

Exploring the Role of Female Successor "'Amrah bint 'Abd al-Raḥmān" in Narration of Prophetic Traditions

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Abstract

Although several studies have investigated the contribution of Muslim women about their lives and works in large corpus of the ḥadīth sciences until now, but much are needed to be explored. Doubtlessly 'Amrah bint 'Abd al-Raḥmān had contributed to the large corpus of the ḥadīth sciences and also the core of Islamic knowledge parallel to her male counterparts. By highlighting her efforts for learning and her struggle for transmission of fundamental text, reveals how a female successor acquired exemplary reputations in her era. Particularly, her rich insight, deep knowledge in ḥadīth sciences and exemplary piety attracted students and placed parallel to her male counterparts in Islamic knowledge of her time. In sum, this study not merely sheds light upon the prolific contribution of an eminent female successor 'Amrah bint 'Abd al-Raḥmān in ḥadīth narrations, but argues that these scholarly females should be given more credit for being interacting educators and not just transmitters. Doubtlessly, the study would be helpful to revise our understandings of Islamic knowledge during early period of Islam regarding gendered dynamics and their great contribution to dissemination and transmission of classical text and Islamic knowledge.

Key Words: 'Amrah bint 'Abd al-Raḥmān, 'Ā'isha (R.A.), female traditionist, classical context, prophetic traditions

Introduction

Women's participation in Ḥadīth transmission is one of the few areas of early and medieval Muslim women's history for which we have considerable source material. The Ḥadīth is second in importance only to the Qur'ān in the derivation of Islamic law, rituals, and creed, and they constitute the bulk of normative religious knowledge transmitted from the earliest period of Islam. Given the centrality of Ḥadīth to Muslim life, the traditions and their transmitters have been subject to scholarly scrutiny throughout Islamic history. The muḥaddithat were women experts and teachers of the ḥadīth and its literature, who were very prominent in their societies. Since women's accomplishments in this domain are recorded from the earliest period of Islam up through the Ottoman era, we can assess continuities or ruptures that appear across the generations of female transmitters, as well as the specific historical contexts for women's ḥadīth transmission activity. In addition to these broadly defined inquiries, the source material also prompts questions about specific terminology alluding to women's educational background and training.¹ Ibn Sa'd's biographical entries on women, focusing on the Companions and Successors, confirm the picture of largely incidental ḥadīth transmission. In *al-Durar al-Kāmina*, Ibn Hajar gives short biographical notes about one hundred and seventy prolific women of the eighth century, most of whom are muḥaddithāt. Some of these women are acknowledged as the most prominent muḥaddithāt of the period and were known to be uniquely specialized (*tafarrud*).

Information on women muḥaddithāt of ninth century is given in a work by Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Rehman al-Sakhawi (830-897/1427-1429), called *al-Daw' al-Lami*, which is biographical dictionary of eminent personalities of the ninth century.² Among the other sources are 'Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥālah's³ work and also the *Mu'jam al-Shuyūkh* of 'Abd al-Azīz 'ibn Umer (d.871), provided the biographical notes of more than eleven hundreds of the author's teachers, and more than one hundred and thirty women scholars are discussed to whom he had studied.⁴

Recently, in *Al-Muhaddithat: The Women Scholars in Islam*, Dr Nadvi summarized his 40-volume biographical dictionary (in Arabic) of the Muslim women who studied and taught *Ḥadīth*.⁵ Even in this short text, he demonstrated that women had played a central role in preserving the Prophetic traditions.

"Hadith Literature: Its Origin, Development & Special Features", by Professor Muḥammad Zubair Siddiqi, explains the origin of Hadith literature, the evolution of the *isnād* system, the troubled relationship between scholars and the state, the problem of falsification, and the gradual development of a systematic approach to the material. An interesting appendix demonstrates

that a high proportion of the medieval ḥadīth scholars were women.⁶ Furthermore, the work of Omaira, "Teaching the Words of the Prophet: Women Instructors of the Hadith (Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries)" is an important contribution in aforementioned domain.⁷

Women's learning and teaching of ḥadīth was not merely incidental and took their place in contexts were not only as moralistic storytelling for popular audiences. Doubtlessly, there are numbers of authentic narrations, which indicates the presence and participation of women in mosque. These authentic narrations had unveiled that how women had attended Friday sermon and prayer, eclipse prayer, and Eid prayers as well, in responding the call for prayer. For instance, it has narrated in the book of authentic classical ḥadīth collection that the sister of 'Amrah had narrated:

"I learned surah Qāf (ق وَالْقُرْآنِ الْمَجِيدِ) of al-Qurān from the Prophet ﷺ, himself because he was used to reciting it on every Friday."⁸

Doubtlessly, Prophet ﷺ advised all the Muslims to attend the Friday congregation with fine appearance and encouraged both male and female that they should take a bath on Friday.⁹

Alongside this informal, unregulated transmission by women whose lives are not commemorated in any detail by historians, there are a handful of more accomplished women whose religious knowledge and exemplary piety attracted students and earned the admiration of chroniclers. In the decades after the Companions, merely eight women are honored who had narrated in the authentic classical ḥadīth collections. Among those honored female were 'Amrah bint 'Abd al-Raḥmān (d. 98 A.H), 'Ā'isha bint Talha (d. ca. 101 A.H), and Fatima bint al-Mundhir (death date unknown), followed closely in the footsteps of the female Companions in the nature of their transmission activity. Three others, Umm al-Dardā' al-Sughrā (d. ca. 81 A.H), Mu'ādhā bint 'Abd Allāh (d. 83 A.H), and Hafsa bint Sīrīn (d. after 100 A.H), represented new models of female learning and piety as teachers and leaders in the emergent ascetic movement. By highlighting her efforts for learning and her struggle for transmission of fundamental text, reveals how a female Successor acquired exemplary reputations in her era. Doubtlessly, successors with kinship-derived prominence. The legal discernment and methodical collection of Prophetic ﷺ reports evinced by 'Amrah bint 'Abd al-Raḥmān distinguishes her among the women whose knowledge was kinship-based.¹⁰

'Amrah bint 'Abd al-Raḥmān's Background

'Amrah had occupied the equal status with the collection and dissemination of traditions at the level of luminaries such as 'Urwa b. al-

Zubayr. It is no coincidence that ‘Amrah bint ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (d. 98 A.H) and ‘Ā’isha bint Ṭalḥah (d. ca.101 A.H), among the more prolific Successors, were nieces of ‘Ā’isha (R.A.). It is instructive to mention here that Muḥammad bin al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī (d. 189 A.H), had compiled the magnum opus of Mālik named *Muwatta’* al-Shaybānī was also the devoted student of Abū Ḥanīfah (d. 150 A.H). In *Muwatta’* we find the name of father of ‘Amrah who had visited ‘Ā’isha (R.A.) during her ailment and during this visit Ismā’īl bin Abī Bakr was accompanied with him, doubtlessly Imam Mālik has revealed the historical incident related ‘Amrah’s father.¹¹ However this narration unveils the close terms of ‘Amrah’s father with the Prophet ﷺ’s family, conversely the other classical biographical texts are doubted that whether ‘Amrah’s father has the same period of that Prophet ﷺ himself.¹² ‘Abd al-Raḥmān bin Ḥārithah bin al-Nu’mān was ‘Amrah’s husband, although he had least mentioned in biographical literature and hardly Ibn Sa’d’s had mentioned his name while discussed ‘Amrah and during the biographical introduction of Abū al-Rijāl Muḥammad the son of ‘Amrah, who had transmitted the ḥadīths from his mother mostly.¹³ Nevertheless, ‘Amrah was benefited from her special access to ‘Ā’isha (R.A.), her paternal aunt in whose custody she was raised. Nearly all of ‘Amrah’s isnāds in the compilations examined here are on ‘Ā’isha (R.A.)’s authority.¹⁴

‘Amrah bint ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, resembles Zaynab bint Abī Salamah in that kinship granted her special access to a beloved wife of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.¹⁵ Because she was the niece of ‘Ā’isha (R.A.) and is reputed to have been raised in her aunt’s custody. Therefore, ‘Amrah had narrated almost exclusively from ‘Ā’isha (R.A.)’s authority, although she has narrated from Ḥamnah bint Jaḥsh (R.A.), the sister of Zaynab bint Jaḥsh (R.A.) and from her own sister named Umm Hishām bint Ḥārithah and also from Ḥabībah bint Sahl, but the narrations other than from ‘Ā’isha (R.A.) are very few in number.¹⁶ Similarly, al-Dhahabī had introduced in his magnum opus *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’* that “‘Amrah bint ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, was a traditionist, jurist and student of ‘Ā’isha (R.A.) also raised under her custodianship.¹⁷ Evidently this introduction highlights the ‘Amrah’s status as a traditionist and jurist indicates her strong affiliation and relationship with ‘Ā’isha (R.A.), the beloved wife of Prophet ﷺ and hence honored as (‘Umm al-mūminīn) Mother of the Believers.¹⁸

‘Ā’isha (R.A.)’s Rich Insight and Deep knowledge of Islamic Law

No doubt, ‘Ā’isha (R.A.) was bestowed with extraordinary retentive sharp memory. She had memorized numerous Arab’s ancient poems and she was considered an authority on aforementioned domain. In addition, during her life span she was well known about her competency in Islamic law and medicine as well.¹⁹ As far as the large corpus of ḥadīth is concerned she did

not only learn a great collection of ḥadīth from her beloved husband Prophet ﷺ. Parallel to this, she has provided the critical appreciation in aforementioned domain and made valuable correction which was mistakenly understood by companions of last Messenger of Allah ﷺ²⁰.

‘Alqama bin Qays reported: “We were with “‘Ā’isha (R.A.), and Abū Hurāira (R.A.) was also there. ‘Ā’isha (R.A.) asked him, ‘O Abū Hurāira (R.A.), are you the one who narrates from the Prophet ﷺ about the woman tormented [in Hell] because she did not give food or drink to her cat [leaving it hungry and thirsty] and did not let it out to feed on small creatures until it died? Abū Hurāira (R.A.) said:

“I heard it from the Prophet ﷺ. ‘Ā’isha (R.A.) responded, ‘A believer is too dear to God that he/she be tormented on account of a cat. On account of this, it must have been that the woman was a disbeliever. O Abū Hurāira (R.A.), when you relate traditions from the Prophet ﷺ, be careful of what you say!’”²¹

Doubtlessly, it was because of her rich insight and deep knowledge of Islamic law and ḥadīth that even senior companions of prophet ﷺ were compelled to seek her advice about legal matters. When they were uncertain about any matter they visited ‘Ā’ishah (R.A.) for its clarification no doubt, she would always put her rich insight into the topic.²² Ibn Ḥajr had discussed in his treatise *Tadhīb al-Taḥdīb* a large number of related ḥadīth.²³

Influence of ‘Ā’isha (R.A.) Custodianship on ‘Amrah bint ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s Intellectual Capacity

‘Amrah bint ‘Abd al-Raḥmān raised under the custody and protégé of this prominent personality of Islamic history.²⁴ Therefore, most of ‘Amrah’s narration are on ‘Umm al-mūminīn ‘Ā’isha (R.A.)’s authority. She had narrated 333 ḥadīths and among them 311 are narrated from ‘Ā’isha (R.A.). It is instructive to mention here, that ‘Amrah’s narration is included in esteemed nine collections of ḥadīth.²⁵

‘Amrah transmits primarily to ‘Umm al-mūminīn ‘Ā’isha (R.A.) and also narrated from ‘Umm al-mūminīn ‘Umm-e-Salmā (R.A.) along with them she also had narrated from her close male relatives. Although there are few nonrelatives acclaimed male ḥadīth authorities in her network. As for her transmission circle as portrayed by al-Mizzī, there are a few additions that expand ‘Amrah’s circle of “teachers” beyond a closed female network. Al-Mizzī had proved a list to whom ‘Amrah had transmitted on their authorities and them are: Rāfi’ bin Khudayj²⁶, ‘Ubayd bin Rāfā ‘bin Rāf’ al-Zurqī²⁷, and Marwān bin al-Ḥakam²⁸, Ḥabībah bint Sahal²⁹, Ḥammah bint Jaḥash, and

‘Umme Hishām bint Hārith bin Naumān.³⁰ He also provided the lists of those five additional men and women like her “students” who were not found in the isnāds. Additionally, he had discussed those who had transmitted her traditions and among them are: ‘Urwah bin Zubaīr (d. 94 A.H), Sulimān bin Yasār, Muḥammad bin ‘Abd al-Raḥmān bin Hārithah Abū al-Rijāl (death date unknown)³¹, ‘Abd Allāh bin Abī Bakr bin ‘Amr bin Ḥazm (d. ca.130 A.H)³², Ruzaīq bin Hakīm, her nephew Muḥammad bin ‘Abd al-Raḥmān bin Sa’d bin Zurārah (d. 124 A.H)³³, her grandson Hārithah bin Abī al-Rijāl (d. 148)³⁴, her nephew Yaḥyā bin Sa’id al-Anṣārī (d. 143 A.H)³⁵, her nephew Yaḥyā bin Abdullah bin ‘Abd al-Raḥmān³⁶, ‘Amr bin Dīār, her grandson Malik bin Abī al-Rijāl, Sa’d bin Sa’id al-Anṣārī, and Muḥammad bin Muslim bin Shahāb al-Zuhrī (d. 124 A.H)³⁷ are two of the more prominent ḥadīth scholars who transmit on her authority and among the female transmitters were Rā’ita al Muzniyya and Fātima bint Munzar bin Zubaīr. In a pattern typical of most of the prolific female Successors, ‘Amrah’s male kin, save for a few prominent exceptions such as al-Zuhrī and Yahya bin Sa’id al-Anṣārī (d. 143 A.H), is mentioned in her isnāds as authorities to whom she transmits.³⁸

As mentioned above, ‘Amrah’s recorded transmissions are almost exclusively on ‘Ā’ishah (R.A.)’s authority. This ḥadīth were not only ‘Ā’ishah (R.A.)’s reported sayings of Prophet ﷺ, but also reports of ‘Ā’ishah (R.A.)’s independent legal judgment (ijtihād) and her interpretations of Prophet ﷺ’s ḥadīth transposal his ruling regarding that women should not be prevented from going to mosques.³⁹ ‘Amrah’s historical reputation and the extent of her circle, as in Zaynab’s case, suggest that she adopted a more systematic approach to ḥadīth acquisition than most of her female counterparts in the Successor generation. ‘Amrah’s recorded transmissions from ‘Ā’ishah (R.A.) and others cover a broad range of subject matter. Moreover, she emerges as far more prolific than Zaynab, being cited as an authority in nearly twice as many isnāds as Zaynab.⁴⁰

This report, which became a basis for limiting women’s attendance of mosques, is transmitted in at least two versions through ‘Amrah. ‘Ā’ishah (R.A.)’s expertise on a wide range of Muḥammad’s precedents was transferred to ‘Amrah to the extent that she could be consulted on legal matters. In this vein, it is reported that Muḥammad bin Abī Bakr bin Ḥazm, the governor of Medina, wrote to ‘Amrah seeking counsel on the punishment of a thief.⁴¹ ‘Amrah is reported as stating the law on the basis of ‘Ā’ishah (R.A.)’s tradition that the hand of a thief was cut off for amounts over one-quarter of a dīnār. She is among the rare women whom medieval biographers refer to as a faqīhah (i.e. one possessing the critical faculties for legal reasoning and judgments, and not just a vehicle for the transfer of knowledge).⁴² ‘Ā’ishah (R.A.)’s other female kin, such as her sister Umm Kulthūm, did not acquire

the same status as 'Amrah, nor did 'Amrah's sisters, who were also said to have been in 'Ā'isha (R.A.)'s care. Therefore, 'Amrah's reputation was based on a historical memory that she had an extraordinary ability to assimilate 'Ā'isha (R.A.)'s traditions and disseminate them with an understanding of their practical and legal implications. It is in this light that ḥadīth critics praise her as one of the most trusted sources, along with 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr and Hishām bin 'Urwa, for 'Ā'isha (R.A.)'s traditions⁴³.

Historians' Opinions about 'Amrah bint 'Abd al-Raḥmān's knowledge and Insight in Prophetic Tradition

Ibn Sa'd highlights women's intellectual accomplishments and refers to her as a learned woman (ālīma). He also cites 'Umar bin 'Abd al-Azīz's (d. 101/720) instructions to Abu Bakr bin Muhammad bin Ḥazm (d. 120/738) to preserve the ḥadīth of the Prophet ﷺ, the practices of previous generations, and the ḥadīth of 'Amrah, thereby confirming the centrality of her storehouse of knowledge.⁴⁴ That 'Amrah's legal authority derives from her relationship with a single Companion should not detract from the fact that she commands it at all. She is among the rare women to whom classical biographers refer as traditionist and jurists (i.e., one possessing the critical faculties for legal reasoning and judgments, and not just a vehicle for the transfer of knowledge).⁴⁵ 'Amrah's achievements can profitably be compared to those of 'Ā'isha bint Talha bin 'Ubayd Allāh, another niece of 'Ā'isha (R.A.), who is credited with thirteen traditions.⁴⁶ Unlike 'Amrah, 'Ā'isha bint Talhā emerges primarily as a littérateur. Although biographers acknowledge that she was knowledgeable in the ḥadīth of her aunt, her attraction for historians and ḥadīth seekers alike lies in her knowledge of poetry, her literary talents, and, not least, her charisma and beauty.⁴⁷ In this vein, Abu Zur'a al-Dimashqī (d. 280 A.H), the third-century ḥadīth critic, is reported to have made the following judgment: "People narrated from her due to her personal merits, and her urbanity and renown in literary circles".⁴⁸

Al-Zuhri (d. 124 A.H), used to visit the female scholars of Madina al Munawwara and heard from them the traditions and consulted them on juristic problems and received knowledge from them directly⁴⁹. Among these scholars were 'Amrah, the illustrious traditionist, and jurisprudent and Hind bint Harith al-Firasiyyah.⁵⁰ Once when al-Zuhri joined the study circle of Qāsim bin Muhammad (d. 90 A.H), the latter said to him: O boy, I find you fond of seeking knowledge. May I guide you to its real place? Al-Zuhri replied in the affirmative. Whereupon Qāsim said: You should go to 'Amrah who used to live under the guardianship of 'Ā'isha (R.A.). He says then I came to her and found inexhaustible ocean of learning.⁵¹ This allows us to locate with more confidence shifting attitudes toward women's ḥadīth

participation in the late first and early second century, the period spanning al-Zuhrī's lifetime. Al-Zuhrī was not alone with respect to his standards. The trend of professionalization is widely attested throughout the second and third centuries.⁵² The opinion of many scholars is reflected in 'Ibn Sīrīn's view that "this knowledge (concerning the Prophetic tradition) is religion, so investigate whomever you relate from."⁵³ Therefore, the aforementioned stance of al-Zuhrī reveals the sincerity while taking knowledge with truth and perfection when Ibn Sa'd reports that al-Zuhrī compared 'Amrah to 'Urwa, by saying, when I heard the ḥadīth of 'Urwa and then those of 'Amrah, I would put more stock by the ḥadīth of 'Urwa. Although I could be satiated with 'Amrah's ḥadīth, 'no doubt 'Urwa was also an inexhaustible sea of knowledge.⁵⁴

'Umar bin 'Abdul Azīz, wrote to al Madina, Search and find out the ḥadīth of Prophet ﷺ and write them down, for I fear the extinction of knowledge and the passing away of the scholars.⁵⁵ He wrote letters to Abu Bakr bin Hazm the governor of Medina, ordering him to collect the original letters and documents written on the instruction of the prophet ﷺ, Abu Bakr and Umar bin al-Khattāb to their emissaries, governors, army commander and judges, which were preserved by the families of older companions in Madīnah. He also ordered him to collect some of the Sunan relating to financial and legal matters which he had heard (when he was governor of Madīnah) from al-Qāsim bin Muhammad and Amrah and send them to him.⁵⁶

Al-Dhahabī (d.748 A.H), had described 'Amrah that she was a scholar, trustworthy, jurist, and most knowledgeable female of her era."⁵⁷ Al-Bukhārī limits himself to the traditions of women known to have superior reputations as transmitters. These include Mu'ādha al-'Adawīyya, 'Amrah bint 'Abd al-Raḥmān, and Hafsa bint Sīrīn. He refers to 'Amrah as a learned woman. He cites 'Umar bin 'Abd al-Azīz's instructions to Abū Bakr bin Muḥammad bin Ḥazm to preserve the ḥadīth of the Prophet ﷺ, the practices of previous generations, and the ḥadīth of 'Amrah.⁵⁸ Ibn al-'Imād (d. 1089 A.H) had discussed 'Amrah bint 'Abd al-Raḥmān in his treatise in following words, that she was a distinguished jurist and brought up under the custody and protégé of 'Ā'isha (R.A.) and narrated mostly from her. She is trustworthy and accurate about what she has narrated."⁵⁹ Likewise, Ibn al-Madīnī had informed that 'Amrah was among the trustworthy scholars of 'Ā'isha (R.A.) who was confirmed about [what they narrate from] her. It is instructive to mention here the Ibn Hibbān's comments about 'Amrah that "She narrates from 'Ā'isha (R.A.) and regarding 'Ā'isha (R.A.)'s ḥadīths 'Amrah was most knowledgeable among them."⁶⁰

‘Amrah bint ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s Narration In Authentic Classical Ḥadīth Collection

‘Amrah also had narrated ḥadīths from the other Companions of the Prophet ﷺ than ‘Ā’isha (R.A.), but those are few in number. Abū al-Rijāl the son of ‘Amrah, had narrated from ‘Amrah 34 ḥadīths, and Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī had transmitted 63 of ‘Amrah’s ḥadīths. Her contemporary Yaḥyā bin Sa’id al-Anṣārī (d.144/761) and also her nephew Abū Bakr bin Muḥammad had transmitted near 89 and among them 36 of ‘Amrah’s ḥadīths. Surprisingly, on accounts of ‘Amrah’s authority most of her narrations are included in the most authentic books of ḥadīth, which is no doubt strong evidence of her prolific contribution in transmission of ḥadīth collection.⁶¹

‘Abd Allāh bin Abī Bakr bin Muḥammad (d. 2 A.H) widely disseminated ‘Amrah’s narrations. ‘Abd Allāh b. Abī Bakr was the teacher of both, the first and foremost historian Ibn Ishāq (d. 150 A.H) and Mālik bin Anas (d. 179 A.H) as noted by ‘Amrah’s biographers.⁶² Consequently all of the ḥadīth related to ‘Amrah (R.A) written in foundational biography of last Messenger of Allah ﷺ by Ibn Ishāq edited by further Ibn Hishām (d. 213 A.H) “*Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*” is transmitted by ‘Abd Allāh bin Abī Bakr.⁶³ From ‘Abd Allāh bin Abī Bakr to Ibn Ishāq (d. 150 A.H) is without any doubt is the actual chain of transmission, that majority of ‘Amrah’s accounts regarding the Prophet ﷺ life in Madīna enters “*Tārīkh al-Rusul wal-Mulūk*”, a well-known history by al-Ṭabarī’s (d. 310 A.H). Additionally, ‘Amrah’s learning was transmitted to Mālik bin Anas (d. 179 A.H) by ‘Abd Allāh bin Abī Bakr as well as many others like Abū al-Rijāl (d. A.H), Yaḥyā bin Sa’id (d. A.H), his brother ‘Abd Rabbih bin Sa’id (d. 139 A.H), al-Zuhrī and Ruzayq bin Ḥukaym (d. A.H). Mālik bin Anas (d. 179 A.H) acclaims ‘Abd Allāh bin Abī Bakr was a man with deep insight and the man who possess knowledge during his time.⁶⁴

In his treatise, Ibn Ishāq, had included the narration of ‘Amrah on authority of ‘Umm al-mūminīn ‘Ā’isha (R.A.) that she stated, “We always heard that Isāf and Na’ila were a man and a woman of Jurham who copulated in the Ka’ba so God transformed them into two stones.”⁶⁵ Another narration from ‘Amrah had included in Ibn Ishāq’s treatise about the burial procedure of our beloved Prophet ﷺ in detail, that those who descended into the grave were ‘Ali (R.A.) and al-Fadl (R.A.) and Qutham (R.A.) the sons of Abbās (R.A.), and Shuqrān (R.A.). Aus implored ‘Ali (R.A.) in the name of God and his share in the Prophet ﷺ to let him descend, and he let him go with the others. when the Prophet ﷺ was laid in his grave and the earth was laid over him Shuqrān (R.A.) his freedman took a garment which the Prophet ﷺ used to wear and use as a rug and buried it in the grave saying, ‘By God, none shall ever, ear It after you,’ so it was buried with the Prophet ﷺ. Al-Mughīra bin

Sh'uba (R.A.) used to claim that he was the last man to be with the Prophet ﷺ. He used to say, 'I took my ring and let it fall into the grave and said, "My ring has dropped. But I threw it in purposely that I might touch the Prophet ﷺ and be the last man to be with him"'.⁶⁶

It is instructive to mention here that, In accordance to a widespread report found in all authentic text that, Yaḥyā bin Sa'īd had listened to the detail of Pilgrimage of Prophet ﷺ from 'Amrah and he later authenticated it from al-Qāsim.⁶⁷ Yaḥyā said, "I discussed with al-Qāsim about this ḥadīth, and al-Qāsim replied, that I swear by God she has elaborated with its original form or great originality".⁶⁸ This tradition of al-Qāsim was comprehended by the commentators as showing that 'Amrah has conveyed the narration about this pilgrimage in the original and high faithful manner. In addition, it also had observed that al-Qāsim's words seem to be illustrating the correlation between his own narrated event and those abbreviated by the 'Amrah's and appreciating the comprehensiveness with which 'Amrah has narrated the events.⁶⁹ In the same way, 'Amrah had also validated the accounts of male fellows. When she was asked regarding 'Urwah's narration about how 'Ā'ishah (R.A.) affirmed the waiting period for her divorced niece's. 'Amrah with full confidence said that 'Urwah is correct and then further clarified 'Ā'ishah (R.A.) position in the context.⁷⁰

The early Islamic resources show that 'Amrah has 'Amrah also served as a mean of help for the private concerns of the women.⁷¹ For example, many narrations had affirmed the criteria determined by 'Amrah about the full ritual ablution of a woman from her menstruation period, and when she could resume her participation in ritual prayer, legitimate sexual relations and fasting etc., Fāṭimah bint Muḥammad narrates that once a woman belongs to Quraysh had sent a small piece of cotton in a tiny purse on which the yellowishness was visible and asked to 'Amrah about the complete ritual ablution, "Do you think that when a woman sees only this left of her menstruation that she has become clean [from it]?" She said, "No, not until she sees pure white."⁷²

In terms of the quality of the narrators themselves, the difference between al-Bukhārī's and Abū Dāwūd's selection criteria becomes pronounced primarily after the Companion generation. In the Companion generation, both compilers cite the ḥadīth of prominent and prolific female Companions, among them the wives of Holy Prophet ﷺ, and also those women who are not as well known. Yet, in the Successor generation and beyond, al-Bukhārī limits himself to the traditions of women known to have superior reputations as transmitters. These include Ḥafṣah bint Sīrīn, 'Amrah bint 'Abd al-Raḥmān, and Mu'ādhah al-'Adawīyyah. Women such as 'Amrah bint 'Abd al-Raḥmān and Zaynab bint Abī Salamah were authorities mainly

for the ḥadīth of female members of their own households, and their range was confined to Medina.⁷³

In sum, the whole Islamic history of female scholarship, doubtlessly it is crystal clear that women didn't keep themselves confined or limited to their own interest in prophetic traditions or to educate their successors, but they also seated as disciples and as educators too, specifically in government educational sectors, they played their prolific role, shoulder to shoulder by their male counterparts,⁷⁴ because numerous notes on magnum opus of Khatīb al Baghdādī (d. A.H) entitled *Kafaya* indicates Nima bint Ali, Umme Ahmad Zaynab bint al- Makki, along many other female traditionists delivered their lectures on this treatise, sometimes they delivered their lecture independently and very often jointly parallel to their male scholars of ḥadīth sciences in major institutes like Aziziyah Madrash and Diyaiyya Madrash to daily lectures to the students, few of those lectures had been attended by a great general Salah al-Din's son named Ahmad.⁷⁵

Ibn Asākar, the renowned historian who belonged to Damascus had stated, that he had studied from more than 1200 male and approximately from 80 female scholars of Islamic knowledge and he had obtained certification from Zaynab bint ‘Abd al-Rahmān for Imām Malik's *Muwatta* and also had obtained certification from Hajar bint Muhammad for *Risāla* of Imām Al-Shāfi.⁷⁶ A traditionist of ninth century Afif al-Dīn Junaīd, he had studied *Sunan al-Dārimi* from Fātima bint Ahmad ‘ibn Qāsim.⁷⁷ In *al-Durar al-Kāmina*, the great exponent of Ftah al-Bari Ibn Hajar had delivered short biographical notices about 170 eminent female religious scholars of eight century and among them, most are female traditionists, and Ibn Hajar himself studied under numerous female scholars of classical Islamic knowledge.⁷⁸ In addition, Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456 A.H) had bluntly acknowledged the debt owed by numerous female scholars and erudite, including Prophet ﷺ's wives ‘Umm al-mūminīn, Prophet ﷺ his female companions, and subsequent generations of female Muslims.⁷⁹

Conclusion

The article highlights the role of prolific females in the important field of prophetic traditions and argues that they should be given more credit for being interacting educators and not just transmitters. They were endowed with unique characteristics and talents which are reflected in their biographical literature. This Islamic history also reveals that women didn't keep themselves confined or limited to their own interest in prophetic traditions or to educate their successors, but they also sated as disciples and as educators too, specifically in government educational sectors, they played their prolific role, shoulder to shoulder by their male counterparts. Similarly

'Amrah had occupied the equal status with the collection and dissemination of traditions at the level of luminaries such as 'Urwa bin al-Zubīr and she was also honored to be the educator of erudite of their time like al-Zuhrī and 'Abd Allāh bin Abī Bakr etc.

It is the need of the hour that contemporary Muslim women should take a step forward and engage in learning of Islamic sciences especially the primary sources Quran and ḥadīth and spread out its true and most accurate interpretation of these religious texts. Muslim women today must take inspiration from the role and contribution of leading Muslim women from the past and walk in their footsteps. This study will enable Muslim women to achieve the status and nobility that was once granted by our devout ancestors by performing the vital role of preserving and disseminating the knowledge of their religion. Nevertheless, more researches on such important aspects of knowledge and contribution of Muslim women in spreading it would help Muslims to get back their golden pride.



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- ⁸ Muslim bin al Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, The Book of Prayer, Chapter: Keeping the prayer

and khutbah short, Ḥadīth # 872

⁹ Ibid., The Book of Prayer, Chapter: Ghusl on Friday is obligatory for all adult men, and clarifying what they were ordered regarding it, Ḥadīth # 846

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¹¹ Mālik bin Anas, *Muw'aḡḡa*, (UAE: Al Majlis al A'lā lil Shu'ūn al Islāmiyyah, 1967), pp: 299–300

¹² Ibn Ḥajar, *Al Iṣābah fī Tamyiz al Ṣaḡābah*, (Beirut: Dār al Kutub al 'Ilmiyyah, 1995), 4:286

¹³ Al Mizzī, Yūsuf, *Tahdhīb al Kamāl fī Asmā' al Rijāl*, (Beirut: Mo'assasah al Risālah, 1983) 25:602

¹⁴ Sixty-three of her traditions are on 'Aisha's authority. The remaining three are from Hamna bint Jahash, the sister of Zaynab bint Jahash; her own sister, Umm Hisham bint Haritha; and from Habība bint Sahl.

¹⁵ For detail see: Ibn Sa'd, *al Ṭabaqat al-Kubrā*, (Beirut: Dār Ahyā al-Turās al-Aarbī, 1996), 8:353; Al Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al Kamāl fī Asmā' al Rijāl*, 35:241-243; Al Dhahabī, *Siyar A'lām al Nubalā'*, 4:507,508

¹⁶ The Male kin who had transmitted her traditions were Muḥammad bin 'Abd al Raḥmān bin Ḥārithah Abū al Rijāl (death date unknown), her son (for his biography, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb al Tahdhīb*, (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1968), 9:225; 'Abdullah bin Abī Bakr bin 'Amr bin Hazm (d. ca.130), her nephew (for his biography, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb al Tahdhīb*, 5:147; Muḥammad bin 'Abd alRaḥmān bin Sa'd bin Zurārah (d. 124), her nephew (for his biography, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb al Tahdhīb*, 9:256,257); and Ḥārithah bin Abī al Rijāl (d. 148), her grandson (for his biography, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb al Tahdhīb*, 2:153. Outside of her kin group, Yaḡyā bin Sa'id al Anṣārī (d. 143), and al-Zuhrī (d. 124) are two of the more prominent ḥadīth scholars who transmit on her authority.

¹⁷ Al Dhahabī, *Siyar A'lām al Nubalā'*, 4:416

¹⁸ Sūrah al Aḡzāb, 6

¹⁹ Abū 'Abdallāh Shams al-Dīn Al Dhahabī, *Tadhkirah al Huffāz*, (Beirut: Dār al Kutub al 'Ilmiyyah, 1998), 1:24

²⁰ Ibid.,

²¹ Al Zarkashī, *Al Ijābah li Irād mā Istadrākathu 'Ā'isha 'Ala Al Ṣaḡābah*, (Beirut: Al Maktab Al Islāmī, 1970) p: 118

²² Ibn Sa'd, *al Ṭabaqat al-Kubrā*, 2:286

²³ Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Tahdhīb al Tahdhīb*, 12:2841

- ²⁴ Ibid., 4:682
- ²⁵ Ibn Hajar *al-'Asqalānī*, *al-Iṣābah fī tamyīz al- Ṣahābah*, 5:27
- ²⁶ Ibid., 3:229
- ²⁷ Ibid., 12:181
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- ³¹ Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb al Tahdhīb*, 9:255
- ³² Ibid., 5:147
- ³³ Ibid., 9:256-57
- ³⁴ Ibid., 2:153
- ³⁵ Ibid., 1:221
- ³⁶ Ibid., 7:241
- ³⁷ Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Sa'd, *al Ṭabaqat al-Kubrā*, (Dār al Kutub al-'Ilmīyya, 1997), 5:222; Al Dhahabī, *Siyar A'lām al Nubalā'*, 5:326
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