender.[25]

5. Role of Women in Teaching Hadith

Hadith learning was not only for the male scholars during the early Islamic period. The female scholars played a pivotal role in educating people about Hadith, and they played an important part in preserving Islamic knowledge. There is historical evidence that the women had no restriction on teaching the religious sciences. Their classes consisted of students coming from various places, and many well-known scholars narrated Hadith through women.

5.1 Houses as Teaching Places

The houses of women scholars became major centers of learning. It is well known that Hazrat Aisha (RA) regularly used to teach Hadith and Sharia laws at her home in Madinah, where she taught many companions and tabi'un from her house. Following in the footsteps of Hazrat Aisha, many other women scholars after her also started teaching Hadith in their own homes. Fatimah bint Ali ibn al-Husayn was one such scholar who regularly used to teach Hadith in her house, and people like Ibn Asakir used to learn Hadith from her. Similarly, Zaynab bint al-Alam, Zaynab bint Abd Allah al-Maqdisiyyah, and Khadijah bint al-Hunad al-Maqdisiyyah used to teach Hadith in their houses.[26]

5.2 Teaching of Hadith in Mosques

Mosques were another place where women taught Hadith. For instance, one of the well-known figures was Umm al-Darda who taught Hadith in Umayyad Mosque in Damascus and in Jerusalem. Her students included both men and women as

well as the Umayyad Caliph Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan due to her academic excellence. Also an eminent woman teacher, Umm al-Khayr, taught Hadith in Al-Masjid al-Nabawi mosque in Madinah and issued ijazah for her students to transmit Hadith. In the same way, Nishah bint Abd al-Hadi was teaching Hadith in Grand Umayyad Mosque of Damascus. Thus, these examples show that women scholars were acknowledged as capable teachers even in such respected mosques of the Muslim world.[27]

5.3 Teaching in Madrasas

Female teachers have also been known to have taught in formal schools. Historical evidence exists where both boys and girls used to attend their classes. For example, Zaynab bint Makki al-Harrani used to teach Hadith in al-Madrasah al-Mismariyyah in Damascus, and there were a lot of students who attended her classes. Similarly, Sitt al-Ahl bint Alwan used to conduct Hadith classes at Madrasat al-Hanabilah, which was one of the most prominent schools of Damascus.

5.4 Teaching in Ribats and Gardens

The teaching of women did not only take place in the home, mosques, or madrasa. In addition to that, they used to give Hadith classes in ribats and gardens. For instance, Zaynab bint al-Kamal gave Hadith classes in Ribat Ibn al-Qalanisi in Damascus, which attracted a lot of students. Furthermore, she gave classes on Hadith in the Garden of Amin al-Din al-Warani. Karimah bint Abd al-Wahhab al-Zubayriyyah and Umm al-Fadl bint al-Amin al-Zubayriyyah also gave lessons in gardens. This is one of the cases that show that the education system in Islam was not limited to certain institutions only.

It is evident from history that women have played an important role in the field of education as well as Hadith scholars in the history of Islam. Women conducted their classes at homes, mosques, madrasas, ribats, and gardens where they educated both male and female students. The contribution of women to these classes played an important role in the safeguarding of Sunnah and Islamic scholarship.[28]

6. Female Companions as Hadith Transmitters

The preservation and passing down of the Hadith is one of the biggest intellectual successes of early Islam, and without women, it could not have been achieved. Women played a critical role in preserving, narrating and teaching the hadith of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). These narrations became the primary sources of Islamic jurisprudence, morals, and social codes. The scholarly work of these women opened the way for future generations of female scholars and Hadith narrators.

6.1 Women and the Science of Hadith

In Islam, seeking knowledge is encouraged among men and women. This is illustrated in the Qur'anic injunction, "Read!" (iqraa) and the Prophetic saying, "Seeking knowledge is an obligation on every Muslim." Under the influence of these verses and sayings, Muslim women were actively involved in acquiring, teaching, and protecting Islamic knowledge.

The most significant of the services rendered by Muslim women was that of Hadith. Women companions and later women scholars were responsible for transmitting Hadiths of the Prophet regarding worship, family, marriage, cleanliness, ethics, and behavior. It is through these Hadiths that the private and domestic life of the Prophet has been recorded, which would otherwise have been impossible without the narrations of women companions. Thus, their contribution was vital in the formation of Islamic jurisprudence and scholarship.

6.2 The Mothers of the Believers as Leading Hadith Scholars

The Mothers of the Believers were in a distinctive place due to the reason that they had seen the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) up close and were aware of his day-to-day affairs. It was Allah's will that they guard and transmit the teachings from their homes (Qur'an 33:34). Their wisdom became an important source of information for Muslims. Hazrat Aisha (RA) was one of the best scholars of Hadith among them. She reported 2,210 hadiths and became a major expert in Islamic laws and the traditions of Prophet (Sunnah). Whenever the Companions used to have a dispute over any religious matter, they turned to Aisha (RA) because she was very knowledgeable about the Qur'an, Sunnah, inheritance, medicine, poetry, and Islamic jurisprudence. Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari (RA) said that whenever the Companions found difficulty in interpreting any hadith, they used to get the right interpretation from Aisha (RA). Her fatwas and corrections helped shape Islamic jurisprudence.[29]

Besides Aisha (RA), Umm Salama (RA) is another prominent personality in Hadith who narrated approximately 378 hadith and was renowned for her fiqh reasoning and sound knowledge of Sunnah. Umm Salama (RA) resolved many important legal matters related to fasting, purification, family laws and the deeds of the Prophet (PBUH). So valuable were her views on the legal issues that the later jurists remarked that her views could constitute an independent legal treatise. Some other Mothers of the Believers have also made great contributions in the field of Hadith sciences. For instance, Maymunah (RA) narrated 76 hadiths, Umm Habibah (RA) narrated about 65 hadiths, Hafsah (RA) 60 hadiths and Zaynab bint Jahsh (RA), Juwayriyyah (RA), Sawdah (RA) and Khadijah (RA) narrated authentic hadiths which were incorporated into the traditional Hadith collections.[30]

6.3 Contributions of Other Female Companions

However, there were many other women Companions other than the Mothers of the Believers who have made remarkable contributions to Hadith. Some narrations from such women are as follows:

Fatimah (RA), the daughter of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), was a narrator of Hadiths about domestic affairs and worship. Umm Sulaym (RA) became famous due to her legal competence and the opinions of senior Companions about religion were based upon her decisions. Umm Atiyyah (RA) was narrating authentic Hadiths about funeral practices, women's purification, and Eid prayer, which were later used by jurists as legal evidence. These Hadiths contained very important details about Islamic practice.

6.4 Legacy in Hadith Scholarship

The role of females as Hadith transmitters persisted even beyond the era of the Companions. The Tabi'at (female Successors) along with other succeeding generations maintained the practice of teaching and transmitting Hadith. This significance is reflected even in the Hadith literature of that time. Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal had documented more than 140 female Companions in his Musnad. Similarly, classical biographical sources like Al-Isabah fi Tamyiz al-Sahabah, Usud al-Ghabah, and Tahdhib al-Tahdhib record the life stories of hundreds of Hadith transmitters.

6.5 Women Scholars and the Transmission of Hadith

The practice of the transmission of Hadiths continued through eminent female scholars following the era of the Sahabah (Companions). The above-mentioned females were known for their honesty, scholarship, and devotion towards Sunnah preservation.

6.6 Hafsah Bint Sirin: The Trustworthy Hadith Scholar

Hafsah bint Sirin was one of the most renowned female scholars in the age of the Tabi'at. She studied Hadith from some of the most respected Companions like Anas bin Malik (RA) and Umm Atiyya (RA). She later on went on to teach many renowned scholars including Ibn Awan, Khalid al-Hadhdha, and Qatadah. The renowned Hadith scholar Yahya bin Ma'in termed her as Thiqah (reliable) while Imam al-Dhahabi included her among the great Hadith hafiz.[31]

6.7 Travel of Scholars in Search of Hadith

Similar to men, Muslim women used to travel to various places in order to gather and disseminate hadith according to the rules of Islamic jurisprudence. For instance, Umm Ali Taqiyyah bint Abi al-Faraj al-Baghdadiyyah went on a trip from Baghdad to Egypt to study under the well-known scholar Abu Tahir al-Salafi. Similarly, Zaynab bint Burhan al-Din al-Ardabiliyyah traveled back and forth between Makkah and Persia in search of knowledge. Another famous

scholar, Umm Muhammad Zaynab bint Ahmad al-Maqdisiyyah gained her reputation through educational travels and was called "al-Mu'ammarah al-Rahhalah" (the long-lived travelling scholar) by Imam al-Dhahabi. Students from all over the Muslim world used to travel to her in order to get Hadith education. This proves that Muslim women were actively involved in traveling while following Islamic norms of modesty and traveling with mahram.[32]

6.8 Women as Teachers of Hadith

Female Hadith scholars maintained constant teaching sessions where there used to be many pupils. One of the most famous teachers of Hadith was Zaynab bint al-Kamal al-Maqdisiyyah, who was regarded as the greatest Hadith scholar in Syria. She lived teaching and narrating Hadith. In the same way, Zaynab bint Makki al-Harraniyyah taught Hadith until she reached the age of ninety-four years. It is mentioned by Imam al-Dhahabi that many students came round her because of her great knowledge in the field of Hadith.[33]

Many women Hadith scholars traveled from one city to another to give Hadith lectures. The name of Sitt al-Wuzara bint Umar al-Tanukhiyyah was very popular among those who taught Sahih al-Bukhari and Musnad Imam al-Shafi'i in both Egypt and Damascus.[34]

6.9 Contribution of Women Scholars to Literature

Apart from the above contribution of female scholars to Islamic teachings, Muslim women were able to make significant contributions in writings, editing and preservation of Islamic literature. The female hadith scholars copied and preserved Islamic manuscripts and also compiled literary works and even indexed some classical works of Islam for easy understanding. Among these female scholars was Umm Muhammad Fatimah al-Isfahaniyyah who wrote scholarly books like Al-Rumuz min al-Kunuz. Ajibah bint Hafs al-Baghdadiyyah was another female scholar who compiled ten volumes of the book describing her teachers and hadith taught by them. Shahdah bint Kamal also preserved oral traditions of hadith and recorded them in writing.

6.10 Transmission Methods of Hadiths

Women hadith scholars employed the same exacting methods of transmission as other scholars. They transmitted the hadiths via scholarly methods which include: Sama' (hearing from the master), Qira'ah (reading in the presence of the master), and Ijazah (a certificate authorizing the transmission of hadith). They adhered to high moral standards of integrity, accuracy, and modesty in their scholarly endeavors. Scholars like Hafsah bint Sirin have been recorded as having conducted herself with proper Islamic manners in class.

6.11 Women as Authors and Editors of Hadith Literature

In addition to their activities as teachers and Hadith narrators, Muslim women also played an active role in the scholarly writings and conservation of manuscripts. As with their male colleagues, they wrote books, documented the lives of scholars, collected Hadith, and even copied classical books. These actions show that women were contributors to the intellectual growth of Islamic civilization.

Among the many distinguished women writers is Ajibah bint al-Hafiz Muhammad al-Baghdadiyyah. As per Imam al-Dhahabi, she produced ten books containing the lives of her scholars and the Hadith they had transmitted to her. Umm Muhammad Fatimah Khatun al-Isfahaniyyah is another famous scholar who has written some great books, such as Al-Rumuz min al-Kunuz in five volumes. She has been complimented by classical scholars for her writing style and capability to impart knowledge through her writings; hence she is considered a great female writer in the field of Islamic studies. Umm Muhammad bint Fatimah al-Bahnasiyyah al-Makkiyyah has written many books regarding Hadith and other Islamic subjects. According to the history, she is considered an eminent scholar who has written many great manuscripts herself. Khadijah bint Muhammad al-Shahajaniyyah al-Baghdadiyyah also made significant contributions to Hadith science by collecting the narrations of her mentor, Ibn Maymun, separately. Her contribution is highly valuable since it allows preserving some important chains of narration The second female Hadith scholar who is worthy of mentioning is Shahdah bint Kamal al-Din. She was famous for having an excellent memory. Apart from memorizing many Hadith, she also collected them in writing, which allowed their preservation and further distribution among other scholars. Karimah bint Ahmad al-Marwaziyyah was known for being an expert on verifying the authenticity of manuscripts by comparison with other versions.[35]

The female Companions of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) played a fundamental role in preserving and transmitting the Sunnah. Through their dedication to learning, accurate narration, and teaching, they became trusted authorities in the science of Hadith. The Mothers of the Believers, especially Hazrat Aisha (R.A.) and Umm Salama (R.A.), narrated hundreds of authentic hadiths and provided legal explanations on matters of worship, family life, and social conduct that could not have been preserved without their contributions. Their efforts continued through later generations of female scholars, who travelled in search of knowledge, taught hadith in homes, mosques, schools, and ribats, authored scholarly works, copied and verified manuscripts, and trained both male and female students. Their scholarship demonstrates that women were active

participants in the intellectual development of Islamic civilization and made lasting contributions to the preservation of the Prophetic tradition.[36]

The historical record clearly establishes that female scholars were not merely transmitters of knowledge but also educators, jurists, authors, and preservers of Islamic heritage. Their contributions enriched the science of Hadith and ensured that the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) were accurately conveyed to future generations. Their legacy continues to serve as an enduring example of women's significant role in Islamic scholarship and education.[37]

Conclusion

The Female Companions of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) have rendered outstanding contributions to the field of Islamic jurisprudence as well as education, emerging as highly respectable scholars and educators of Islamic knowledge. It is pertinent to mention that their services were not restricted to the preservation of the teachings of Islam but rather they were also involved in explaining and implementing the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah. The discipline of jurisprudence (fiqh) saw Female Companions engage in legal reasoning (ijtihad), issuing fatwas and explaining the Qur'an and Hadith based on their objectives and context, and solving problems concerning worshipping, family matters, ritual purification, inheritance, marriage, trade, and women's affairs. Hazrat Aisha (R.A.) stands out as the leading female jurisprudence expert; her legal opinions were taken into consideration by eminent Companions and later Muslims. Likewise, Umm Salama (R.A.), Hafsah (R.A.), Asma bint Abu Bakr (R.A.), Umm Atiyyah (R.A.), and other Female Companions contributed immensely to the development of Islamic jurisprudence through legal opinions, Hadith and practical advice. The engagement of these women in the process of Shura is yet another indication that Muslim women were taken into consideration in terms of consultation due to their abilities to make wise decisions.

In addition to their juristic contributions, the Female Companions made tremendous contributions in education. They were tutors of Hadith and Islamic sciences; held study circles at their homes, mosques, schools, ribats and other public places and taught both males and females. They have been responsible for the preservation and transmission of hundreds of authentic Hadiths; have educated numerous generations of scholars; traveled in search of knowledge; granted ijazat; wrote scholarly books; copied and authenticated books, and contributed greatly towards the preservation of the Islamic scholarly tradition. In conclusion, it is clear from the historical facts presented above that the role played by the Female Companions was that of active participants rather than passive members of the early Islamic community. Their intellectual, educational, and legal achievements formed the basis of Islamic civilization and serve as an inspiration to current

scholarship among Muslims. They proved the importance of women's involvement in preserving Islamic tradition and culture.

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