

**Journal of Religion & Society (JR&S)**

Available Online:

<https://islamicreligious.com/index.php/Journal/index>

Print ISSN: 3006-1296 Online ISSN: 3006-130X

Platform & Workflow by: [Open Journal Systems](#)

---

**Women's Role in Religious and Educational Activities in the Prophetic Era**  
**Muhammad Azam**

Lecturer, Department of Islamic Studies, Green International University Lahore  
[m.azam@giu.edu.pk](mailto:m.azam@giu.edu.pk)

**Dr. Hafiz Muhammad Afzal**

Lecturer, Islamic Studies LGS College, Lahore

**Abstract**

*This article explores the significant religious, educational, and social roles Muslim women played during the Prophetic era, highlighting their vital contributions to Seerah al-Nabi. Far from being passive observers, women were actively involved in learning, teaching, narrating Hadith, and supporting the spread of Islam through both scholarship and sacrifice. Key figures such as Hazrat Khadijah (RA), Hazrat Aisha (RA), and Hazrat Umm Salama (RA) were foundational in shaping early Islamic knowledge and character. Their homes became centers of learning, and their narrations and legal opinions became references for generations. Women like Hazrat Fatimah (RA), Hazrat Safiyyah (RA), and Hazrat Umm Ammarah (RA) combined religious devotion with social activism and even military engagement. Female companions contributed to educational pursuits, medicine, Qur'anic memorization, and calligraphy showcasing Islam's encouragement of women's intellectual growth. This article emphasizes that the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) not only endorsed women's education but also ensured they had separate gatherings for learning. Their sacrifices, such as that of Sumayyah (RA), the first female martyr, and their leadership in society continue to guide modern Muslim women in faith and service.*

**Keywords:** Women, Prophetic Era, Seerah al-Nabi, Sahabiyat, Islamic Education, Religious Contribution.

**Introduction**

Islam is a perfect religion that has guided humanity in every aspect social, educational, ethical, and spiritual. The teachings of Islam have elevated not only men but also women to a high status of knowledge, understanding, awareness, character, and honor. If we study the Seerah of the Prophet (ﷺ), it becomes clear that during the Prophet's era, women were not merely confined to domestic life; rather, they stood shoulder-to-shoulder with men in religious and educational fields.

Women acquired knowledge of the Quran and Sunnah, narrated Hadith, offered opinions on jurisprudential matters, rendered services on the battlefield, and demonstrated their practical wisdom in social and family life. The unparalleled sacrifice of Hazrat Khadijah (RA), the scholarly stature of Hazrat Aisha (RA), the practical simplicity of Hazrat Fatima (RA), the bravery of Hazrat Umm Ammarah (RA), and the intellectual, educational, and social contributions of other female companions are all evidence that Islam granted women honor, authority, and an active role.

This article highlights the fact that the role played by women during the Prophet's era in promoting Islam, disseminating knowledge, and implementing

social reforms not only holds historical significance but also provides practical guidance for Muslim women today.<sup>1</sup>

### **Importance**

In the contemporary era, as various theories and movements concerning women's rights, freedom, and social roles are emerging, it becomes immensely important to understand the role of women in the light of Islam's original and primary source: the Seerah of the Prophet (ﷺ). The active, dignified, and constructive role of women that we observe in the Prophet's era not only represents Islam's true conception of women but also provides a perfect model for today's Muslim women. From the lives of Hazrat Khadijah (RA), Hazrat Aisha (RA), Hazrat Fatima (RA), and other female companions, we find aspects of knowledge, action, sacrifice, leadership, and steadfastness that are desperately needed in today's society.

This article highlights the fact that Islam not only honored women but also granted them the right to participate in educational, social, and religious fields. It brings women's religious contributions out from the dust of history, emphasizing their exemplary aspects so that the new generation, especially Muslim women, can better understand and take pride in their Islamic identity. The role of women in the Prophet's era offers solutions to today's societal challenges such as moral decay, lack of education, and deficiency in religious awareness. Therefore, research and awareness on this topic are of paramount importance.

### **Research Question**

Women's Pivotal Role in the Prophet's Era (PBUH) and Its Guidance for Muslim Women Today

### **Religious and Educational Activities:**

The entire world takes pride in its national history, but if one were to question the contributions of women in these achievements, silence would fall over the subject, with only a few names coming to mind. Similarly, if we turn from national history to the history of Islam, its pages are not devoid of the remarkable achievements of women. Islam provided shelter and respect to those women who, in turn, accomplished great and extraordinary deeds in the world. During the Prophetic era, women were not only engaged in seeking education but were also actively participating alongside men in understanding religious issues. In fact, the tradition of teaching and learning was, to some extent, already established.

The Mothers of the Believers (may Allah be pleased with them) not only taught the Quran but also began educating their children in religious matters. So much so that the chambers of the mothers of the Believers (may Allah be pleased with them) turned into educational institutions. Following in their footsteps, other Muslim women also considered it obligatory to promote knowledge and understanding of religion. Thus, in the early Islamic period, Muslim women played an active role in the dissemination of knowledge, the promotion of education, and the narration of Hadith.

---

<sup>1</sup> To see the how modern madrassa education incorporated the women religious education in Pakistan in general and in Pakistan, especially Gujranwala see: Dr. Farman Ali, Dr. Faryal Umbreen, Raheela Imtiaz (2024). The Contribution of Nuṣrat-ul-‘Ulūm Gujranwala’s Graduates to Religious Leadership in Pakistan: An Analytical Study. *Shnakhat*,3(3), 513-34. Retrieved from <https://shnakhat.com/index.php/shnakhat/article/view/352>.

All these facts reveal that, at the beginning of Islam, Muslim women made significant and constructive contributions, setting a high standard and providing exemplary models for future generations, which remain a guiding light for Muslim women today and will continue to do so. Their contributions were not limited to educational activities or confined to the four walls of the home; rather, they strove for the elevation of Islam in every aspect of life.

Our beloved Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) came with Allah's message for the guidance, direction, and salvation of all humanity. Men demonstrated courage and perseverance by embracing this message, making it their way of life, enduring hardships, and standing firm in the face of trials and tribulations. Similarly, women also demonstrated astonishing loyalty to the path of truth, devotion to Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him), and remarkable examples of love, obedience, and dedication that men of today find difficult to match.

Out of their love for Allah and His Messenger ﷺ, they sacrificed their homes and everything they owned to protect their faith. They embraced the teachings of their religion with conviction and preserved the freshness of their faith, spreading its fragrance throughout their surroundings.

### **The Spirit of Sacrifice Among the Female Companions**

Women in the Prophetic era played a vital role in society, actively participating alongside men in national affairs. They not only nurtured children but also contributed to trade, commerce, and even the battlefield while adhering to Islamic principles. One of the most significant religious duties was jihad, and the female companions performed it with unmatched sincerity, courage, and determination. Islamic history is filled with examples of their bravery, generosity, and unwavering commitment.

When the Prophet ﷺ began preaching Islam in Makkah, the disbelievers subjected Muslims to severe persecution. Despite the torture and hardships, their faith remained unshaken. Women, too, stood firm in their devotion to Islam, enduring every trial for the sake of their faith.

The first person to affirm the Prophethood of Muhammad ﷺ was a woman Hazrat Khadijah (RA). She stood by the Prophet ﷺ, enduring every hardship with patience and resilience. When the disbelievers confined Banu Hashim and Banu Muttalib in the Valley of Abu Talib, she bore the suffering alongside the Prophet ﷺ for three years with unwavering faith. Her sacrifices earned her a unique honor, making her an inspiration for all Muslim women. The female companions played a crucial role in upholding and spreading Islam, proving that women were an essential force in the rise of the faith.

### **The Religious Services of Hazrat Khadijah (RA):**

Hazrat Khadijah al-Kubra (RA) is such a blessed personality who achieved a level of fame and acceptance that remains unparalleled throughout history. She was the first and most revered wife of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). Hazrat Khadijah (RA) set the highest example in serving the Master of the Universe. She (RA) was not only cheerful and virtuous, always keeping the pleasure of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) in mind, but she also embraced faith at a time when the entire world stood against him (ﷺ). As a wife, she was a source of strength and comfort for the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). She was the wealthiest woman in Arabia, yet after marriage, she dedicated everything to Islam and its founder (ﷺ). Hazrat Khadijah (RA) was not only honored to be the first wife of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) but was also among the earliest supporters of Islam. The

era in which she opened her eyes was devoid of humanity, yet from the very beginning, she was noble-hearted and pure in thought, earning her the title of "Tahira" (the Pure One). She (RA) possessed boundless compassion and empathy for humanity.

'She (RA) had no shortage of wealth, as her father had left behind a considerable inheritance, and she also received the estates of her two late husbands. Her father had entrusted his business to her in the final stages of his life.'

From the very beginning, she was extremely wise and intelligent. Using her sharp intellect, she expanded her trade to such an extent that her income multiplied exponentially. She employed many workers, and the famous markets of Syria and Yemen became the centers of her trade.<sup>2</sup>

Hazrat Khadijah (RA) showed unmatched loyalty and compassion to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). In times of rejection and persecution by the Quraysh, she stood as his greatest support, offering comfort and strength. She sacrificed her wealth and self for Islam and actively promoted its message, especially among women. As a role model in religious, social, economic, and domestic life, her example remains unmatched. She was a devoted wife, a sincere advisor, and a key figure in the spread of Islam. The Prophet (PBUH) declared her the best woman of this Ummah, second only to Maryam bint Imran.

Narrated Anas (may Allah be pleased with him): 'That the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Sufficient for you among the women of mankind are Mariam bint 'Imran, Khadijah bint Khuwailid, Fatimah bint Muhammad and Asiyah the wife of Fir'awn'<sup>3</sup>

### **The Excellent Upbringing of Children**

From her (Khadijah), the Prophet ﷺ had six children: Zainab, Ruqayyah, Umm Kulthum, Fatimah, Al-Qasim and Abdullah. Both sons passed away in childhood, but the daughters survived. Fatimah was the only child who outlived the Prophet ﷺ. On the other hand, Ali ibn Abi Talib, who was a child at the time, was also taken under the Prophet's care to ease the burden of his uncle Abu Talib. Thus, along with the Prophet's four daughters, Ali, Zaid ibn Harithah, and the two sons from Khadijah's previous marriage were also raised in his household.<sup>4</sup>

Khadijah raised them with exceptional care, and the result of her upbringing was evident: Ali became known as the "Gate of Knowledge" and a master of eloquence. The Prophet's daughters grew up to be embodiments of modesty and mountains of patience and resilience all a reflection of Khadijah's nurturing and upbringing.

### **Khadijah: The First to Accept Islam**

Khadijah was the first person to believe in the Prophet ﷺ. As the "First Lady of Islam," she actively supported her husband in spreading the message of Islam. In the first three years of prophethood, 133 people embraced Islam, including 27

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Muhammad Ali Al-Hashmi, **Misali Musalman Aurat** (Lahore: Dar al-Iblagh, 2016), 43

<sup>3</sup> al-Tirmidhi, **Jami' at-Tirmidhi**, trans. Abu Khaliyl, vol. 1, book 46, hadith 3878 (in book 49, hadith 278) (Riyadh: Darussalam, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> Ibn Ishaq's **"Seerat Ibn Hisham, As-Si rah an-Nabawiyyah**, Dar Al-Kotob Al-Ilmiyah, Vol :1,P: 736

women who accepted Islam due to her efforts<sup>5</sup>. These were the people whom the Quran honored as "As-Sabiqoon Al-Awwaloon"<sup>6</sup> (The Foremost Pioneers). For these immense contributions, Khadijah rightfully deserves the title of "The Preacher of Islam (Muballighah al-Islam)".

### **The Religious and Educational Services of Hazrat Syeda Aisha Siddiqah (RA):**

Hazrat Aisha bint Abi Bakr (RA) was the wife of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). She is honored with the title Umm al-Mu'minin (Mother of the Believers). After the Prophet's (ﷺ) passing, her role became highly prominent during the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs.<sup>7</sup>

She lived for 47 years after the Prophet's (ﷺ) demise, a period marked by early Islamic conquests and the expansion of the Muslim state. In Hadith sciences, she is the second-most prolific narrator after Hazrat Abu Huraira (RA), with over 2,210 narrations.<sup>8</sup> Her early education was overseen by her father, Abu Bakr Siddiq (RA), who taught her history, literature, and wisdom.<sup>9</sup> However, her formal Islamic education, including Quranic recitation, deepened after her marriage to the Prophet (ﷺ).

Imam Zuhri further stated: "If the knowledge of the mothers of the Believers (the Prophet's wives) and other women were combined, the knowledge of Aisha (RA) alone would surpass them all. Whenever the Companions faced a difficult issue, they would consult Aisha (RA), and they would find the correct answer with her"<sup>10</sup>

As mentioned in Musnad Ahmad: "Young boys, women, and men who were not required to observe hijab from Aisha (RA) would enter her room and sit in her gathering. Others would sit in the Prophet's Mosque facing her room, while a curtain hung at the door. She would sit behind the curtain, and people would ask questions, to which she would reply. Sometimes, a discussion would arise, and the teacher (Aisha) and students would engage in deep conversation on the topic. Occasionally, she would initiate the discussion herself, explaining an issue while the listeners remained silent"<sup>11</sup>

In the early days of Islam, the very first center for women was the school of Hazrat Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her). When it comes to the transmission of Islamic religious knowledge to the Ummah, Hazrat Aisha alone contributed so significantly that, according to Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani:

"Most people took knowledge from her and transmitted a great deal of rulings and manners from her, to the extent that it was said that a quarter of Islamic legal rulings are narrated from her, may Allah be pleased with her"<sup>12</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Mubarakpuri, Safi-ur-Rahman. **Ar-Raheeq Al-Makhtum** (The Sealed Nectar). Lahore: Maktabah Salafiyyah, 2012., p: 91

<sup>6</sup> Al-Baghawī, al-Husayn ibn Mas'ūd. **Ma'ālim al-Tanzīl** (Tafsir al-Baghawī). Translated by Muhammad al-Muhammadi. Riyadh: Darussalam, 2003, Vol:2, p:433\

<sup>7</sup> Al-Dhahabi, Shams ad-Din. **Siyar A'lam al-Nubala**. Edited by Shu'ayb al-Arna'ut. Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risalah, 1985

<sup>8</sup> Al-Mizzi, Tahdhib al-Kamal

<sup>9</sup> Jamāl al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥajjāj Yūsuf ibn 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Mizzī, **Tahdhīb al-Kamāl fī Asmā' al-Rijāl**, ed. **Bashshār 'Awwād Ma'rūf** (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risālāh, 1980), vol. 1, 123.

<sup>10</sup> Lumensor, "**AISHA** - STUDIES OF RELIGION II," accessed May 20, 2025, <https://lumensor.weebly.com/aisha.html>.

<sup>11</sup> Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Musnad al-Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, vol. 2, p. 172

<sup>12</sup> Aḥmad ibn 'Alī Ibn Ḥajar al-Asqalānī, *Fath al-Bārī fī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 7 (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rīfah, 1379 AH), 107

Hazrat Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) was an expert in Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh). It has even been said that a quarter of Shariah rulings are narrated from her. Among her students in Hadith, Fiqh, and Fatwas, the names of over 200 scholars have been recorded.<sup>13</sup> The magnitude of her scholarly contributions can be gauged from the fact that 2,210 hadiths have been transmitted from her. She is counted among the most prolific narrators of hadith in Islamic history.

#### **Hazrat Umm Salama (RA): A Journey of Sacrifice, Patience, and Scholarly Excellence**

Similarly, another respected wife of the Prophet (peace be upon him), Hazrat Umm Salama (RA), endured great hardship to protect her faith. When she migrated to Medina with her first husband, Hazrat Abu Salama (RA), and their young son Salama, her tribe, Banu Mughira, found out and stopped them. They told Abu Salama (RA), "You may go alone, but our daughter will not go with you. They forcibly took Umm Salama (RA) away. Meanwhile, Abu Salama's tribe, Banu Abdul Asad, arrived and seized their child, Salama, declaring, "If you prevent our woman from going with her husband, we will not leave our tribe's child with you."

For an entire year, Umm Salama (RA) lived separated from both her husband and son. Every morning, she would leave her home, sit on a hill, and weep. Thus, for the sake of her faith, she endured immense suffering.

#### **Hazrat Zainab (RA)**

Hazrat Urwa bin Zubair (RA) narrates:

When Hazrat Zainab (RA), the daughter of the Prophet (peace be upon him), was being taken from Mecca by Kinana (or Ibn Kinana), the Quraysh pursued them and intercepted them on the way. A man repeatedly struck her camel with his spear, causing her to fall. As a result, she suffered a miscarriage and began bleeding severely.<sup>14</sup>

The people took her to Abu Sufyan (RA), who handed her over to the women for care. Some time later, she migrated to Medina but remained ill until she passed away. The Muslims considered her a martyr (Shaheedah). The Prophet (peace be upon him) would say about her, "Among my daughters, she was the best, yet she suffered the most for my sake." The Scholarly Status of Hazrat Umm Salama (RA). Among the mothers of the Believers (Ummahat al-Mu'mineen), Hazrat Umm Salama (RA) held the highest rank after Hazrat Aisha (RA). She, along with other female companions, was knowledgeable in various fields, including medicine, poetry, and theology.

Mahmud bin Labid states:

"The wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him) preserved many of his narrations, but none matched the knowledge of Aisha (RA) and Umm Salama (RA).<sup>15</sup>

Hazrat Umm Salama (RA) narrated a total of 387 hadiths, out of which 29 are recorded in the two most authentic collections Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim. Among these, 13 hadiths are agreed upon by both Bukhari and

<sup>13</sup> Mohammad Akram Nadwi, *Al-Muhaddithat: The Women Scholars in Islam* (Milton Keynes, UK: Interface Publications, 2007)

<sup>14</sup> Sahih al-Bukhari, Virtues and Merits of the Prophet (ﷺ) Vol. 2, Book 26, Hadith 660

<sup>15</sup> *Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra*, Vol. 2, p. 375

Muslim, while 3 are recorded exclusively by Bukhari and 13 solely by Muslim. Many notable individuals narrated hadith from her. These include her sons Umar and Zainab (children of Abu Salama), her freed slave Nabhan, her brother Amir bin Abi Umayya, and her nephew Mus'ab bin Abdullah bin Abi Umayya. Others include her servants Abdullah bin Rafi', Nafi', and Safina bin Yas as well as prominent companions and successors such as Usama bin Zaid bin Haritha, Hind bint Al-Harith, Safiyya bint Shayba, Abu Uthman Al-Nahdi, Humaid, Abu Usama, Ikrima, Abu Bakr, Uthman bin Abdullah, Urwah bin Zubair, Nafi' (the freed slave of Ibn Umar), Ya'la bin Umayya, Abdullah bin Abbas (RA), Aisha (RA), Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri, and many others. Hazrat Umm Salama (RA) was a woman of deep knowledge and understanding. She was literate able to read but did not write. Her contributions through hadith narration and scholarly insight have greatly enriched the intellectual and spiritual heritage of Islam.<sup>16</sup>

### **The Religious Services of Hazrat Sayyidah Fatimah (RA):**

Hazrat Sayyidah Fatimah al-Zahra (RA), the most beloved daughter of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), stands as a radiant beacon of religious service in Islamic history. Her personality was a beautiful blend of patience, piety, and sincere devotion to the faith. Through her blessed life, she set a practical example for the Muslim Ummah, serving as a guiding light for every Muslim woman until the Day of Judgment. Her religious contributions can be examined from various perspectives:

#### **A Practical Embodiment of Islamic Values**

Hazrat Fatimah (RA), through her character, conduct, and way of life, established a living example of Islamic values. Her life was adorned with lofty virtues such as piety, patience, gratitude, contentment, and detachment from worldly desires. She made modesty and hijab her hallmark, setting an exemplary model for all Muslim women.<sup>17</sup>

As a devoted wife and an exemplary mother, she transformed her household into a center of religious learning and upbringing. Being the wife of a noble companion like Hazrat Ali (RA) and the mother of esteemed grandsons of the Prophet (PBUH), Hazrat Hasan and Husain (RA), her role in nurturing them was of immense significance. She instilled in them a profound religious foundation, shaping them into future guardians and propagators of Islam. During the most challenging times in Makkah, when the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) faced persecution from the disbelievers, Sayyidah Fatimah (RA) stood firmly by her father's side in defending the faith. She demonstrated unparalleled patience and courage. Her unwavering support and contributions played a pivotal role in strengthening the foundation of Islam. Hazrat Fatimah (RA) was endowed with profound knowledge and wisdom. She learned the essential principles and rulings of Islam directly from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and transmitted them to others. Although the number of hadiths directly narrated by her is limited, her scholarly status remains distinguished among the women who acquired knowledge from the Prophet

<sup>16</sup> Umar Raza Kahala, **A'lam al-Nisa fi Alamay al-Arab wal-Islam**, Vol. 1, p. 13

<sup>17</sup> Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Virtues of the Companions, Chapter on the Merits of the Relatives of the Prophet

(peace be upon him). Through her, the chain of religious knowledge continued within the Ahl al-Bayt .18

### **Hazrat Asma bint Abi Bakr (RA)**

Hazrat Asma (RA) was the mother of Abdullah ibn Zubayr ibn al-Awwam and the daughter of Hazrat Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (RA). Her mother's name was Qutaylah (or Qutaylah bint Abd al-Uzza), who belonged to the Quraysh tribe, specifically the Banu Amir ibn Lu'ayy clan. Hazrat Asma (RA) embraced Islam in Makkah. She was given the title "Dhat an-Nitaqayn" (the Possessor of the Two Belts) because, during the Hijrah (migration), she tore her waistband into two parts using one to tie the provisions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the other to fasten around her waist.

### **Narration of Hadith**

Hazrat Asma (RA) narrated 58 hadiths from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). Scholars have documented these narrations through various chains of transmission, as follows:

"Asma narrated several hadiths from the Prophet (peace be upon him), which are found in Sahihayn (Bukhari and Muslim), the Sunan collections, and other books. Among those who narrated from her were her son Abdullah (ibn Zubayr), her grandson 'Ubadah ibn Abdullah, Abdullah ibn 'Urwah, Fatimah bint al-Mundhir ibn Zubayr, 'Ubadah ibn Hamzah ibn Abdullah ibn Zubayr, her freed slave Abdullah ibn Kaysan, Ibn Abbas, Safiyyah bint Shaybah, Ibn Abi Mulaykah, Wahb ibn Kaysan, and others"19

### **The First Sacrifice in the Path of Allah**

The noble companion, Hazrat Syeda Sumayyah bint Khayyat (RA), mother of the famous Sahabi Hazrat Ammar bin Yasir (RA), was that lionhearted woman who offered the first sacrifice of her blood for the supremacy of faith. She strengthened the roots of Islam's tree with her sacrifice, outpacing all others in devotion. She was not only honored as the "First Female Martyr (Shahida-e-Awwal)" but also became the only female Shamiyah to give her life as an offering in the path of Allah.

Persecution for Embracing Islam, her mere act of emerging from the darkness of disbelief into the light of Islam became an unbearable offense for the disbelievers. They subjected her to such unbearable torture that words cannot describe it. It is narrated that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) would see her, along with her son Hazrat Ammar (RA) and husband Hazrat Yasir (RA), enduring brutal persecution under the scorching sun of Makkah at Maqam al-Balh, he would console them, saying Family of Yasir! Be patient, for your destination is Paradise."20

What Cruelty Did the Enemies of Islam Not Inflict Upon Her? The extent of her suffering can be understood from this horrific account: "She was forced to stand under the scorching sun while clad in a coat of iron mail.21" Yet, despite the relentless torment inflicted by the enemies of Islam who spared no effort in

<sup>18</sup> Al-Munadi, Muhammad 'Abd al-Ra'uf bin 'Ali bin Zayn al-'Abidin. *Ithaf al-Sa'il bima li-Fatimah* min al-Manaqib: Sayyidat Nisa' Ahl al-Jannah Fatimah al-Zahra. Littiba' wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi', Shari' al-Qamash bil-Faransawi, Bulaq, al-Qahirah, p:75

<sup>19</sup> Umar Raza Kahala, *A'lām al-Nisa fi Alamay al-Arab wal-Islam*, Vol. 1, p.35

<sup>20</sup> Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani. *Al-Isabah fi Tamyiz al-Sahabah*. Vol. 8, p. 209. Entry no. 11344: "Sumayyah bint Khabbat." Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid



their brutality the love of Islam had taken such deep root in her heart that she never loosened her grip on the faith.

### **The Valiant Contribution of Women in Islamic Conquests**

Certainly, the great victories of Islam were not solely achieved by the sword, but were also the result of the sacrifices of those great mothers, sisters, and wives who sent their loved ones to the battlefield for the sake of the true religion. When Islam expanded beyond the borders of Makkah and Madinah, conquering mighty empires like Rome, Persia, and Syria, the role of these courageous women is prominently visible in the background of these victories.

History will remember mothers who themselves prepared their sons to fight against the enemy, sisters who set examples of patience and resilience while bidding farewell to their brothers, and wives who, immediately after their wedding night, sent their husbands off to answer the call of jihad. These brave women not only encouraged from behind but some also participated in the battlefield, heading towards the fields without concern for their own lives in defense of Islam, and inspired the mujahideen with their passionate poetry. The sacrifices of these women are a proud chapter in Islamic history.

In the early history of Islam, women played a prominent role in the military field. Umm Ammarah Nusaybah bint Ka'ab (RA) displayed extraordinary bravery during the Battle of Uhud, defending the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) and sustaining multiple injuries. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) praised her courage, saying: "Whenever I looked to the right or left, I saw her fighting in my defense," and "Umm Ammarah! From where can anyone get courage like yours?"<sup>22</sup>

Safiyah bint Abd al-Muttalib (RA) protected the fort during the Battle of the Trench (Khandaq) by single-handedly killing a Jewish spy. Similarly, Aisha as-Siddiqah (RA) and Umm Sulaym (RA) provided water to the wounded and cared for them during the Battle of Uhud. Anas (RA) narrated: "I saw Aisha and Umm Sulaym providing water to the wounded." These examples demonstrate that women not only supported from behind the lines but also performed direct combat services, which the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) acknowledged and praised.

The role of Muslim women in the battlefield has been incredibly important and a source of great pride. These remarkable women would accompany the warriors, tend to the wounded, and serve them without any discrimination, whether they were common soldiers or commanders. Even in significant battles like the Battle of Uhud, Hadrat Sayyida Aisha Siddiqah (RA) was personally present and performing services for the injured.

The key services rendered by the female companions (Sahabiyat) in the battlefield included:

- Providing water to thirsty warriors
- Digging graves for the martyrs
- Spinning yarn to make clothes for the soldiers
- Dressing wounds and nursing the injured
- Moving martyrs and wounded soldiers from the battlefield to safe locations
- Supplying arrows and swords to the warriors
- Arranging food and drink

<sup>22</sup> Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar al-Wāqidi, **al-Maghāzī**, 3rd ed. (Beirut: Dār al-ʿIlmī, 1989), 1:271

- Boosting the army's morale and instilling enthusiasm

These women were not merely supporters; they actively participated in this sacred duty of defending Islam. Their role is a bright and exemplary chapter in Islamic history.

During the Battle of Uhud, Aisha (RA), Umm Sulaym (RA), and Umm Sulayt (RA) diligently carried water skins, providing water to the wounded. Umm Sulaym (RA), along with several other Ansar women, were actively engaged in nursing the injured warriors. Similarly, Rubayyi' bint Mu'awwidh (RA) performed the immense task of retrieving the bodies of martyrs from the battlefield and transporting them to Madinah. These women played their part in defending Islam with exceptional dedication and courage.<sup>23</sup>

Umm Atiyah (RA) narrated that she participated in seven battles alongside the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). She would stay behind him in the camp, prepare food, dress the wounds of the injured, and nurse the sick. Similarly, during the Battle of the Trench (Khandaq), Muslim women played a full and active role with their traditional spirit. On this occasion, Rufeidah Al-Aslamiyah (RA), a female companion skilled in medicine and healing, transformed her tent into a temporary field hospital. There, the wounded were treated, dressed, and cared for. In the early days of Islam, these women were not only at the forefront of service and sacrifice but also played a positive and constructive role in consultations and decision-making. This clearly demonstrated their understanding, wisdom, and practical capabilities.

#### **Hazrat Safiyyah bint Abd al-Muttalib (may Allah be pleased with her)**

Hazrat Safiyyah bint Abd al-Muttalib (may Allah be pleased with her) was an aunt of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and one of the great female companions. Her lineage was from the esteemed Quraysh tribe. Her father was Abd al-Muttalib, who was the grandfather of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and her mother was Hala bint Wahb, who was the sister of Hazrat Aminah bint Wahb (mother of the Messenger of Allah). Thus, Hazrat Safiyyah was also a paternal cousin of the Prophet (peace be upon him). She was also the biological sister of Sayyid al-Shuhada (Master of Martyrs), Hazrat Hamza (may Allah be pleased with him).

Hazrat Safiyyah (may Allah be pleased with her) embraced Islam at the very beginning of the Prophethood. She was among the first individuals who immediately believed in the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) and remained loyal to the religion of Islam despite all difficulties. Her services to Islam were not limited to devotion and love; in practical terms, she possessed extraordinary courage and bravery.

Hazrat Safiyyah's bravery prominently came to light during the Battles of Uhud and Khandaq (Trench). Especially during the Battle of Khandaq, while all Muslim warriors were engaged on the battlefield, women and children were moved to a secure fortress. During this time, an armed Jew managed to climb over the fortress wall and enter. On this occasion, Hazrat Safiyyah displayed exceptional courage. She struck the assailant with a tent pole, killing him on the spot. After that, she severed his head with his own sword and threw it outside the fortress wall. Seeing this sight, all the Jews who were waiting outside the fortress to attack the women fled.

<sup>23</sup> Ismā'īl ibn 'Umar Ibn Kathīr, **Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah**, ed. 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī (Cairo: Dār Hajar, 1997), vol:4 ,p:432

Similarly, during the Battle of Uhud, when the Muslim army scattered, she alone continued to strike the disbelievers with her spear. The Prophet (ﷺ) was greatly astonished by her immense bravery, and he said to her son, Zubair, "O Zubair! Look at the bravery of your mother and my paternal aunt; even great warriors fled, but she stands firm like a rock amidst the disbelievers, fighting alone."<sup>24</sup>

This incident involving Hazrat Safiyyah is not only a manifestation of her individual bravery but also proof that woman in the early Islamic society played an active role in the defense of Islam. Her blessed life is a shining example of the exemplary role of women in Islamic history, which remains worthy of emulation even today.

### **Umm Ammarah (Nasibah bint Ka'b) (RA): A Great Female Warrior Companion**

Umm Ammarah, whose real name was Nasibah bint Ka'b and whose kunya was Umm Ammarah, belonged to the Najjar family of the Khazraj tribe. She was one of the few great female companions who not only participated in Jihad during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) but also risked her life to protect Islam after his passing.

#### **Extraordinary Bravery in the Battle of Uhud**

In the Battle of Uhud, when Muslims initially gained success, Umm Ammarah (RA) was serving the mujahideen by providing water. However, when the tide of the battle turned and Muslims began to disperse, Umm Ammarah (RA) took it upon herself to defend the Holy Prophet (PBUH). She kept stopping the surrounding disbelievers with arrows and swords. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) himself testified to her bravery, saying, "I saw her fighting on my right and left in Uhud"<sup>25</sup>

When a disbeliever named Ibn Qami'ah attacked the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), Umm Ammarah (RA) stepped forward to stop him, resulting in a deep wound on her shoulder. She also counter-attacked, but the disbeliever was protected by wearing double armor. According to some narrations, she also killed a disbeliever in Uhud.

#### **Participation in Other Ghazwat and the Battle of Yamamah**

Besides the Battle of Uhud, Umm Ammarah (RA) also participated in \*\*Bay'at al-Ridwan, the Battle of Khaybar, and the Conquest of Makkah.<sup>26</sup>

During the reign of the first Caliph, Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq (RA), when the Battle of Yamamah against Musailamah al-Kazzab took place, Umm Ammarah (RA) participated in this battle along with her son Habib. When Musailamah al-Kazzab martyred her son Habib, Umm Ammarah (RA) vowed that she would either kill Musailamah or sacrifice her own life. In the battlefield, she displayed such unparalleled bravery that she sustained 12 wounds and lost one hand. Musailamah al-Kazzab was also killed in this battle.<sup>27</sup>

#### **Testimony of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ)**

<sup>24</sup> al-Zurqā nī , Muḥ ammad ibn ʿ Abd al-Bā qī . Sharḥ al-Zurqā nī ʿ alā al-Mawāhib al-Ladunniyya bi-l-Minaḥ al-Muḥ ammadiyya. 1st ed. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿ Ilmiyya, 1996. Vol:4, p:488

<sup>25</sup> Ahmad ibn Hanbal, **Al-Musnad**, (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risalah, n.d.), Vol. 6, p: 438.

<sup>26</sup> Ibn Saʿ d, **Kitab al-Tabaqat al-Kubra**, Vol. 8 (Beirut: Dar Sader, n.d.), 411

<sup>27</sup> Ibn Kathir. **Al-Bidaya wa al-Nihaya**. Vol. 6. Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, n.d., 324.

Regarding Umm Ammarah (RA)'s defensive capability and valor, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) praised her in these words: "Wherever I looked right or left, I saw her fighting in front of me" I did not turn right or left but that I saw her fighting in front of me/defending me"<sup>28</sup>

Umm Ammarah (RA) also participated in Bay'at al-Aqabah and in the Battle of Uhud with her husband Zayd bin Asim and her two sons Habib and Abdullah. Her bravery and sacrifice will always be remembered in the history of Islam.

It's impossible to find an example of the kind of sincerity, passion, determination, and steadfastness with which the female companions (Sahabiyat) served the religion. Observing the extensive participation of Muslim women in various religious and social spheres during the time of the Prophet (PBUH) and the era of the companions, some progressive individuals might mistakenly assume that women in that sacred period were not subject to any limitations or restrictions. However, this is a misconception.

### **Educational Pursuits of Female Companions (Sahabiyat)**

From its very inception, Islam emphasized knowledge (ilm) and piety (taqwa) as foundational pillars. The light of knowledge was considered the basis for righteous deeds. Since Islamic law equally obligates both men and women to fulfill religious duties, education and training became indispensable for their proper discharge. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) clearly stated:

"Seeking knowledge is a duty upon every Muslim, male and female."<sup>29</sup>

Prior to Islam, Arab society, particularly concerning women, was steeped in ignorance, oppression, and backwardness. Women were deprived of basic rights, let alone education. In such an environment, Islam granted women the full right to education, honor, understanding, awareness, and participation in both religious and social spheres.

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) paid special attention to the education and training of women. He allocated a separate day for women to attend his gatherings, where they could ask questions and learn religious rulings. He also instructed male companions to provide religious education to their families. It was due to the miracle of Islam that education became a fundamental right for women. Aisha (RA), the Prophet's wife, said:

"The women of Ansar were excellent women; shyness did not prevent them from seeking understanding of the religion."<sup>30</sup>

### **Prominent Examples**

Aisha (RA) She had profound expertise in fields like Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), Tafsir (Quranic exegesis), Hadith (Prophetic traditions), and medicine. She narrated over 2210 hadiths, and prominent companions and Tabi'een (successors) sought religious knowledge from her.<sup>31</sup>

Umm Waraqah (RA) This great female companion was a Hafizah of the Quran (one who had memorized the entire Quran). The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) appointed a mu'adhdhin (caller to prayer) for her so that she could lead her household in prayer. This is evidence that Islam allowed women not only to acquire knowledge but also to teach others.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Imam Ahmad, **Al-Musnad**, Vol. 6, p. 438

<sup>29</sup> Ibn Majah. **Sunan Ibn Majah**. Hadith no. 224

<sup>30</sup> Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj. **Sahih Muslim**. Hadith no. 332

<sup>31</sup> Ibn Sa'd, **Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra**, Vol. 8, p. 67

<sup>32</sup> Abu Dawud. **Sunan Abi Dawud**. Hadith no. 591.

Rufaidah (RA) She was an expert in medicine and treated wounded warriors during battles. Her tent was located near the Prophet's Mosque, serving as a prime example of women's practical contributions and professional skills in Islam.<sup>33</sup>

Other Examples and Continued Emphasis: Umm Sa'd (RA) used to teach the Quran. Zainab bint Abi Salamah (RA) was counted among the jurist women of Madinah. Aisha (RA) was not only intellectually distinguished but also a teacher for other women. Emphasis on women's education continued during the Rightly Guided Caliphate. Umar ibn al-Khattab (RA) issued instructions in various cities for women to be taught Surah An-Nur, as it outlines principles for domestic and social life. The educational activities of the Sahabiyyat clearly demonstrate the high status and crucial role women played in the early Islamic society.

### **The Role of Women in Calligraphy and Script Writing**

It is commonly believed that Arab society before Islam was unfamiliar with reading and writing, but this impression is not entirely accurate. Historical evidence suggests that although the practice of writing was limited, it did exist, and women also played a role in it.

#### **Female Scribes in the Prophetic Era**

During the time of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, there were women who knew how to write. Among them, the most prominent name is that of Hazrat Shifa bint Abdullah, who was skilled in writing even during the pre-Islamic era (Jahiliyyah). She taught Umm al-Mu'minin Hazrat Hafsa, one of the wives of the Prophet ﷺ, the art of writing <sup>34</sup>. Similarly, there are narrations indicating that Umm al-Mu'minin Hazrat Hafsa and Hazrat Umm Salamah also knew how to write <sup>35</sup>. This serves as proof that women had an inclination toward literacy and were encouraged in this pursuit.

### **Women Calligraphers and Scribes in Later Periods**

In later periods of Islamic history, we find examples of women who were not only skilled in reading and writing but were also entrusted with official correspondence.

Marnah bint Abi Bakr : This is a notable name, as she was the scribe of the Abbasid Caliph Al-Nasir li-Din Allah and a renowned writer. Historical books preserve accounts of her elegant handwriting and literary taste, which were praised by the caliph himself.<sup>36</sup>

Fatimah bint Abdul Malik : While a verified historical reference for this name is currently unavailable, Islamic history mentions women who excelled in multiple fields simultaneously. These women were not just calligraphers but also poets, scholars, physicians, and experts in other sciences. Some of them participated in scholarly gatherings, asked questions, and even issued religious rulings (fatwas) or presented academic opinions.

For example, Aisha bint Ahmad al-Qurtubiyyah (d. 1009 CE) was a famous Andalusian scholar, poet, and calligrapher. Her calligraphy was highly admired,

<sup>33</sup> Ibn Hajar, **Al-Isabah**, Vol. 4, p. 308

<sup>34</sup> Sunan Abi Dawood, **Kitab al-Diyat**, Bab fi al-Qasas, Hadith No. 4531.

<sup>35</sup> Ibn Sa'd, **Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra**, Vol. 8, p. 67

<sup>36</sup> Ahmad Muhammad Sulaiman, **Al-Khatt al-Arabi wa A'lamuhu Khilal al-'Usur** (Arabic Calligraphy and Its Prominent Figures), Dar al-Ma'arif, 1999, p.232

and she transcribed several manuscripts by hand.<sup>37</sup> These examples reflect that woman in Islamic society had ample opportunities to advance in knowledge and the arts.

### **The Importance of Women's Intellectual and Artistic Role**

Women played a crucial role in the dissemination of knowledge through calligraphy and script writing. They transcribed copies of the Quran, Hadith books, and other scholarly and literary manuscripts, ensuring the continuity of knowledge for future generations. Their contributions not only highlight their involvement in academic fields but also demonstrate that in Islamic civilization, the acquisition and propagation of knowledge were equally important for both men and women.

### **Conclusion**

The extraordinary services rendered by women during the Prophet's era (ﷺ) in religious, intellectual, social, and practical spheres are not only a proud chapter in Islamic history but also provide comprehensive guidance for contemporary Muslim women. These women not only participated in the propagation of Islam but also laid a foundation, through their education, understanding, sacrifice, selflessness, and unwavering faith, that continues to aid in the construction and development of Islamic society to this day.

Hazrat Khadijah (RA) strengthened the early Islamic movement through her wealth, time, and emotional support. Hazrat Aisha (RA) played an extraordinary role in the fields of Hadith, Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), and women's education. Hazrat Fatima (RA), as a daughter, wife, and mother, presented a sublime example of Islamic ethics and upbringing. Similarly, Hazrat Umm Ammarah, Hazrat Safiyyah (RA), Hazrat Umm Salamah (RA), and other female companions not only rendered scholarly and educational services but also demonstrated unparalleled courage on the battlefield.

All these women are a manifestation of the fact that Islam not only granted women the right to acquire knowledge but also encouraged them to play an active role in the service of their religion. The noble values adopted by women in the Prophet's era (peace be upon him), despite limited resources, are exemplary for women today.

Therefore, if today's Muslim woman makes the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the lives of the female companions the focal point of her own life, she can not only become a dignified, knowledgeable, and practical Muslim but also a source of positive change in society. The role of these great personalities tells us that women are not merely confined to the four walls of the home; rather, they can serve Islam shoulder-to-shoulder with men in knowledge, leadership, sacrifice, and wisdom.

### **Bibliography**

Ahmad ibn Hanbal. *Musnad al-Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*. Vols. 2 and 6. Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risalah, n.d.

Al-Baghawī, al-Husayn ibn Mas'ūd. *Ma'ālim al-Tanzīl (Tafsīr al-Baghawī)*. Translated by Muhammad al-Muhammadi. Vol. 2. Riyadh: Darussalam, 2003.

Al-Dhahabi, Shams ad-Din. *Siyar A'lam al-Nubalā'*. Edited by Shu'ayb al-Arna'ut. Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risalah, 1985.

<sup>37</sup> Ibn Bashkuwā l. **Al-Ṣ ilah fī Ta' rī kh Ā' immat al-Andalus**. Vol. 2, 592–593. Edited by Ibrahim al-Ibyari. Cairo: Dā r al-Ma' ā rif, 1966.

- Al-Hashmi, Muhammad Ali. *Misali Musalman Aurat*. Lahore: Dar al-Iblagh, 2016.
- Ali, Dr. Farman, Dr. Faryal Umbreen, and Raheela Imtiaz. "The Contribution of Nuṣrat-ul-'Ulūm Gujranwala's Graduates to Religious Leadership in Pakistan: An Analytical Study." *Shnakhat* 3, no. 3 (2024): 513–534. <https://shnakhat.com/index.php/shnakhat/article/view/352>.
- Al-Mizzi, Jamāl al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥajjāj Yūsuf ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān. *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl fī Asmā' al-Rijāl*. Edited by Bashshār 'Awwād Ma'rūf. Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 1980.
- Al-Munadi, Muhammad 'Abd al-Ra'uf ibn 'Ali ibn Zayn al-'Abidin. *Ithaf al-Sa'il bima li-Fatimah min al-Manaqib: Sayyidat Nisa' Ahl al-Jannah Fatimah al-Zahra*. Bulaq, Cairo: Littiba' wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi', n.d.
- Al-Tirmidhi. *Jami' at-Tirmidhi*. Translated by Abu Khaliyl. Vol. 1, Book 46, Hadith 3878 (in Book 49, Hadith 278). Riyadh: Darussalam, 2007.
- Al-Wāqidī, Muḥammad ibn 'Umar. *Al-Maghāzī*. 3rd ed. Beirut: Dār al-'Ilmī, 1989.
- Al-Zurqānī, Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Bāqī. *Sharḥ al-Zurqānī 'alā al-Mawāhib al-Ladunniyya bi-l-Minaḥ al-Muḥammadiyya*. 1st ed. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1996.
- Bashkuwāl, Ibn. *Al-Ṣilah fī Ta'rīkh A'immat al-Andalus*. Vol. 2. Edited by Ibrahim al-Ibyari. Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1966.
- Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī, Aḥmad ibn 'Alī. *Fath al-Bārī fī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. Vol. 7. Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1379 AH.
- Al-Isabah fī Tamyiz al-Sahabah*. Vol. 8. Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah.
- Ibn Ishaq. *Seerat Ibn Hisham (As-Sīrah an-Nabawiyyah)*. Vol. 1. Beirut: Dar Al-Kotob Al-'Ilmiyah.
- Ibn Kathīr, Ismā'īl ibn 'Umar. *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*. Edited by 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī. Cairo: Dār Hajar, 1997.
- Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*. Vol. 6. Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, n.d.
- Ibn Majah. *Sunan Ibn Majah*. Hadith no. 224.
- Ibn Sa'd. *Kitab al-Tabaqat al-Kubra*. Vols. 2 and 8. Beirut: Dar Sader, n.d.
- Kahala, Umar Raza. *A'lām al-Nisa' fī 'Ālamay al-'Arab wa al-Islām*. Vol. 1.
- Lumensor. "AISHA - STUDIES OF RELIGION II." Accessed May 20, 2025. <https://lumensor.weebly.com/aisha.html>.
- Mubarakpuri, Safi-ur-Rahman. *Ar-Raheeq Al-Makhtum (The Sealed Nectar)*. Lahore: Maktabah Salafiyyah, 2012.
- Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj. *Sahih Muslim*. Hadith no. 332.
- Nadwi, Mohammad Akram. *Al-Muhaddithat: The Women Scholars in Islam*. Milton Keynes, UK: Interface Publications, 2007.
- Sahih al-Bukhari. *Virtues and Merits of the Prophet (ﷺ)*. Vol. 2, Book 26, Hadith 660.
- Sulaiman, Ahmad Muhammad. *Al-Khatt al-Arabi wa A'lamuhu Khilal al-'Usur (Arabic Calligraphy and Its Prominent Figures)*. Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1999.
- Sunan Abi Dawud. *Kitab al-Diyat*, Bab fī al-Qasas, Hadith no. 4531.