

SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE ‘WOMEN OF ANŞĀR’: AN ANALYSIS FROM ŞAHĪĤ AL-BUKHĀRI AND MUSLIM

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ABSTRACT

At the time of the Prophet, women were undeniably contributed in various aspects and were given rights in their private and public life. One of the exemplary groups of women at that time is women from Madinan society which known as women of *anşār*. They were acknowledged in many traditions of the Prophet for their great attributes and contributions. This study aims to discover special features of the women of *anşār* as have been mentioned in the Hadith literature, particularly from two authentic collections of Hadith: *Şahīĥ al-Bukhāri* and *Şahīĥ Muslim*. It is also vital to highlight few women figures from *anşār* and their roles and contributions in the early Islamic era. As a qualitative research, this study applies thematic approach by gathering all related hadiths based on specific themes, and textual-analytical approach by analysing their descriptions from the text of Hadiths. The finding shows that women of *anşār* were reported as one of the honourable groups of women as they contributed a lot in various aspects including education, social, economic, politic, as well as philanthropy.

Keywords: Women of *anşār*, Madinan society, Hadith, *Şahīĥ al-Bukhāri*, *Şahīĥ Muslim*

INTRODUCTION

Women at the time of the Prophet were known to have had a noble and favourable position following their involvements in social, political, and educational aspects. They have played remarkable roles and they have huge contributions in both private and public spheres. As those who are among the first generations which was regarded as *şahāba*,¹ there are no differences between male and female in terms of their positions as the Companions of the Prophet. Both genders were given similar rights to seek knowledge and to practice the religious teaching. Both male and female companions also shared similar quality and they were dignified with their special privilege for living at the time of the Prophet and experiencing the hardship together with in spreading the religion.

The Prophet’s companions came from different tribes, origins and historical background. The concept of companionship introduced by the Prophet for this generation of *şahāba* is considered as a special opportunity that has not be given to other generations. They have great opportunities to receive the teachings of the Prophet directly from him. As the followers, they assimilated those teachings, simultaneously transmitted his words and reported his actions, and later compiled in the Hadith literature by later generations.

Specifically, female companions were recognized by their courage and knowledge. They grabbed every single opportunity to learn from the Prophet and to follow his teachings. There is no single bad report

¹ A group of people who met the Prophet, who believed in him, who came together with him, and who died as a Muslim

was heard regarding them, only compliments from great and famous scholars. For example, Imam al-Dhahabi (d.748 AH/1347 CE) said in his book *Mīzān al-I'tidāl*, 'I have not known of any woman who was accused of falsifying the ḥadīth.' Imam al-Shawkani also commented, 'It is not reported by any of the scholars that he rejected the ḥadīth narrated by a woman because the narrator was a female.'

These are among the positive statements that prove their credibility and trustworthiness of their positions as the companions of the Prophet, the transmitters of the Prophetic traditions, and the scholars from the very first generation of Islam. They have great opportunities to receive the teachings of the Prophet directly from him. As the followers, they assimilated those teachings, simultaneously transmitted his words and reported his actions, and practiced the religion by all their hearts and mind. These women companions of the Prophet are the best role and example for all generations, and they have been studied by many past and present scholars.² Importantly, these female companions come from different background and tribes, origins and historical background. Some of them were instantly becoming the Prophet's followers, and some were his enemies before turned to be his followers. But, one of the special people which always have been mentioned in his Prophetic traditions was known as a group of *anṣār*.

WHO WERE ANṢĀR?

In Madinah, Muslims are virtually consisted of two groups. The first one consisted of the original residents of Yathrib. They were known as *anṣār* who had already settled in their abode, had land and wealth, were fully at ease, but seeds of discord amongst them were deeply seated and chronic enmity was continually evoked.³ The word *anṣār* means 'helper' in Arabic and they were known as a group who accepted Allah SWT as the only God and Prophet Muhammad as the last Messenger except few groups such as Khaṭma, Wāqif, Wā'il, and Umayya from a clan of Aws who clung to their heathenism.⁴

The second party consisted of the *Muhājirīn* (the Emigrants), who were mostly homeless, jobless and penniless. Their number was not small, on the contrary, they increased day by day after the Prophet had given them the green light to leave for Madinah where the economic structure was originally not that prosperous. It began to show signs of imbalance aggravated by the economic boycott that the anti-Islamic groups imposed and consequently worsened their living conditions.⁵

Both *anṣār* and *muhājirīn* are the group of Muslims which inhabited Madinah after the occasion of *Hijra* (migration) of the Prophet from Mecca to Madinah. *Hijra* was considered as one of the most significant events as a symbol of success in spreading the message of Islam and uniting all believers in one place.

² Sayeed, A. (2005). *Shifting Fortunes Women and Ḥadīth Transmission in Islamic History (First to Eighth Centuries)*. Princeton University; Nadwi, M. A. (2007). *Al-Muhaddithat: The Women Scholars in Islam*. Oxford: Interface Publication; Mubarakpuri, M. Q. A. (2005). *Achievements of Muslim Women in the Religious and Scholarly Fields*. (Trans. by Rafiq Abdur Rahman, Ed.). Karachi, Pakistan: Darul Ishaat; Nadia, Z. (2017). Women Political Participation in the Era of Prophet Muhammad: Study on the Hadith Transmitters of the Women Companions. *Al-Albab*, 6(1), 55–78; Kabbani, S. H. & Bakhtiar, L. (1998). *Encyclopedia of Muhammad's Women Companions and the Traditions They Related*. Chicago, IL: ABC International Group; Keddie, N. R. (1990). The Past and Present of Women in the Muslim World. *Journal of World History*, 1(1), 77–108.

³ Al-Mubarakfuri, Muhammad Abd al-Rahman ibn Abd al-Rahim. (2004). *Al-Raḥīq al-Makhtūm*. Al-Mansurah: Dar al-Wafa', p.170.

⁴ Ibn Ishaq, Muhammad. (1982). *Life of Muhammad: A Translation of Ishaq's Sirah Rasullah, Introduction and Notes by A. Guillaume*. Karachi: Oxford University Press, p.230.

⁵ Al-Mubarakfuri, p.170.

The life in Madinah was enlightened by the presence of Prophet Muhammad and his companions from Mecca. The Madinan society at that time was a plural and multi-religious society where there are Arab tribes which consisted of the Aws and Khazraj, and the Jews of Qurayzah, an-Nadīr, and Qaynuqa' tribes.

Historically, the city of Madina was known as Yathrib in the pre-Islamic era, and it is recognised as *Madīnat al-Nabī* (city of the Prophet) with its usually added epithet *al-Munawwarah* (the radiant).⁶ Madina is situated in the Hijaz province of Saudi Arabia. It was an oasis with fertile soil and plenty of water. The history of Yathrib was unknown due to the absence of written documents and historical compilation on this old city, but there were some opinions that illustrated a basic background of Yathrib. However, these narratives cannot be relied on because they were not based on any authentic evidence.

The name of Yathrib was mentioned in the Qur'an which was later replaced by 'Madina' before the immigration of Prophet Muhammad and his companions from Mecca to Madina (The Qur'an, 33: 13). The changing of name is due to several reasons. First, its meaning was not reflective of the uniqueness and dynamism of Madina. Second, the name had improper meaning and it was considered offensive for the city inhabited by the Prophet.⁷ Yathrib actually refers to an upsetting meaning of reproach (*tathrib*) and malevolence or ill will (*tharb*). While still in Makkah, the Prophet was reported to have said: "I was ordered to (migrate to) a town which will eat up towns. They used to say, Yathrib, but it is Madinah. It removes the bad people like the blacksmith's furnace removes impurities from the iron".⁸

The arrival of Islam in Madina brought a lot of changes in its belief system, political system, social system and economic system. Muslims in Madina avowed their faith in Muhammad as the Prophet and took oath: "There were twelve of us and we pledged ourselves to the Prophet after the manner of women and that was before war was enjoined, the undertaking being that we should associate with God, we should not steal; we should not commit fornication; nor kill our offspring; we should not slander our neighbours; we should not disobey him in what was right; if we fulfilled this, paradise would be ours; if we committed any of those sins, it was for God to punish or forgive as He pleased."⁹ When they had taken the pledge, Prophet Muhammad said: "Whoever commits any of these actions after that, and is punished, that will be an expiation. Whoever is not punished, then his affair is up to Allah; if He wills, He will forgive him, and if He wills, He will punish him."¹⁰ The term of the pledge was known as the First Pledge of 'Aqaba or 'Pledge of Women'.¹¹ This was before the duty of making war was laid upon them.

In Madinah, the Prophet played a very important role in administering and ensuring peaceful coexistence in this city since it was inhabited by plural societies with different backgrounds, cultures, and religions. Every action taken during his lifetime was based according to the laws of Allah which later turned Madinah into the best integrated city in history. However, one of the success factors in Madinan society was because of the *anṣār*, inhabitants of Madinah who supported the Prophet in every situation without expecting any return.

⁶ Glasse, Cyril. (1989). *The Concise Encyclopedia of Islam*. London: Stacey International, p.266.

⁷ Omer, Spahic. (2009). *The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and the Development of Madinah*. Shah Alam: Arah Pendidikan Sdn. Bhd., p.2.

⁸ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Vol. 3, Book 30, Hadith 95; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Book 7, Hadith 3189.

⁹ Ibn Ishaq, p.199.

¹⁰ *Sunan al-Nasa'i*, Vol. 5, Book 39, Hadith 4167

¹¹ Ibn Ishaq, p.198.

The *anṣār* were noted for their spirit of sacrifice, generosity and hospitality as has been described in the Quran: “And those who, before them (emigrants), had homes (in Madinah) and had adopted the Faith, love those who emigrate to them, and have no jealousy in their breasts for that which they have been given, and give them (emigrants) preference over themselves even though they were in need of that. And whosoever is saved from his own covetousness, such are they who will be the successful.”¹² The selfless character of people of *anṣār* were not only mentioned in the Quran, but there are numerous hadiths explained the merit of *anṣār* as to show their greatness of generosity.

Interestingly, the Quran and Hadith never compare any gender difference of *anṣār* in order to show that all male and female from this group equally have similar qualities of being acknowledged by the Prophet and all Muslims. Moreover, it has been reported that most female companions were from *anṣār* which were 28 women, and majority of female hadith narrators were live in Madinah which were 65 women.¹³ The dominance of female companions who were *anṣār* was due to the fact that Madina was the central of Muslim at that time particularly after *Hijra*, and they have total freedom to practice Islam together with companions from Quraisy. Therefore, this study aims to discover these women of *anṣār* and their roles and contributions at those golden times. Although number of males among the *anṣār* were higher, it is significant to analyse the special features of these women of *anṣār* and to highlight important figures among them as have been mentioned in the Hadith literature.

MATERIAL(S) AND METHOD

This study is qualitative in nature. The method applied is thematic approach by gathering all related hadiths based on specific themes, and textual-analytical approach by analysing descriptions related to women of *anṣār* from the text of Hadiths. Data collections were obtained from two authorised and authentic books of Hadith; *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhāri* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. Holding the highest position in terms of reliability and authenticity compared to any other collections of Hadith, these two were known as *Ṣaḥīḥayn* (Two *Ṣaḥīḥs*) and any Hadith found in both is regarded as *muttafaq ‘alaih*.

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhāri is one of the most important authentic Hadith collections. Its actual title is *al-Jāmi’ al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Musnad al-Mukhtasar min Umūri Rasūlillāhi wa Sunanihi wa Ayyāmihi* (translated as ‘The Abridged Collection of Authentic Hadith with Connected Chains regarding Matters Pertaining to the Prophet, His Practices and His Times’). It contains 7563 totals of Hadith. However, it has been argued that this total number of Hadiths is repeated, and only 4000 Hadiths in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhāri* are without repetition. All Hadiths are arranged according to *Musannaf* i.e. collections of Hadith which classified by subject matter. Thus, they are grouped under 97 chapters (*kitāb*) and 3,450 subject headings (Al-’Asqalani, 1960; Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, 1986). All Hadiths in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhāri* were arranged by Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl ibn Ibrāhīm ibn al-Mughīrah ibn Bardizbah al-Ju‘fī, also known as Imam al-Bukhari.

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim is the second highest in the rank of six authentic Hadith collections. The full title of this book is *al-Jāmi’ al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Musnad al-Mukhtasar min al-Sunan bi Naql al-‘Adl ‘an Rasūlillāh* (translated as The Abridged Collection of Authentic Hadith with Connected Chains Narrated by Just

¹² The Qur’an, 59:9

¹³ Nadia, Z. (2017). Women Political Participation in the Era of Prophet Muhammad: Study on the Hadith Transmitters of the Women Companions. *Al-Albab*, 6(1), 55–78.

Transmitters from the Prophet). It contains roughly 7190 Hadiths (with repetitions), but around 4000 Hadiths without repetitions, in 43 books. It is said that around 2000 Hadiths in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* are similar with Hadiths *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. All Hadiths in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* were arranged by Abū al-Ḥusayn ‘Asākir ad-Dīn Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj ibn Muslim ibn Ward ibn Kawshādh al-Qushayrī an-Naysābūrī, commonly known as Imam Muslim. He spent nearly 15 years to compile and complete this collection of Hadith.

Using these two important hadith collections, the analysis is based on two themes: First, analysing hadiths on women of *anṣār* in general. Second, analysing Hadiths on women of *anṣār* which specific on certain figures, for example: Umm Darda’, Umm Atiyya and others. Later, their characters and features will be examined from all those collected hadiths, particularly from *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the materials mentioned above and the methods applied in this study, three important findings are discovered in this study. First, numbers of hadith on women of *anṣār* found in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* are different. But they are complementing each other for both collections acknowledging their positive attributes.

Imam al-Bukhari arranged a special *kitāb* (book) in his Hadith collection under The Book of the Merits of the Helpers in Madinah (*Kitāb Manāqib al- Anṣār*). In this Book, there are 53 chapters (*bāb*) which compiled 173 hadiths. While Imam Muslim has no special *kitāb* concerning *anṣār* in his collection of Hadiths, but hadiths on them were included under The Book of the Merits of the Companions (*Kitāb Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥāba Raḍiallāhu ‘anhum*). In this Book, it contains 60 chapters but there are only 6 chapters which specifically addressing the people of *anṣār* either as an individual or group. These six chapters are: Chapter 20: The Virtues of Abu Talhah Al-Anṣārī (1 hadith); Chapter 23: The Virtues of Ubayy bin Ka’b and a Group of the *Anṣār* (3 hadiths); Chapter 43: The Virtues of the *Anṣār* (5 hadiths); Chapter 44: The Best Clans of the *Anṣār* (7 hadiths); Chapter 45: Keeping Good Company With the *Anṣār* (8 hadiths); and Chapter 47: The Virtues of Ghifar, Aslam, Juhainah, Ashja’, Muzainah, Tamim, Daws and Tayy’ (14 hadiths). Therefore, the total number of Hadiths regarding the people of *anṣār* in *Saḥīḥ Muslim* is 38 hadiths.

However, hadiths which specifically reporting on the women of *anṣār* are lesser than the number of hadiths mentioned above. The hadiths on them were not mentioned in any particular *kitāb* and *bāb*, but were found scattered either in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. These hadiths were categorised under themes in order to know the importance of the existence of women of *anṣār* at the time of the Prophet.

Second, this study found 9 important figures among the women of *anṣār* which have been significantly mentioned in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. They are as follow:

1. Umm al-Darda’ Khayra bint Abi Hadrād.

She was a famous *Anṣārī* companion of the Prophet. She also was known as Umm al-Darda’ al-Kubra which is different with Umm Darda’ al-Sughra.¹⁴ She has narrated few hadiths directly from the Prophet, Aisha, Salman al-Farisi and her own husband, Abu Darda’ ‘Uwaimir ibn

¹⁴ Hujayma bt. Huyayy al-Awsabiyya (d. 81H/700CE), one of the female successors (tabi’in)

Malik.¹⁵ A large group of successors transmitted different hadiths on her authority. She died in Syria during the caliphate of 'Uthman ibn 'Affan. Ibn 'Abd al-Barr described her as being virtuous, intelligent, and possessing good judgment, in addition to having great piety.¹⁶

2. Umm 'Atiyya Nusayba bint al-Harith

She was also a female companion of the Prophet from *anṣār*. Several of her hadiths have been included in the works of al-Bukhari and Muslim. As an example: 'Umm 'Atiyya, an *Anṣāri* woman said: "I took part with the Messenger of Allah in seven battles. I would stay behind in the camp of men, cook their food, treat the wounded and nurse the sick."¹⁷ This hadith shows that she had participated in the battle and contributed her roles as a cook and nurse. It also indicates that although going to the battle is not prescribed for women, but when necessary, women are allowed to assist in certain areas of specialisation.¹⁸

3. Umm 'Umarah – Nusayba bint Ka'ab

She was from the famous Banu Najjar tribe. Her two sons had been martyred and her brother 'Abdullah bin Ka'b was a Companion of the Prophet in the Battle of Badr. She was renowned for her courageous exploits in the battlefields. She was a faithful and loyal wife, and a loving mother, and had remarkable patience and forbearance. She was also experts in the Quran and Hadith. Furthermore, she was known as the first woman warrior who defended Prophet Mohammad from the spike of infidels in the battlefield of Uhud when he was encircled by non-believer arrow holders from quarters and in the meantime, other companions were busy with the collecting of booty.¹⁹ Umm 'Umarah's jihad was not confined to the battle of Uhud. She was also present on a number of other occasions, namely the treaty of 'Aqabah, Al-Hudaybiyah, Khaybar and Hunayn. Her heroic conduct at Hunayn was no less marvellous than her heroic conduct at Uhud. At the time of Abu Bakr's Khilafah, she was present at Al-Yamamah where she fought brilliantly and received eleven wounds as well as losing her hand.²⁰

4. Ummu Hiram binti Milhan Ibnu Khalid al-Ansaiah al-Najjariah

She is the daughter of Umm Sulaim, the maternal aunt of Anas bin Malik, and was the wife of 'Ubada bin As-Samit. She was the first among the *anṣār* woman to not only accept Islam, but also announce it; and she did so before the migration of the Prophet. In one hadith, it is mentioned that she was among the female companions who received an honour from the Prophet. The Prophet went to the daughter of Milhan and reclined there (and slept) and then (woke up) smiling. She asked, "O Allah's Messenger! What makes you smile?" He replied, (I dreamt that) some people amongst my followers were sailing on the green sea in Allah's Cause, resembling kings

¹⁵ Mubarakpuri, M. Q. A. (2005). *Achievements of Muslim Women in the Religious and Scholarly Fields*. (Trans. by Rafiq Abdur Rahman, Ed.). Karachi, Pakistan: Darul Ishaat, p.103.

¹⁶ See Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani. (1917). *al-Iṣāba fī Tamyīz al-Saḥāba*, 13vols., ed. Taha Muhammad al-Zayni. Cairo: Maktabat al-Kulliyat al-Azhariyya, 12:241-42.

¹⁷ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Book 19, Hadith 4462

¹⁸ Naseef, F. U. (1999). *Women in Islam: A Discourse in Rights and Obligations*. (S. M. Abedin, Ed.). New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., p.155.

¹⁹ Islam's women Jewels of Islam, (2016). Umm 'Umarah - Nusaybah bint Ka'b. Retrieved August 15, 2016, from http://www.islamswomen.com/articles/umm_umarah.php; The Nuseibeh Articles, (2016). Nusaybah Bint Ka'ab - The First Woman Warrior of Islam. Retrieved August 15, 2016, from http://www.islamswomen.com/articles/umm_umarah.php

²⁰ Nuseibeh Family. (2018). "Nusaybah Bint Ka'ab - The First Woman Warrior of Islam", Retrieved July 15, 2020, from <http://www.nuseibehfamily.net/articles/12-articles/66-nusaybah-bint-ka-ab-the-first-woman-warrior-of-islam>

on thrones." She said, "O Allah's Messenger! Invoke Allah to make me one of them." He said, "O Allah! Let her be one of them." Then he (slept again and woke up and) smiled. She asked him the same question and he gave the same reply. She said, "Invoke Allah to make me one of them." He replied, "You will be amongst the first group of them; you will not be amongst the last." Later on she married 'Ubada bin As-Samit and then she sailed on the sea with bint Qaraza, Mu'awiya's wife (for Jihad). On her return, she mounted her riding animal, which threw her down breaking her neck, and she died on falling down.²¹

5. Umm Waraqa bint. 'Abd Allah b. al-Hārith

She was also among the female companion of the Prophet. She comes from a high, noble and prestigious lineage and was blessed with much wealth. Choosing Islam as her religion, she learned the Quran, memorized it and followed its teachings. The Quran became her main concern in all aspects of her private and public life and for her everything resolved around it. She attained a high and commendable status in this respect. Many reports narrated the story that she wished to be known as martyr. Umm Waraqa wanted to go out with the Prophet to participate in the Battle of Badr, therefore she went to him and explained her ardent wish and intension. She came to the Prophet and said, "O Messenger of Allah, allow me to go out with you so that I may nurse the sick ones from among your Companions and perhaps, Allah will bless me with Martyrdom." From that day onward, she was called and referred to with the prestigious title of, 'the Martyr'. After the Prophet's death, she was appointed by Caliph Umar to lead the market committees of Medina and Mecca. She was one of the few people who handed down the Qur'an before it was compiled into its final written form during Uthman's caliphate.²²

6. Asma' bint Shakal Anṣāriyyah

She was known as the woman who asked about the washing after menstruation and sexual intercourse as mentioned in a long hadith. The Prophet said: "Everyone amongst you should use water (mixed with the leaves of) the lote-tree and cleanse herself well, and then pour water on her head and rub it vigorously till it reaches the roots of the hair. Then she should pour water on it. Afterwards she should take a piece of cotton smeared with musk and cleanse herself with it." Asma' said: "How should she cleanse herself with the help of that?" Upon this, the Prophet observed: "Praise be to Allah, she should cleanse herself." 'A'isha said in a subdued tone that she should apply it to the trace of blood. She (Asma) then further asked about bathing after sexual intercourse. The Prophet said: "She should take water and cleanse herself well or complete the ablution and then (pour water) on her head and rub it till it reaches the roots of the hair (of her) head and then pour water on her."

In a similar hadith (because of her questions), Aisha praised women of *anṣār* for their eagerness to learn and seek knowledge. Their shyness did not stop them to learn more and more from the Prophet, as expressed by 'Aisha: "How good are the women of *Anṣār* (helpers) that their shyness does not prevent them from learning religion."²³ In another hadith, 'Aisha said "The best of the

²¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Vol. 4, Book 52, Hadith 129; Vol. 4, Book 52, Hadith 47; Vol. 8, Book 74, Hadith 299; Vol. 9, Book 87, Hadith 130.

²² Walther, Wiebke. (1981). *Women in Islam: From Medieval to Modern Times*. Princeton: Markus Wiener, p.111, citing Ibn Sad, *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr*, vol. 8, p. 335 & John L. Esposito. (2003). ed. *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 339-340; Muhammad Ali Qutub. (n.d.). "Umm Waraqa, the Martyr". Retrieved July 15, 2020, from <https://idealmuslimah.com/personalities/sahaabiyaat/1495-umm-waraqah-the-martyr.html>

²³ *Saḥīḥ Muslim*. Book 3, Hadith 649

women are the women of the *Anṣār*. Shyness would not prevent them from inquiring about religion and from acquiring deep understanding in it.”²⁴

7. Asma’ bint Yazid

She was known as “the orator of the women” (*Khātibatun Nisā’*) due to her straightforwardness and eloquence. She used to speak and argue on behalf of her fellow Muslim women, and the Prophet used to encourage her and expressed his admiration for her strong personality. Becoming a representative, she would meet the Prophet, ask questions, learn from him, and tell him clearly about any issue. Because of her intelligence and braveness, she narrated 81 hadiths. Besides, she participated in the battle (Battle of Yarmuk) not only to take care of the wounded people, but she went to the battlefield and killed nine Byzantine soldiers.²⁵

8. Rufaidah bint Sa’ad al-Aslamiyya

She was born in 620CE, from the Bani Aslam tribe of the Khazraj in Madina, and was known as among the first to accept Islam. She was famous with her major contribution in nursing and treating the sick. She received her medical training and knowledge from her father, Sa’d al-Aslamy who was a physician. At the time of the Prophet, she would treat the ill in a tent set up outside the Prophet’s mosque. During war time, however, she would lead groups of volunteer nurses onto the battlefields, where they would treat wounded people. Together with her fellow Muslim women, she participated in the battles of Badr, Uhud, Khandaq and Khaibar.²⁶ She is said to have provided health education to the community, helped the disadvantaged (like orphans and the disabled), advocated for preventative care, and even to have drafted the world’s first code of nursing ethics.²⁷

9. Khansa’ bint Khidam al-Anṣāriyyah

There is no detail mentioned about her background, but she was famous with a hadith that she was forced to marriage by her father. But her marriage was invalidated by the Prophet because the consent was granted unwillingly. The hadith was narrated by herself, Khansa bint Khidam Al-Anṣāriya narrated: that her father gave her in marriage when she was a matron and she disliked that marriage. So, she went to Allah's Messenger and he declared that marriage invalid.²⁸ It indicates that any woman is free to accept or reject her father’s choice, or make her own choice. Simultaneously, forced marriage is never a part of Islamic teaching,

In fact, there are many women of *anṣār* but these figures were chosen due to their great contributions for Ummah. From these nine female figures as well as hadiths concerning women of *anṣār*, it shows that *Anṣāri* women were capable of many things and contributed in many fields. It leads to the third finding by acknowledging the characters or features which specifically attributed to these women of *anṣār*. These features are the good qualities that make those women became a great model for other women particularly among new generations.

²⁴ *Sunan Abi Dāwud*, Book 1, Hadith 316

²⁵ Encyclopaedia of the Companions. (n.d). “Asma bint Yazid (r.anha)”, Retrieved July 15, 2020, from <https://questionsonislam.com/article/asma-bint-yazid-ranha>

²⁶ Akhmetova, E. (2016). Women in Islamic Civilisation: Their Rights and Contributions. *Islam and Civilisational Renewal*, 7(4), 474–491.

²⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nursing_in_Islam

²⁸ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhāri*, Vol. 7, Book 62, Hadith 69

The first feature which became the most important trademark for these women of *anṣār* is their eagerness of seeking knowledge. It has been proven as in hadith narrated by Aisyah that she did not praise Asma' bint Shakal alone, but she admired all women of *anṣār* as she said: "How good are the women of *Anṣār* (helpers) that their shyness does not prevent them from learning religion."²⁹ These women frequently referred to the Prophet for any issue including all related to women, and the Prophet never ignored them and answered their questions patiently. One of the best results of their actions is the Prophet's teaching could be the reference for other Muslim women until present day.

The second feature is their good memorisation of hadith of the Prophet. Majority of women of *anṣār* narrated hadith directly from the Prophet. They were also known as *al-muḥaddithāt*³⁰ who experts in the hadith. For instance, Asma' bint Yazid narrated 81 hadiths. The other female figures as mentioned above also narrated hadith directly from the Prophet as they live during his lifetime like Umm al-Darda' and Umm 'Atiyya.

The third feature is their courage by using their freedom of speech. There are many examples shown by these women of *anṣār* for being outspoken for good purposes. As shown by Asma' bint Yazid who speaks for other women and defending women's rights in front of the Prophet. Khansa' bint Khidam also speaks for herself due to her forced marriage, and the Prophet was on her side invalidating that marriage.

The fourth feature is their braveness to participate in the battlefield. This feature is important to prove that women at the time of the Prophet were not confined to their role as a wife and mother in the private sphere, but they were actively participated in the public sphere and fought together with the male companions in defending Islam. Umm Umarah participated in the battle of Uhud, Khaybar and Hunayn. She was also present at Al-Yamamah where she fought brilliantly and received eleven wounds as well as losing her hand. Asma' bint Yazid killed nine Byzantine soldiers in the battle of Yarmuk. Umm Waraqah was called as the martyr even though she was not killed in the battle of Badr.

The fifth feature is their expertise in nursing and helping wounded in the battle. It comes from their initiative to help without receiving any order from the Prophet. These women requested and the Prophet agreed to let them join the battle by bringing the water, preparing food, treating the wounded, and nursing the sick people. For instance, Umm Atiyya took part in seven battles with the Prophet not to fight in the battlefield but contributed her role as a cook and nurse. Rufaidah bint Sa'a also participated in several battles like Badr, Uhud, Khandaq and Khaibar, and did her great work as a nurse and gave medical treatment.

CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, people of Madinah particularly from *anṣār* have a special place in the Prophetic traditions. Many hadiths were narrated to strengthen and clarify further what have been mentioned by the Quran regarding these people of *anṣār*. As reported in the hadith, the Prophet encouraged to appreciate them and to regard them as his own family and good friends. Anas ibn Malik reported Allah's Messenger as saying: "The *Anṣār* are my family and my trusted friends. and the people would increase

²⁹ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Book 3, Hadith 649.

³⁰ Nadwi, M. A. (2007). *Al-Muḥaddithat: The Women Scholars in Islam*. Oxford: Interface Publication; Siddiqi, M. Z. (1993). *Women Scholars of Hadith*. In *Hadith Literature: Its Origin, Development, Special Feature & Criticism*. Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, pp. 142–153.

in number whereas they (the *Anṣār*) would become less and less, so appreciate the deeds of those from amongst them who do good and overlook their failings.”³¹

Not only that, the Prophet emphasised that to love the people of *anṣār* is a sign of a good faith. Narrated by Al-Bara: I heard the Prophet said, "None loves the *Anṣār* but a believer, and none hates them but a hypocrite. So, Allah will love him who loves them, and He will hate him who hates them."³² In addition to that, the Prophet also acknowledged the women and children from *anṣār*. Narrated by Anas: The Prophet saw the women and children (of the *Anṣār*) coming forward. (The sub-narrator said, "I think that Anas said, "They were returning from a wedding party.") The Prophet stood up and said thrice, "By Allah! You are from the most beloved people to me."³³ In this hadith, he meant *Anṣār*.³⁴ The hadith concerning people of *anṣār* covers all men and women, young and elder, rich and poor as long as they believe in Allah and the Messenger of Allah.

Interestingly, there are also hadiths specifically either by addressing the women of *anṣār* as the whole group or aiming at the specific woman individually. It is not happened to other women from different group, which to prove that these women of *anṣār* have a special quality and strong character. The findings from this paper achieved to discover special features of the women of *anṣār* as have been mentioned in the Hadith literature, particularly from two authentic collections of Hadith: *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*. The findings also show that women of *anṣār* were reported as one of the honourable groups of women as the female companions of the Prophet and have known as the women who have significant roles and contributions in the early Islamic era.

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³¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Vol. 5, Book 58, Hadith 145; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Book 31, Hadith 6103

³² *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Vol. 5, Book 58, Hadith 127

³³ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Vol. 5, Book 58, Hadith 129

³⁴ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Book 31, Hadith 6101

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