

## Female Companions as Role Models for Today's Muslim Women

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### Abstract

A genuine revival and tangible contribution of the Muslim Ummah to humanity will never materialize without the full participation and active empowerment of Muslim women, not only in Islamic scholarship but also in Muslim affairs more broadly. But in order to take a balanced approach to this empowerment, we need to refer to the ultimate example of the female companions of the Prophet, peace be upon him. This article surveys different dimensions of their empowerment from the Sunnah or tradition of the Prophet of Islam, peace be upon him, in order to show how Muslim women today could follow their example. Female companions contributed each in her own unique way, and were role models for Muslim women today in all fields of knowledge and action.

### Approach

It is very important before dealing with any topic from an “Islamic” perspective, to define what we mean by the very term. This is the question of methodology that defines the approach of our research. The true reference to what is Islamic is nothing other than the Word of Allah, the original source and the founding document of Islam, the Quran, and the tradition or *Sunnah* of His Prophet, peace be upon him, who was a living illustration of the Quran.

The question here, however, is *how* do we read the Quran and Sunnah? This is the essential question, and failing to address it adequately results in misguided opinions and incorrect decisions, especially in the area of women and Islam.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, for the purpose of this article, the following is a quick classification of three popular readings that do not fulfill the standards set by the Quran itself as to how it should be read and how we should deal with the Sunnah of the Prophet, peace be upon him.

1. Partial readings: Allah warns us from “partitioning” the Quran and “believing in some of it while rejecting some of it.”<sup>2</sup> When it comes to the topic of equity between men

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<sup>1</sup> For a more in-depth discussion on methodology of reasoning (*ijtihad*) in the Islamic jurisprudence,

<sup>2</sup> For example: “[We punished] the partitioners, who have broken the Quran into unrelated shreds” (15:90–91), “Do you then believe in a part of the Book and disbelieve in the other?” (2:85), and other similar verses.

and women in Islam, we find examples of how some verses or hadith narrations are misread or misunderstood, because of the partial or narrow view with which they were approached. Some verses or narrations are read in isolation from other related and relevant verses and narrations, or without giving due consideration to the context of time or related circumstances. Hence, the outcome is interpretations that contradict the principles of Islam, even though they could still be called “Islamic.” Another partial reading is to read the Quran in isolation from the Sunnah or interpret the Quran in contrary with the (authentic) Sunnah, or vice versa. This reading wrongly considers the Sunnah to be an alternative source of knowledge that could possibly be at odds with the Quranic commands. The Quran, however, confirms that the Sunnah is a *bayān* (illustration) of the Quran. “And We revealed to you [Muhammad] the Remembrance so that you may illustrate to the people what was sent down to them and that they might give thought.” (16:44)

2. Historical readings: In which a historical interpretation of the original sources is taken from a source of one of the schools of Islamic law and considered to be the only possible interpretation, even if it proved to be erroneous. Some contemporary voices reject the re-interpretation of the historical opinions in light of contemporary circumstances. However, the Quran and Sunnah contain numerous commands that prohibit “blind following” of others without proof and independent judgment. Moreover, the “renewal of the religion” is not a new term, but rather a term that was coined by the Prophet, peace be upon him, when he stated: “Verily Allah sends to this ummah (community) at the turn of every one hundred years people who will renew its religion.”<sup>3</sup>
3. Historicist readings: In the name of rejecting stagnation and blind imitation of history, some people take the other extreme of “historicising” all interpretations and even the original sources themselves. Historicisation means the rejection of any everlasting “authority” or reference in the Word of Allah or the commands of His Messenger, peace be upon him. They miss, however, that the Quran and the Prophetic example are not “cultural products” as is human speech or literature. The Quran and Sunnah are revealed knowledge suitable for every place and time.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Abu Dawud (4291) and was verified as *sahih* (authentic) by Al-Sakhawi in *Al-Maqasid Al-Hasanah* (149) and Al-Albani in *Al-Silsilah Al-Sahihah* (599). And the Arabic term “*mann*” in the hadith could be interpreted as “a person” or “people”. I chose people since the evidence of history proved that this renewal throughout the centuries has been carried out by groups of Muslim leaders and scholars and not individuals.

<sup>4</sup> For a more in-depth discussion on postmodern approaches and their problematic methodology, refer to: Jasser Auda, *Maqāsid al-Sharī'ah as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A Systems Approach*, International Institute of Islamic Thought, London-Washington, 2008, in addition to more recent writings.

Therefore, a purpose-based and integrative reading of the Quran and the Sunnah is the approach that we follow in this article. We move beyond partial readings to integrating all related views, contexts and sources into a purpose-based holistic reading. Purposes or the answers to the questions of 'why', represent the higher level of reasoning that resolves the contradicted and integrates the detached, and were well studied throughout the Islamic history under the *maqasid al-Shariah* (purposes of Islamic jurisprudence) branch of knowledge. We also avoid blind following of the historical interpretations by re-reading them in the current context and comparing them to contemporary opinions. Finally, we differentiate between the immutable articles of Islam, which cannot be "historicized" or altered, and the flexible articles, which can and should change with time and circumstances.

### **The role of wife and mother**

Female companions set a high example for women at all times in terms of being good wives and mothers. The prime example of this was the Mothers of the Believers. The Quran mentioned them specifically (verses 33:32-35):

O wives of the Prophet, you are not like anyone among women. If you fear Allah , then do not be soft in speech [to men], lest he in whose heart is disease should covet, but speak with appropriate speech. And abide in your houses and do not display yourselves as [was] the display of the former times of ignorance. And establish prayer and give zakah and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah intends only to remove from you the impurity [of sin], O people of the [Prophet's] household, and to purify you with [extensive] purification. And remember what is recited in your houses of the verses of Allah and wisdom. Indeed, Allah is ever Subtle and Acquainted [with all things]. Indeed, the Muslim men and Muslim women, the believing men and believing women, the obedient men and obedient women, the truthful men and truthful women, the patient men and patient women, the humble men and humble women, the charitable men and charitable women, the fasting men and fasting women, the men who guard their private parts and the women who do so, and the men who remember Allah often and the women who do so - for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward.

The primary example of the Mothers of the Believers was Khadija Bint Khuwailid, may Allah be pleased with her. When angel Jibreel came to Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, for the first time, he was frightened and not sure about the nature of what he is seeing. He rushed home returning from his isolation in the mountain to relate his experience to his wife, Khadija may Allah be pleased with her. As she listened to his account of what happened. "Do not worry," she said, "for by Him who has dominion over Khadijah's soul, I hope that you are the Prophet of this nation. Allah would never humiliate you, for you are

good to your relatives, you are true to your word, you help those who are in need, you support the weak, you feed the guest and you answer the call of those who are in distress”.<sup>5</sup>

His life with his wives, peace be upon him, set an example of ideal couples and families. The following are some examples from the dynamics of his marriage to Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, as narrated in the Sunnah:

Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim narrated after Aisha as well: “Allah's Apostle invited me on a day of Eid to watch the Abyssinians who were playing in the mosque, displaying their skill with spears. He asked: ‘Would you like to watch?’ I answered: ‘Yes’. So I stood behind him and he lowered his shoulder so I can put my chin on it. I did and leaned with my face on his cheek and watched. Eventually, he asked me several times if I wanted to leave and I replied every time: ‘Please wait’. I was not interested in watching, really, but on that day I wanted women especially to know my status with him. Therefore, appreciate a young lady’s keenness to be playful.”<sup>6</sup>

Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, asked the Prophet how he would describe his love for her. The Prophet Muhammad answered, saying: “Like a strong binding knot.” Afterwards, ‘Aisha would jokingly ask, “How is the knot?” The Prophet would answer, “As strong as the first day”.<sup>7</sup>

When Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, was asked: “What did the Prophet use to do in his house?” She replied, “He used to keep himself busy serving his family”.<sup>8</sup>

When one of his companions asked him “who is the most beloved to your heart?” he answered instantly “Aisha”.<sup>9</sup>

### **Populating and maintaining mosques**

The role of female companions was not restricted to their homes, but extended to all fields of action. For example, female companions played a primary role in populating and maintaining the Prophet’s mosque.

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<sup>5</sup> Imam Muslim 160.

<sup>6</sup> Imam Bukhari 445 and Imam Muslim 892.

<sup>7</sup> Narrated by Al-Darqutni (*Lisan Al-Mizan* 1/242) after Malik Ibn Anas, but disapproved of the chain of narrators as weak, except for Imam Malik and Imam Al-Shafie.

<sup>8</sup> Imam Bukhari 676.

<sup>9</sup> Imam Bukhari 3662 and Imam Muslim 2384.

There are dozens of Quranic verses related to mosques, all of which urge all believers who seek guidance, light and knowledge, males and females alike, to frequent mosques. The following are a few examples:

“Say, O Muhammad, ‘My Lord has ordered justice and that you all maintain yourselves in worship of Him at every mosque, and invoke Him, sincere to Him in religion.’” (7:29)

“O children of Adam, take your adornment at every mosque.” (7:31)

“The mosques of Allah are populated merely by those who believe in Allah and the Last Day and establish prayers and give charity and fear nothing except Allah, for it is expected that those are of the rightly guided.” (9:18)

“And the mosques are for Allah, so do not invoke with Allah anyone.” (72:18)

Therefore, female companions participated in a number of activities in the mosque during the time of the Prophet, peace be upon him. The following are examples:

Al-Rubayyi` Bint Mu`awwidh Ibn Afra', may Allah be pleased with her, said that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him sent a person on the morning of Ashura to the villages of Ansar around Medina with this message: “He who got up in the morning fasting he should complete his fast, and he who had had his breakfast in the morning, he should complete the rest of the day in fasting.” So, we henceforth observed the fast on it and, God willing, made our children observe that. We used to go to the mosque and make toys out of wool for the children so that when they felt hungry and wept for food we gave them these toys to distract them, till it was time to break the fast.<sup>10</sup>

Abu Hurairah, peace be upon him, narrated that a black woman, who used to clean the mosque, passed away. When the Messenger, peace be upon him asked about her, they informed him that she had died. He then said, “Why did you not inform me when she died? Guide me to her grave.” So, he approached her grave and offered the funeral prayer for her there.<sup>11</sup>

Anas narrated that the Prophet, peace be upon him saw a spittle on one of the mosque's walls, which made him quite angry. A woman from the Ansar stood up and walked to it, rubbed it off and put some perfume on the wall instead. The Prophet said: “How beautiful this is!”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Imam Bukhari 3/37; and Imam Muslim 2/798. The report quoted here is Imam Muslim's version.

<sup>11</sup> Imam Bukhari, chapter on Expeditions, 416/8, and Imam Muslim, chapter on Jihad, 160/5.

<sup>12</sup> Ibn Khuzaimah 1229, Ibn Majah 762, Nasa'i 797.

There is also ample evidence from the time of the Prophet, peace be upon him to allow *i'tikaf* (staying in the mosque) during Ramadan and in other months. Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her reported: "The Prophet, peace be upon him used to perform *i'tikaf* during the last ten days of Ramadan until he passed away; his wives followed this practice after him."<sup>13</sup>

Aisha also reported that the Prophet, peace be upon him used to practice *i'tikaf* in the last ten days of Ramadan and she used to pitch a tent for him; he would enter it after offering the fajr prayer. Hafsa, may Allah be pleased with her asked the permission of Aisha to pitch a tent for herself and Aisha allowed her. So, Hafsa pitched her tent. When Zainab bint Jahsh, may Allah be pleased with her saw it, she pitched another tent. In the morning the Prophet, peace be upon him noticed the tents. He commented, "Do you think that they intended to do righteousness by doing this?"<sup>14</sup> So, he abandoned *i'tikaf* in that month and observed it later in the month of Shawwal for ten days.<sup>15</sup>

Safiyah bint Huyai, may Allah be pleased with her, wife of the Prophet, peace be upon him narrated that she visited the Messenger, peace be upon him while he was staying in the mosque to observe *i'tikaf* during the last ten nights of the month of Ramadan. She spoke to him for a while and then she got up to return home. The Prophet, peace be upon him got up to accompany her. When they reached the gate of the mosque, two Ansari men passed by. They greeted the Messenger and quickly went ahead. The Prophet said to them, "Do not be in a hurry, She is Safiyah bint Huyai." They exclaimed, "Glory be to Allah."<sup>16</sup>

Imam Muslim mentions that Al-Sha`bi narrated: "We entered upon Fatimah bint Qays, and she said, 'It was announced that the people should gather for prayer, and then I was among those heading for the Prophet's Mosque. I was in the front row of women, which was right behind the last row of men, when I heard the Prophet, peace be upon him saying while he was on the pulpit: 'The cousins of Al-Dary sailed the sea ...'"<sup>17</sup>

Imam Bukhari narrated that Asma' bint Abu Bakr said: "I came to Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, the wife of the Prophet, peace be upon him when the sun had eclipsed,

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<sup>13</sup> Imam Bukhari, chapter on fasting 5/177

<sup>14</sup> Editor's note: according to scholars, this question means, "Is the real purpose of pitching these tents devotion and worship or is it only a matter of wives' rivalry and competition?"

<sup>15</sup> Imam Bukhari, chapter on women *i'tikaf*, 3/48-49.

<sup>16</sup> Imam Bukhari (3/49), chapter on houses of the Prophet's wives, Imam Muslim (4/1712); Al-Baihaqi in *As-Sunan Al-Kubra* (4/529); chapter on woman's visiting her husband in *i'tikaf*; Ibn Khuzaimah (3/349) in his *Sahih*, Chapter on concession (*rukhsah*) for woman to visit her husband in *i'tikaf*; Ibn Hibban in his *Sahih*, chapter on permissibility of woman's visiting her husband in *i'tikaf* during night; and others.

<sup>17</sup> Imam Muslim, the chapter on ordeals, 205/8.

and found out that all people were standing in prayer...when the Prophet, peace be upon him finished the prayer, he thanked and praised Almighty Allah.”<sup>18</sup>

Asma bint Abu Bakr narrates the same story as follows: “The sun eclipsed during the lifetime of the Prophet, peace be upon him...then, I came and entered the mosque, and saw the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him standing up in prayer. I joined him in prayer, but he kept standing up so long that I felt I needed to sit down. Yet, I would notice a weak woman standing next to me, and then I would say to myself, “She is even weaker than me” and I would keep standing ... Then he, peace be upon him bowed down in *ruku* and kept bowing for a long time, and then he raised his head from *ruku* and kept standing up for a very long time. A man approached then and, because of the delay, thought that the Prophet, peace be upon him had not yet offered the *ruku*.”<sup>19</sup>

Imam Bukhari and others narrated that Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her said: “The believing women, covered with their veiling sheets, used to attend the dawn prayer with Allah’s Messenger, and after finishing the prayer they would return to their homes.”<sup>20</sup>

Umm Salamah, the wife of the Prophet, peace be upon him, narrates that during the lifetime of the Prophet, when women had concluded the ordained prayer, they would rise and leave, and the Prophet, peace be upon him would sometimes stay along with the men.<sup>21</sup>

### **The first clinic in history was managed by a female companion**

The first place that is known in human history that could be considered a specialized clinic, was set by a female companion, Rufaydah, may Allah be pleased with her. Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, narrated: “Sa’d Ibn Muaz was wounded on the Battle of the Al-Khandaq (The Ditch) ... Then, the Prophet, peace be upon him set up a tent in the mosque for Sa’d to be able to visit frequently.”<sup>22</sup> Commenting on this particular narration, Ibn Hajar stated that: “The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him actually let Sa’d stay in Rufaydah’s tent near his mosque. She was known for her skills in treating the wounded. The Prophet said, ‘let Sa’d stay in her tent so that I can visit him from a close distance.’”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Imam Bukhari, chapter on ablution, 300/1, and Imam Muslim, chapter on prayer upon eclipse, 32/3.

<sup>19</sup> Imam Muslim, chapter on Prayer upon Eclipse, 32/3.

<sup>20</sup> Imam Bukhari, chapter on Prayer, 195/2 and Imam Muslim, chapter on Masjids, 118/2.

<sup>21</sup> Imam Bukhari, 173/1.

<sup>22</sup> Imam Bukhari, chapter on Expeditions, 416/8, and Imam Muslim, chapter on Jihad, 160/5.

<sup>23</sup> *Fat-h Al-Bary*, 415/8.

### **The first pulpit/*minbar* in history was built by a female companion**

The first structure known in the Islamic history that is an Imam's pulpit/*minbar* was set by a female companion, Fukaihah, may Allah be pleased with her. Jabir, may Allah be pleased with him reported the following incident: The Prophet, peace be upon him used to stand on a tree trunk while he delivered his sermons. One day, a woman from the Ansar said to him, 'O Messenger of Allah! One of my servants is a carpenter. Shall I get him to construct a pulpit for you?' The Prophet, peace be upon him responded, 'Yes'. She did, and the Prophet started using the pulpit. One Friday, while he was delivering a sermon standing on the pulpit, we heard a groaning sound coming out of the tree trunk. The Prophet, peace be upon him commented, 'This trunk is weeping because it misses my standing on it while praising Allah.'"<sup>24</sup>

### **Female companions' actively participating in public events**

Jabir Ibn Abdullah, may Allah be pleased with him, reported according to Imam Bukhari: "I attended *Eid* Prayer with the Messenger of Allah. He started with the prayer before the sermon, without an *adhan* or an *iqamah*. Then, he stood up, and while leaning on Bilal, commanded people to fear Allah and obey His commands. He started with the men and advised them, and then walked towards the women and advised them. He said: 'Give charity' ... Women started giving out their jewelry in charity, throwing their earrings and rings in Bilal's garment."<sup>25</sup>

Moreover, it was narrated from Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her that when Sa'd Ibn Abu Waqqas died, the wives of the Prophet, peace be upon him sent a message to bring his bier into the mosque so that they should offer prayer for him."<sup>26</sup>

Atikah bint Zayd, Umar Ibn Al-Khattab's wife, used to offer the *fajr* (dawn) and the *isha* (night) prayers in congregation in the mosque. Some attendees of the mosque asked her, "Why do you come out for the prayer even though you know that Umar dislikes it? It makes him jealous." She replied, "Then, why does not he forbid me from doing that?" They answered, "What prevents him is the statement of Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him 'Do not prevent women from going to Allah's mosques'."<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Abu Shaybah's *Musannaf*, 319/6.as

<sup>25</sup> Imam Bukhari (1462).

<sup>26</sup> Imam Muslim, chapter on Funerals, 63/3.

<sup>27</sup> Imam Bukhari, chapter on Prayer, 6/2; Ibn Hibban, 327/1, Al-Muwatta', 197/1, Al-Bayhaqi, 199/3, Ibn Khuzaymah, 90/3, Ibn Abu Shaybah, 156/2, Ibn Abu Shaybah, 156/2, and Ahmad on the authority of Abu Hurairah (405/15).



## Female companions' advising leaders

Omar ascended the Prophet's pulpit when he was caliph, and said to the people, "Why do you go to excess in women's dowries even though during the lifetime of the Prophet, the companions used to pay 400 dirhams or less in dowry? If the increase in the dowries were a sign of piety or honour in the sight of Allah, you would have not surpassed the companions in this regard. So, let me not hear that a man paid a woman a dowry of more than 400 dirhams." When he descended from the pulpit, a woman from the Tribe of Quraysh (described in another narration as a flat-nosed, tall woman) intercepted him and said, "O Commander of the Believers! Do you forbid the people to pay more than 400 dirhams as women's dowries?" He answered, "Yes". She replied, "Did you not hear what Allah said in the Quran about dowries?" He wondered, "Which verse do you mean?" She answered, "Did you not hear Allah's saying, 'if you have given one of the women a *qintar* (great amount) in gifts, then do not take back from it anything. Would you take it in injustice and manifest sin?'" (4:20). He said, "O Allah, I ask You for pardon! Everybody is more knowledgeable than Omar... The woman was right while the man erred."<sup>28</sup>

## Female companions and Islamic scholarship

During his lifetime, the Prophet, peace be upon him, used to teach and instruct people in his mosque. His companions followed suit after he passed away. Although there are no reports of women, or men, systematically teaching in the mosque during the Prophetic era, there are tens of thousands of prophetic traditions that were transmitted by women over the early centuries. Female companions, especially the Prophet's wives, were amongst the highest authorities in the Prophet's Sunnah.

As a matter of fact, one of the features of scholarship following the Prophet's time was that male scholars of hadith used to learn hadith reports from female companions and their students. In her excellent book, *Women's Role in Serving Hadith During the First Three Decades*, Amal Qurdash named a number of female hadith narrators who taught great male hadith scholars including Fatimah, daughter of Imam Malik Ibn Anas, Khadijah Umm Muhammad, Zainab Bint Sulaiman al-Hashimiyah, Zainab Bint Sulaiman Ibn Abu Ja'far Al-Mansur, Umm Omar al-Thaqafiyah, Asma Bint Asad Ibn Al-Furat, Sulaiha Bint Abu Na'im, Samanah Bint Hamdan al-Anbaiyah and Abdah Bint Abdulrahman Ibn Mus'ab. Qurdash counted the numbers of female companions from whom great imams narrated hadith as follows:

- Al-Bukhari narrated hadith from 31 female companions in his *Al-Jami*.
- Muslim narrated from 36 female companions in his *Al-Jami*.
- Abu Dawud, in his *Sunan*, narrated from 75 female companions.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibn Kathir's *Musnad Al-Farouq*, 573/2, and Abu Ya'la's *Az-Zawa'id*, 335/2.

- Al-Tirmidhi narrated from 46 female companions in his *Sunan*.
- Al-Nasa'i narrated from 65 female companions in his *Sunan*.
- And Ibn Majah, in his *Sunan* as well, narrated from 60 female companions.

She adds: "It is only after the death of all the wives of the Prophet (s) that narrating hadith from women declined. The wives of the Prophet were frequently visited and referred to by female scholars. However, transmitting hadith by women continued, yet less frequently, until all junior companions, who lived long like Anas, Abdullah Ibn Abu Awfa and Ibn Omar, passed away."<sup>29</sup>

This decrease, observed by the researcher, is actually associated with the decline of Islamic civilization itself. It is also obviously connected with the practice of barring women from going to the mosque in many places.

Yet, the information we have about female Muslim scholars during that golden era reveals the important role that can be played by Muslim women when they engage in the fields of knowledge and education. In a research of historic importance, Mohammad Akram Nadwi compiled information on the female narrators of hadith (*Al-Muhaddithat*) and analyzed their invaluable contribution to what we know about Islam today. The preface, the first volume of a 40-volume biographical dictionary, was published separately in English.<sup>30</sup>

Detailed studies of this work are necessary to draw a full picture of female scholarship along the Islamic history and across the world. However, this is an informative paragraph from the book related to the role of women scholars as teachers:

The women who had knowledge of the religion transmitted that knowledge to men as well as women. Indeed, given that the majority of students of hadith were men, we would expect the majority of the women's students to have been men. Their numbers varied in different periods, but in some periods were very high: for example, al-Dhahabi in his account of Hafiz Abu Abdillah Muhammad ibn Mahmud ibn al-Najjar (d. 643) reports from Ibn al-Sa'ati that '[Ibn al-Najjar's] teachers included 3000 men and 400 women.' It should suffice as evidence of the authority of women in preserving and transmitting the *Sunnah* of God's Messenger that some of the greatest of his Companions and, after them, some of the greatest imams and jurists in the history of Islamic scholarship relied on women teachers.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> *Dawr al-Mar'ah fi khidmat al-Hadith fil Qurun ath-alathah al-awla* (Women's Role in Serving Hadith During the First Three Decades), Amala Qurdash bint al-Husain, Al-Ummah Book, Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, Researches and Studies Center, Qatar, Vol. 70, 1999.

<sup>30</sup> Mohammad Akram Nadwi, *Al-Muhaddithat: The Women Scholars in Islam* (Oxford: Interface Publications, 2007).

<sup>31</sup> *Al-Muhaddithat*/138.

There is no proof that women should not be permitted to teach men and/or women in the mosque. To the contrary, history shows that women's role in Islamic scholarship, especially in the mosques, marked a thriving Islamic civilization and flourishing scholarship in all fields of Islamic knowledge.

## **Conclusion**

The true reference to what is “Islamic” is nothing other than the Word of God, the Quran, and the true example or Sunnah of His Prophet (s), who was a living illustration of the Quran. The Quran and the Prophetic example are not “cultural products” as is human speech or literature. The Quran and Sunnah are revealed knowledge suitable for every place and time and are not subject to “historicization”. The Prophet’s female companions prayed in the Prophet’s Mosque, traded in the local and regional markets, taught Quran and prophetic traditions, gave and raised charity, and fought in the battlefield. One of the features of scholarship following the Prophet's time was that male scholars of hadith used to learn hadith reports from female companions and their male and female students. History also shows that women's role in scholarship marked a thriving Islamic civilization and flourishing scholarship in all fields of knowledge.