

## **THE CONTRIBUTION OF AISHAH AND SYIFA IN NARRATING THE PROPHETIC HADITH: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Women during the Prophet's time had a significant positive impact on society because they were individuals who were willing to contribute energy, particularly in the advancement of hadith knowledge. However, there is a failure to understand or acknowledge their important roles particularly among young generation because there are many figures that were falsely taken as the role model. Therefore, this study focuses on acknowledging the importance of two female figures who narrated hadiths which are Aisyah R.A and Syifa binti Abdullah by discovering their biographies and analysing their contributions in Islam. In the case of this study, qualitative research is applied because it requires library research and the use of Maktabah Syamilah to obtain information on hadith. In the research finding, this study provides an understanding that includes the following: (1) comprehending and delving into the biographies of women who have made significant contributions to hadith and (2) the ability to assess the comparative contribution of female figures to Islam in various fields. In conclusion, these women can serve as role models for young women, inspiring them to emulate qualities like perseverance in seeking knowledge, contributing expertise, discipline, and carrying out responsibilities.

**Keywords:** Hadith, Women, Comparison, Contribution

### **Introduction**

Islam is a religion that values knowledge more than anything else. This is proven in the first revelation, found in Surah *Al-'Alaq*, which highlights the importance of education. This order is intended for all people, including men and women who certainly play significant roles in society. Starting from the time of Prophet Muhammad SAW, many women have becoming hadith narrators and actively participating in its dissemination. The primary factor determining a hadith's legitimacy is not based on gender, women and men are equally qualified

to narrate hadith. These women's persistence has produced a new generation of female hadith scholars, or *muhaddithat*, who not only study but also teach the knowledge and hadith to others. Basically, teaching and sharing knowledge is required in Islam according to the Prophet's hadith:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو: أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: بَلِّغُوا عَنِّي وَلَوْ آيَةً، وَحَدِّثُوا عَن بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَلَا حَرَجَ، وَمَنْ كَذَبَ عَلَيَّ مُتَعَمِّدًا فَلْيَتَّبِعُوا مَقْعَدَهُ مِنَ النَّارِ

Meaning: "From Abdullah ibn Amr: That the Prophet said: Convey even one verse from me and relate (what you hear) from Bani Isra'il and it is not a sin..." (*Hadith from Imam al-Bukhari, 3461*)

Due to this reason, the responsibility to learn the hadith of the Prophet as well as to teach and deliver the hadith to others is equally for both men and women. But this study focuses on the role of women in the narration of hadith by emphasizing two important female figures only which are Aisyah bint Abu Bakr and Syifa bint Abdullah. This study aims to examine their historical backgrounds and their contributions in Islam by applying comparative approach.

### **Problem Statement**

The topic of the role of women in Islam will always be debated. One of the related topics concerns one of the great achievements of women in the Islamic world, which is their involvement in transmitting the hadith of Prophet Muhammad SAW (Muhsin & Inah, 2014). The problem arises when widespread discrimination occurs against a particular gender. This is related to the issue of women during the time before the arrival of Islam. They did not have the ability to act, express their thoughts, or shoulder responsibilities (Sulaemang, 2015).

Furthermore, there is a comparison between men where only men can obtain their rights. Men are often seen as powerful and capable, while women are often seen as weak and incapable of doing anything (Faisal Abdullah, 2020). Besides, they did not receive legal protection or appropriate social status throughout the age of ignorance. In addition, the existence of women was always subject to male oppression. Women also did not have the right to receive higher education or other forms of self-improvement (Rusli Takunas, 2019).

However, after the emerged of Islam, women have gained more access to social activities and education, leading to the emergence of many outstanding female figures, such as Aishah binti Abu Bakr, Syifa binti Abdullah, Hafsa binti Umar, and many others. Indeed, men and women are created from the same soul, according to the Quran (Ismail Karim, 2021). Therefore, there is no difference between them.

### **Literature Review**

In past research on the contributions of women, there has been a greater emphasis on the contributions of men compared to those of women. However, it is important to note that there are women who have played significant roles in preserving and disseminating Islamic knowledge. Furthermore, the contributions of women should not be ignored or underestimated.

According to Dibok (1994), the contribution played by Muslim women during the time of the Prophet Muhammad SAW in the effort to develop Islamic civilization. This is aimed to review the excellence of Islamic civilization achieved during the time of the Prophet Muhammad SAW to be realized in this century in line with the role of Islam as a 'way of life'. Women play a crucial role in the construction of world civilization as it aligns with the role of women as the pillars of the state and educators of future generations.

Besides, Nur Saadah and Norullisza (2022), have mentioned the life histories and prominence of several *muhaddithat* including Aishah R.A. and Syifa binti Abdullah. The first group of *muhaddithat* consists of the female companions of the Prophet Muhammad SAW who met him and narrated hadith directly from him. These women also had extraordinary expertise in various other fields, making them the best examples for women in this era, especially in the aspect of human development.

Furthermore, the source taken for this study is the book titled "*100 Tokoh Wanita di Sisi Rasulullah*" written by Hepi Andi Bastoni (2013). This book focuses on the female companions who contributed to the advancement of Islam and lived in the time of Prophet Muhammad SAW. Numerous female figures who accompanied the Prophet not only narrated hadiths but also spoke about other subjects and areas of expertise of these female companions, including conflict, administration, and others.

Moreover, the thesis by Nurhadianti (2019) entitled "*Perancangan Informasi Asy-Syifa Binti Abdullah Inspirasi Berkiprah Wanita Muslimah Melalui Media Buku Cerita Bergambar*" highlights the biography of Syifa binti Abdullah as a female figure in the time of the Prophet. This study also explains about Syifa binti Abdullah's devotion to the Muslim community in her time. Syifa's sacrifice is also not only focused on the narration of hadiths but also on various other fields that he is involved in. In addition, this study also shows the condition of women in the current era, which is very different from the time of the Prophet.

Consequently, Muhsin and Inah (2014) explained in their journal titled "*Perempuan Dan Periwaiyatan Hadits*" women continue to demonstrate their significance in upholding Islamic law. One of the roles of women is actively engaging in the narration of the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Aishah R.A. was a woman of high intellect and became a role model for women. She narrated many hadiths from Prophet Muhammad SAW.

According to Aisyah Tidjani's article (2016) titled "*Aishah Binti Abu Bakr R.A.: A Special Woman Who Transcended Her Time,*" it explains the intelligence and scientific capacity of Aishah R.A. through narrations from the companions and successors. Aishah's role in Islamic history is quite strategic. Her scientific abilities have made a significant contribution to the development of Islamic scholarship. Aishah R.A. often served as a reference for scholars and the companions of Prophet Muhammad SAW. Her intelligence was outstanding and capable, surpassing the intelligence of women and men in her time, especially in the fields of exegesis, hadith, jurisprudence, medicine, and literature.

In addition, the article journal titled "*Khidmat Sosial Wanita pada Zaman Rasulullah SAW*" was written by Mohd Nazim et al., (2013). This article aims to explore the role of women that performed during the time of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, that they provided the Muslim community with numerous services and contributions. This study also reveals that women, like men, have made significant contributions to culture and civilization in other fields, such as war.

This research also highlights the variety of professions that women were involved in during the past, including management and voluntary work.

## Methodology

As a qualitative study, this research applies related approaches in both data collection and analysis. In collecting data, library research is used to gather the information appropriately. Additionally, this research uses an online application like *Maktabah Syamilah* to find materials related to hadith books such as *Musnad Ahmad* and *Sunan Abi Daud*. Besides, in analysing data, this research uses historical approach to examine the biography of Aishah binti Abu Bakar and Syifa binti Abdullah to understand the background, personality, and context of their involvement who have made important contributions in the field of hadith. Another approach is content analysis which is important to systematically analyse the content of the text. Finally, a comparative approach is used to identify the similarities and differences in their contributions to Islam in various fields.

## Result And Discussion

### Biography of Aishah

Her full name is Aishah binti Abi Bakr al-Ṣiddiq Abd Allah bin Uthman bin Amr bin Ka'ab bin Sa'ad bin Taym al-Taymi al-Qurashi. Aishah was born in Mecca in the ninth year before the Hijrah, which coincided with July in the year 614 AD, at the end of the fifth year after the Prophet Muhammad SAW was appointed as a Messenger. Aishah R.A. is the Prophet SAW's third wife. She was born to a noble husband and wife; his father, Abu Bakar al-Siddiq, was a close friend of the Prophet SAW whom she adored, and her mother's name was Ummu Ruman binti Amir (Abdul Mun'im Muhammad, 2017).

Prophet Muhammad SAW married Aishah 3 years after Khadijah R.A. death when she was 6 years old, then they lived together when she was 9 years old, then Prophet Muhammad SAW died when Aishah was 18 years old. The marriage of Aishah and the prophet was carried out on Allah SWT's direct order, which was revealed in a dream. This was made clear to Aishah when the Prophet Muhammad SAW said to her:

أُرِيْتُكَ قَبْلَ أَنْ أَتَزَوَّجَكَ مَرَّتَيْنِ، رَأَيْتُ الْمَلَكَ يَحْمِلُكَ فِي سَرَقَةٍ مِنْ حَرِيرٍ فَقُلْتُ لَهُ: اكشِفْ. فَكَشَفَ، فَإِذَا هِيَ أَنْتِ. فَقُلْتُ: إِنْ يَكُنْ هَذَا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ يُمُضِهِ. ثُمَّ أُرِيْتُكَ يَحْمِلُكَ فِي سَرَقَةٍ مِنْ حَرِيرٍ، فَقُلْتُ: اكشِفْ. فَكَشَفَ فَإِذَا هِيَ أَنْتِ، فَقُلْتُ: إِنْ يَكُنْ هَذَا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ يُمُضِهِ

“You were shown to me twice (in my dream) before I married you. I saw an angel carrying you in a silken piece of cloth, and I said to him, Uncover (her), and behold, it was you. I said (to myself), If this is from Allah, then it must happen. Then you were shown to me, the angel carrying you in a silken piece of cloth, and I said (to him), Uncover (her), and behold, it was you. I said (to myself), If this is from Allah, then it must happen”. (*Sahih al-Bukhari 7012*)

Aishah R.A. was a wise woman who traveled with the Prophet Muhammad SAW. She used every opportunity she had to accompany the Prophet to ask her questions about anything she didn't understand. She has an exceptional memory, recalling every answer given by the Prophet to questions posed by her people. So, after the Prophet's death, Aishah disseminated and taught her knowledge to the people through the "Madrasah Aishah" as she had learned during the Prophet's lifetime (Gazali Mukhtar, 2023).

After living as a preacher spreading Islamic knowledge, Aishah R.A. was invited by God to leave this mortal world. Aishah R.A. died on Tuesday night, which corresponded to the 17th of Ramadhan in the year 58 Hijrah. According to some scholars, it occurred in the year 57 Hijrah. Aishah was laid to rest in al-Baqi' cemetery in al-Madinah al-Munawwarah (Rozaimi Ramle, 2022).

### **Biography of Syifa Binti Abdullah**

Her name was Syifa binti Abdullah. She is the *sahabiyah* (companion) of the Prophet Muhammad SAW and an intelligent woman who is inspiring the community. Before this, she was called by Laila, but Syifa binti Abdullah ibn Abd Shams al-Quraisyah al-Adawiyah was her better-known name after she converted to Islam. She was a female scholar and the Prophet Muhammad SAW's companion (Bastoni, 2013).

Moreover, Syifa binti Abdullah was the first woman to pledge allegiance to the Messenger or promised to obey the teachings of Islam and acknowledge that her God is Allah SWT, and her Messenger is Muhammad SAW. Additionally, there is one alternative name for Syifa binti Abdullah which is *Asy-Syifa*. The name "syifa," which she gained, means the healer (Yaqeen Institute, 2021). According to the Cambridge Dictionary (2023), healer means a person who can heal sick people without the use of common medications.

Furthermore, on 1 Hijri, Syifa binti Abdullah became a Muslim, shortly before the Prophet Muhammad SAW moved to Madinah from Makkah (Nurhadiyanti, 2020). She was the daughter of Fatimah binti Wahab and Abdullah bin Abd Shams. She belongs to Umar RA's tribe, the Bani Adi, and Quraisy (Yaqeen Institute, 2021). Her husband is Abu Hathmah ibn Huzaifah ibn Ghanim al-Quraisy al-Adawi. Another name for Syifa binti Abdullah is Umm Sulaiman, which translates as "mother of Sulaiman" in Arabic. She was blessed with two sons, Sulaiman bin Abu Hathmah and Masruq RA.

Moreover, Syifa binti Abdullah is among the most clever and lucky ladies as she acquired the ability to read and write during a period when most people were in a state of *ummi* (Nisrofah, 2023). According to the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (2023), *ummi* can be defined as uneducated (an illiterate individual). This is an incredible chance that will help spread knowledge to other communities on a larger scale. Finally, Syifa binti Abdullah passed away approximately in the year 20 Hijrah during Umar bin Khattab's caliphate (Nurhadiyanti, 2020). She left with a great record in Islamic history.

### **The Similarity Between Aishah R.A. and Syifa Binti Abdullah**

According to Fatmawati et al., (2020), Islam has provided an esteemed social position for women when it was given the great social responsibility, which is the obligation to enjoin good

and forbid evil. Women are the future generation and leaders who are highly anticipated for their positive contributions. The Prophet Muhammad SAW said:

الْمَرْأَةُ رَاعِيَةٌ عَلَى بَيْتِ زَوْجِهَا وَوَلَدِهِ، فَكُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ

“Women is a guardian and is responsible for her husband’s house and his offspring; and so, all of you are guardians and are responsible for your wards”. (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, 2554)

This can be identified through the life history, leadership, and similarities between these two prominent female scholars, Aishah R.A. and Syifa R.A.

First, the similarity between Aishah and Syifa is that they were both companions who received guidance and narrated many hadiths from the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Based on Nur Saadah and Norullisza (2022), Aishah R.A. held the fourth position among the companions who narrated hadiths from the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Besides, Syifa also learned hadith from the Prophet Muhammad SAW. She narrated several hadiths from the Prophet Muhammad SAW and also from Umar ibn Khattab (Asy Syafi’i, 2023).

Second, Aishah R.A. and Syifa binti Abdullah share similarities in the field of teaching, as they were both teachers who imparted knowledge to their students. Additionally, they were also experts in the fields of medicine and ‘*ruqyah*’, which refers to Islamic healing and spiritual healing practices. Based on Istiqlaliyah (2016), she mentioned that Aishah R.A. was an expert in various fields including *tafsir*, hadith, *tauhid*, *aqidah*, *fiqh*, history, genealogy, Arabic poetry, and even the field of medicine. Thus, Syifa was known as a teacher of reading and writing even before the advent of Islam, so when she embraced Islam, Syifa continued to provide teaching to Muslim women. Because of this, she was referred to as the ‘first female teacher in Islam’. Syifa was also skilled in traditional medicine or ‘*ruqyah*’ (Nisrofah, 2023).

The third similarity is that besides narrating hadith and teaching, Aishah R.A. and Syifa binti Abdullah also endeavored to spread the teachings of Islam and provide advice to the community. Aishah R.A. always corrected the mistakes of the companions or explained what they did not know. This is one of Aishah’s greatest contributions to the Islamic community. She successfully rectified several mistakes made by people in her time (Muhsin & Inah, 2014). According to Widaningsih (2021), Syifa binti Abdullah also participated in spreading Islam and providing advice to the community. Umar bin Khattab greatly valued her opinions and trusted in her wisdom.

In conclusion, the similarities between Aishah R.A. and Syifa binti Abdullah that have been explained can serve as a guide and inspiration for women in modern times. Women who excel in all aspects not only add value to themselves but can also help those around them. Therefore, women of this era need to rise and do good in various fields to not be looked down upon by anyone and also to help achieve the glory of the *ummah* (Nur Saadah & Norullisza, 2022).

## The Differences of Contributions between Aishah R.A. and Syifa Binti Abdullah

### 1. Contributions of Aishah R.A.

According to the treasures and thoughts of Islam, Aishah R.A. is an individual who has played a significant role in the history of Islam's journey until today. As the beloved wife and person closest to the Prophet Muhammad SAW, there are many important things and lessons that Aishah learned. Therefore, Aishah R.A. is regarded as a remarkable individual who did not only assist the Prophet Muhammad in household matters but also as an important companion in community and state affairs. Aside from being the Prophet's second most beloved wife after Khadijah, Aishah has another advantage that stands out, she is appointed as the most jurist woman who understands religion in the Islamic religion, from whom the great Companions also ask for fatwas from her (Rozaimi Ramlee, 2022).

According to Abu Musa Al Ashari, he affirmed Aishah's superiority by saying:

مَا أَشْكَلَ عَلَيْنَا أَصْحَابَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - حَدِيثَ قَطٍ فَسَأَلْنَا عَائِشَةَ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا - إِلَّا وَجَدْنَا عِنْدَهَا مِنْهُ عِلْمًا

“Never was a Hadith unclear to us - the Companions of the Messenger of Allah - and we asked Aishah, except that we found some knowledge concerning it with her.” (*Jami' At-Tirmidhi*, 3883)

Aishah's charm is becoming more and more perfect, as is her intelligence and leadership ability. Aishah R.A. is a very knowledgeable person. She mastered various fields of knowledge such as Ulum Quran, Hadith, jurisprudence, Arabic language, and poetry as a result of his perseverance and seriousness in learning (Abdul Mun'im, 2017). Aishah narrated 2210 hadiths. Her narrations are considered special and unique for the majority of them were directly narrated from the Prophet, and there are more subjects related to domestic affairs than other topics. Aisha's personality was praised and her knowledge was acknowledged, as Zuhri recorded, “If the knowledge of all women and that of the Mothers of the Believers were to be gathered in one place, that of Aisha would be superior” (Nur Saadah, 2016).

In addition to her brain intelligence, Aishah is also known as a generous person. In a story, it is told that Aishah R.A. once received 100,000 dirhams. Then she asked his assistants to distribute the money to the poor without leaving a single dirham for her use. Worldly wealth did not dazzle Aishah R.A. Even though the country's economic situation was very good at the time, Aisyah R.A. chose to live in simplicity, as exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad SAW (Ibanah Suhwardiyah, 2016)

Furthermore, the events of Jamal's war clearly demonstrate that Aishah R.A. is a respected and authoritative figure in leading her team. Although the event was controversial due to her opposition to Ali bin Abi Talib's caliphate, it was an important indication of his ability to mobilise support and solidify his military ranks in the face of what was perceived to be upholding the 'rule of law' following the assassination of Uthman bin Affan (Rizki Amaliah, 2023).

### 2. Contributions of Syifa Binti Abdullah

First, Syifa contributes to Islamic education. She is an excellent and knowledgeable female educator. She taught reading and writing skills to the Muslim women in Medina. In Mecca, Syifa was among a few women who could read and write and only twenty or thirty people could do so. Consequently, when she acquired the skills of reading and writing, it was very rare. She was also one the excellent *al-muhaddithat* because she narrated the hadith directly from the Prophet SAW (Nadwi, 2007).

Besides, she was one of the first female teachers at the time and was also literate. As previously stated, Syifa mastered the art of writing and had been personally requested by the Prophet to teach Hafsa R.A to write. Syifa was also a calligrapher. She just did not know how to write and read. Moreover, she also used to teach people particularly how to do calligraphy. Therefore, the Prophet Muhammad SAW built Syifa binti Abdullah a house at *Al-Kahhalin* as an appreciation for her contributions in the field of education (Bastoni, 2013). She lives the house with his son. Thus, Syifa binti Abdullah is a noblewoman, a female figure who has intelligence and thoughtful opinions.

Second, Syifa RA was the first Muslim woman to hold an official position, appointed by Umar Al-Khattab RA., who was Caliph at the time. During the development and enhancement of the economy in Medina, Umar RA, the Caliph at the time, appointed Syifa as *Qadhi Hisbah* (Abdullah,2020) and Manager of the Medina Market (Mohd Nazim et al., 2013) to ensure that market commerce is done with equity and in compliance with the law (Abdullah, 2021).

Not only that but even Umar Bin Khattab also frequently talked about market matters with Syifa (Bastoni,2013). Additionally, leading the market entails a great deal of responsibility because it requires prudence, trust, and responsibility. Syifa has experience with market management throughout the Prophet's time. Indeed, Syifa RA is not just intelligent, but she can also make a positive impact on the community.

Third, Syifa binti Abdullah is an expert in traditional medicine (*ruqyah*). It's not that surprising that the word "Syifa" refers to medicine or treatment. Her most popular treatment is *Ruqyah Namlah*, which is used to treat skin problems. It is not a spell, instead, it is a prayer to Allah in which she asks for help and healing in this *ruqyah*. According to Nurhadiyanti (2019), Syifa was the first woman to learn *ruqyah*, which dealt with problems connected to the human body rather than jinn.

Syifa RA was a great healer during a time when medicine was still an undeveloped field. When Syifa binti Abdullah RA was with Hafsa RA, Rasulullah SAW entered upon them and stated,

أَلَا تُعَلِّمِينَ هَذِهِ رُفِيَّةَ النَّمْلَةِ كَمَا عَلَّمْتِيهَا الْكِتَابَةَ؟

"Will you not teach (Hafsa R.A.) Ruqyah Namlah as you have taught her writing?" (*Sunan Abi Dawud*)

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the life of Aishah R.A. and Syifa were amazing because of their huge contributions at the Prophet's time and became inspiration in our modern time. Their diverse role has proven that women have an equally significant role as men. Women are able to contribute energy, intellect, expertise, and time to uphold the truth and combat injustice. The contributions of women and the comprehension and exploration of the biographies of women who have made significant contributions to hadith have been elucidated. Moreover, the similarities and comparisons between these female figures can provide the ability to assess the contributions of female figures to Islam in various fields.

The best exemplary role models throughout the ages to be emulated are the women who lived during the time of Prophet Muhammad SAW like Aishah R.A. and Syifa binti Abdullah. Hence, these women can act as inspiration for young women, encouraging them to mirror attributes such as dedication to acquiring knowledge, sharing expertise, discipline, and carrying out responsibilities.

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