An Exploration on the Women *Hadīth* Science Icons of Sixth *Hijrī* Century

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Abstract

Qur'ān keeps knowledge on top of all the human pursuits, and makes its quest binding equally without gender discrimination. In this realm of existence, first school for humanity is the nurturing lap of mother. Humanity thus does not afford to keep women away from education. Throughout Islamic history, women have been contributing to the dissemination of knowledge, alongside male intellectuals, and have played a significant role in shaping future generations. They particularly excelled in the field of *hadīth* and jurisprudence. This review article strives to bring to light the intellectual brilliance of sixth century AH women *muhaddithāts*, who diligently worked to transfer their wealth of wisdom to future generations. Neglecting the contribution of these great ladies is akin to erasing a luminous chapter from human history. Today, Muslim world stands at a crossroads, facing numerous challenges that threaten the very fabric of its society. The lives of *muhaddithāts* and jurists who have illuminated the path of knowledge serve as a beacon of hope for modern day Muslim women. To empower the future Muslim generations, we need to foster a society that honours and appreciates this inspiring legacy.

Keywords

Islamic law, women jurists, women *hadīth* scholars, *muhaddithat*, *hadīth* science.

1. Introduction

Keeping the pursuit of knowledge in the top human preferences, *Qur'ān* asserts to always keep praying "My Lord, increase me in

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knowledge" (Tāhā: 114). It reverberates with the echoes of queries like: "Say, are those who possess knowledge equal to those who do not?' (Az-zumar: 9). The record of situation specific actions/responses of Prophet (ﷺ) is included in *hadīth*. A person who attains expertise in knowledge of *hadīth* records is named as *muhaddith*. For a women *hadīth* scholar it would be *muhaddithah* (Nadwi, 2007, p. 3).

Study of *hadīth* has always been important among Muslims. It is however normal that the level of attention given to almost all bodies of knowledge have been going through variations. In fact, level of attention is a function of how interest in a particular science is motivated and where it makes its space within the wider perspectives of the objectives that education is supposed to serve in the community which is supporting its development (Nadwi, 2007, p. 245).

Prior to the advent of Islam, women faced considerable limitations regarding their rights and autonomy (Mernissi, 1991). Islam recognized their importance by granting them rights in various spheres, including education, inheritance, and social standing. Distinguished figures like 'Ā'ishah bint Abū Bakr played a key role in the narration and interpretation of sayings of Prophet (ﷺ) (Badran, 2013; Haylamaz, 2013). The foremost problem in evaluating the contribution of women in religious knowledge is the general scarcity of formal historical sources. Only brief and concise information is found in biographical dictionaries. The gaps in between the lines are usually filled through historical re-construction (Azad, 2013; Abou-Bakr, 2010). Ruth Roded, for instance, found that dozens of biographical compilations are filled with hundreds of women *hadīth* scholars. An encyclopaedic collection of *muḥaddithāt* being compiled by Mohammad Akram Nadwi has made more than 8000 entries (Azad, 2013). Ibn Asākīr's (d. 571/1175) *Ta'rīkh Damishq* has more than 200 biographical entries, 700 in Ibn Sa'd's book *Tabaqāt al-Kubrā*, 30 in Al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī's *Ta'rīkh Baghdād*, 22 in 'Abd al-Ghafīr al-Fārisī's (d. 529/1134) book *al-Siyāq li-Ta'rīkh Naysābūr*, 12 in Ḥamza al-Sahmī's (d. 427/1035) *Ta'rīkh Jurjān*, and 1543 in Ibn Hajar's *al-Iṣāba fī Tamyīz al-Ṣahāba* (Abou-Bakr, 2003). Richard Bulliet found 7,831 entries in the biographical dictionaries of Baghdad, Nishapur, and Gurgan (Azad, 2013). Appreciating women intellectuals, Imām al-Dhahabī (d.748)

mentions in *Mīzān al-I'tidāl* that he did not find any woman with the blame of falsifying *hadīth* (Sayeed, 2011).

The intellectual role which provided immense space to women and which gave high weightage to their words was the transmision of *hadīth*. Piety, reliability, a good memory, and some knowledge of Arabic are some of the pre-requisites this role demands (Humphreys, 1994). Imām Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī finds that women accomplished greater recognition in *hadīth* science as compared to other branches of Islamic knowledge (Sartain, 1975).

"Seeking knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim" (*Ibn Mājah*). In the early years of Islam, men and women learned directly from Prophet (ﷺ), while sitting with him. Request was forwarded for special sessions for women which was granted (*Sahīh al- Bukhārī; Sahīh Muslim; Musnad Ahmad*) (Khair, 2016). These women were scholars in teaching the sciences of *hadīth* (Abou-Bakr, 2003; Nadwi, 2007). The generation of the Companions witnessed an unparalleled abundance of women *hadīth* transmitters. There had been some decline in the generation of Successors. In fact, the pressing need felt by the knowledgeable of the community necessitated a systematisation of the discipline which actually placed a higher level of check on entry into the field (Farooq, 2020; Khan & Ragab, 1997). Beginning with the mid-fourth *Hijrī* century and gaining momentum in the period between sixth and ninth centuries, compilation of canonical collections stabilised the tradition. It favoured women's re-entry into this domain.

Canonical collections include: The *Muwattā* of Mālik and the *Musnad* of Ahmad. The *"Sahīh Sittah"* – the authenticated six – include the *Sahīhs* of Imam Muslim and Bukhārī, and *Sunans* of Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī, An-Nasā'ī, and Ibn Mājah. The *muhaddith*āt of classical period thus served to perpetuate and authenticate not just single traditions but entire books (Khan & Ragab, 1997). From sixth *Hijrī* century, the number of *muhaddith*āt grew rapidly (Nadwi, 2007, p. 245). This same era brought the destruction of Palestine by the Crusaders, and devastation of the Muslim east by the Mongols (Nadwi, 2007, p. 255). Yet this period glows with rise in *hadīth* scholarship. It is recorded about this period that Imām Hāfiz al-Najjār (578-643 AH) gained knowledge from 400, Hāfiz Ibn

Asākir (d. 571/1175) from 80, Abū Sa‘d al-Sam’anī (d. 562/1166) from 69, and Ibn al-Jawzī from 3 women *hadīth* scholars (Nadwi, 2007, p. 257-258). Women *hadīth* scholars have been supervising the *hadīth* studies of various other scholars including: al-Zuhrī (d. 124/741), Mālik bin Anas (d.179/795), Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d.241/855), Abū Sa‘d al-Sam’anī, Hāfiz Ibn Asākir, Ibn al-Jawzī (d.597/1200), al-Dhahabī, Ibn Hajar al-Asqalānī (d. 852/1448) and many more (Khair, 2016; Nadwi, 2007).

In sixth century AH, Baghdad had a large number of women traditionists including Shuhdah al-Baghdādiah and long lived muhadithah Tajannī al-Wahbāniyyah (d. 575/1179). Most of the *hadīth* scholars of this time benefited from the knowledge of these two ladies. Fātimah al-Juzdāniyyah was the most important *hadīth* scholar in Isfahān at this time (d. 524/1129). The torch of *hadīth* knowledge was carried by Fātimah bint Sa‘d al-Khayr’s student to Damascus and then in Cairo. By revisiting the historical context and achievements of women in early Islamic society, we can foster a more nuanced understanding of their roles and rights within the framework of Islam.

The sixth *Hijrī* century was a time of significant intellectual flourishing in the Islamic world, marked by institutions like madrassahs. Understanding the cultural and scholarly context of that period allows a deeper appreciation of how women scholars operated within those frameworks. The historical study of women’s roles in religious scholarship has contemporary implications. Scholars can inform current debates on gender inclusivity in Islamic scholarship. Extraordinary contribution of sixth *Hijrī* century’s women scholars in *hadīth* transmission challenges gender norms and redefines the landscape of Islamic scholarship. This study explores the legacies of some of the eminent female scholars of this era whose contributions continue to emit radiance till today.

1.1 Methods of *Hadīth* Transmission

Transmission methods include *samā‘, qirā‘ah, al-munāwalah, ijāzah, al-i‘lām al-rāwī, al-mukātabah, al-wijādah, wasiyya,* etc. (Abou-Bakr, 2003; Khair, 2016; Nadwi, 2007). In hearing (*samā‘*) teacher recites *hadīth* to the students. This method allowed women in early Islam to teach *hadīth* to their close relatives. With the compilation of the authentic *hadīth*

books, people started *samā'* of these texts from accomplished scholars of the field. Reading (*al-'ard, qirā'ah*) involves the teacher granting permission to the student to narrate the *hadīth* they have learned. In permission (*ijāzah*), the teacher authorizes the student to narrate the *hadīth*s they have learned. In presentation (*al-munāwalah*), teacher gives his/her original material to the student, or students may bring the *hadīth* material to their shaykh, who then allows him to narrate that material (Abou-Bakr, 2003; Khair, 2016; Nadwi, 2007, p. 87). In correspondence (*al-mukātabah*), the student is provided with a written copy of *hadīth* from his teacher (Nadwi, 2007, p. 88). The term inform (*i'lām al-rāwī*) is used where a student is informed by a teacher that he heard this *hadīth* or this book from so-and-so. Here the student is not permitted to narrate it further (Nadwi, 2007, p. 88). In will (al-wasiyyah) *hadīth* material in original is consigned to a specific individual by a shaykh through a will or other writing at the time of his departure from this world (Nadwi, 2007, p. 88). It is called findng (al-wjādah) when a person discoveres a *hadīth* material or book, and he recognises its author from the handwriting. Then he claims that he has found in the handwriting of so and so. However, in this case the finder cannot say that so and so informed us unless he is provided with an *ijāzah* (Nadwi, 2007, p. 89).

1.2 Women *Hadīth* Science Icons of Sixth *Hijrī* Century

Women *hadīth* intellectuals and jurists played a pivotal role in the sixth *Hijrī* century. They traveled to various Islamic lands to acquire education from scholars and established educational gatherings themselves. Their narrations were documented in jurisprudential books. They had been holding esteemed positions equivalent to the teachers of the nation's great scholars. A brief sketch on some of the great *hadīth* science icons of sixth *Hijrī* century is provided below.

1.3 Shuhdah al-Baghdādīyyah

Fakhr un Nisā Shuhdah al-Baghdādiah's (d. 574/1178) father Abū Nasr Ahmad ibn al-Faraj al-Dīnāwarī was a famous *muhaddith*. She was born in the city of Dinawar, Iran. She belonged to a distinguished lineage, with her father as her first teacher. Under his guidance, she mastered calligraphy. She had the opportunity of learning from great luminaries

such as Abū al-Husayn and Ahmad bin Abd al-Qādir. She studied the whole of *Muwattā* of Imām Mālik (Nadwi, 2007, p. 123). Al-Safadī (d. 764/1362) notes her extensive knowledge of *hadīth*, her piety, God-wariness, benevolence and calls her with titles of the calligrapher, the pride of womanhood, a *muhaddithah* of Iraq with high isnād (Nadwi, 2007, p. 55-56). It is quoted by Al-Dhahabī that Imām Abū Muhammad ʻAbd al-ʻAzīz ibn Dulaf (d. 637) studied al-Qaʻnābī's version of *Muwattā* of Mālik from her (Nadwi, 2007, p. 203). Her father (d. 506/1112) was an essential agent in her success. He migrated from Dinawar to Baghdad and established his reputation there as a Shāfiʻī *muhaddith* affiliated with the ruling elite (Sayyeed, 2013, p. 152).

Shuhdah's transmissions from Jaʻfar bin Ahmad al-Sarraj (d. 500/1106: an acclaimed Hanbalī *hadīth* transmitter, poet, and jurist) were also vital to her reputation. He was praised by al-Dhahabī for his profound knowledge in a broad spectrum of sciences. As Ibn al-Jawzī reports that the last one to transmit from al-Sarraj was Shuhdah al-Baghdādiyyah. He says that he read al-Sarraj's book *Masari' al-'Ushshāq* with her. Another of Shuhdah al-Baghdādiyyah's prominent Shaykhs was Abū Bakr al-Shāshī (d. 507/1113): a leading jurist of the Shāfiʻī madhhab and a successor to Abū Hāmid al-Ghazzālī's (d. 505/1111) post in the prestigious Nizāmiyya. Identifying her as someone who transmits from al-Shāshī, al-Dhahabī distinguishes her with the honourific name of Fakhr un Nisā (Sayyeed, 2013, p. 154).

Shuhdah al-Baghdādiyyah was provided with Abū Bakr Ahmad ibn Ibrahīm al-Ismaīlī's book *al-Mu'jam* by Abū Mansūr ibn al-Husayn. She studied Ibn Shādhān's *Mashyakhah* with Abū Ghālib ibn al-Hasan al-Baqillānī. Al-Baghdādiyyah had the honour of studying the distinguished *Juz' ibn 'Arafah* with its highest narrator Ibn Bayān; *Juz' Hanbal* with Abū l-Hasan ibn a1-Tuyūrī, and *Juz' Hilāl al-Haffār* with Tirād (Nadwi, 2007, p. 129-134).

Exceptional oratory, diverse knowledge, and literary prowess further elevated Fakhr un Nisā's status in the realm of *hadīth*. She established a prestigious institution along the banks of the Tigris. Among her notable disciples was Ibn al-Jawzī, a testament to her enduring legacy. She lived to over 90 years. Ibn al-Jawzī reports that her funeral prayers were

conducted in Jami‘ al-Qasr mosque of Baghdad (Sayyeed, 2013, p. 159). Dignitaries and scholars participated in her funeral and remembered her contributions and achievements.

Famous Students of Shudah al-Baghdadiyya:

Her students include Abū l-Ma‘āli Ahmad al-Nahrawānī (d. 629/1231), Abū Ismā‘īl Ibrāhīm al-Maqdisī al-Dimashqī (d. 614/1217), Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Baghdādī (d. 622/1225), Abū l-‘Abbās Ahmad al-Sūfī (d. 639/1241), Abū Muhammad Ismā‘īl al-Mamūnī, Abū Muhammad Ismā‘īl al-Jawharī (d. 631/1233), Abū Mansūr ‘Abd al-Mālik ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (d. 602/1205), Abū Tālib ‘Abd al-Latīf ibn Muhammad Ibn al-Qubbbāytī (d. 641/1243), Shaykh Abū l-Fadl Ilyas al-Shurūtī (d. 601/1204), Abū ‘Abdillah al-Husayn al-Mawsilī (d. 622/1225), Abū l-Qāsim ‘Alī al-Hāshimī (d. 625/1227), Abū Muhammad Talhah al-Hanbalī (d. 593/1196), Abū l-Qāsim ‘Abd al-Rahīm Al-Jīlī (d. 606/1209), Abū Bakr ‘Abdullah al-Tahhān (d. 623/1226), Qaysar ibn Kumushtkīn (d. 607/1210), Abū l-Fath ‘Abdullah al-Sāmarrī (d. 636/1238), Abū Jafar ‘Abdullah al-Hāshimī (d. 622/1225), Abū Bakr ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Hanbalī (d. 630/1232), Abū l-Qāsim al-Diya ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Qurashī (d. 616/1219), Abū l-Faraj ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Ansārī (d. 634/1236), Abū Bakr Muhammad al-Tāliqānī (d. 614/1217), Abū Muhammad ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Baghdādī (d. 637/1239), al-Muwaffaq Abū Muhammad ‘Abd al-Latīf al-Mawsilī (d. 629/1231), Abū l-Qāsim ‘Ubaydullah al-‘Azajī (d. 619/1222), Abū l-Ma‘alī ‘Ubaydullah al-Naghūbī (d. 622/1225), Abū l-Futuh ‘Uthman al-Mas‘ūdī (d. 636/1238), Abū l-Hasan ‘Alī al-Tilmisānī (d. 599/1202), Abū l-Hasan ‘Alī al-Sulamī (d. 602/1205), Abū Hafz ‘Umar al-Dimashqī (d. 600/1203), Abū l-Hasan ‘Alī al-Jawzī (d. 630/1232), Abū ‘Abdillah Muhammad al-Farghānī (d. 623/1226), Abū l-Ma‘alī Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Baghdādī (d. 627/1229), Abū l-Hasan Muhammad al-Irbilī (d. 618/1221), Abū ‘Abdillah Muhammad al-Zabībī (d. 608/1211), Abū l-Barakāt Muhammad al-Ansārī (d. 600/1203), Abū Nasr Muhammad al-Bayyi‘ (d. 593/1196) (Nadwi, 2007, p. 156-178).

2. Fātimah bint Sa‘d al-Khayr

Umm ‘Abdulkarīm Fātimah (d. 600/1203) was an exceptional scholar of her time. Her father, Sa‘d al-Khayr (d. 541/1146), was an exceptional

scholar. She developed a keen interest in the knowledge of *hadīth* from him. In 529/1134, she had the honour of listening to the book *Al-Jami' lī akhlāq al-rāwī wa ādāb al-sāmi*' by Khatīb Baghdādī along with her father (Nadwi, 2007, p. 93). Hāfiz Dhahabī called her with the titles of Al-Jalīlah, Al-Masnadah, Al-Shaykha. Her notable teachers include: Sa'd al-Khair, Abū Mansūr al-Qazzāz (d. 535/1140), Abū Ghālib bin al-Banna' (d. 527/1132), Yahyā bin al-Banna' (d. 531/1136), Fātimah Jūzdānia (from whom she listened to *Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabīr*), Abū 1-Qāsim Hibatullah ibn Muhammad (major narrator of *Musnad Ibn Hanbal*), and Abū 1-Qāsim Zāhir ibn Tāhir al-Shahāmī (Nadwi, 2007, p. 95). Al-Dhahabī quotes that she saw much honour and wealth but it could not distract her from pursuit of knowledge. Till deaath, she had been actively disseminating her knowledge of *hadīth*. Muhammad ibn Ismā'īl learned from *Musnad Abi Ya'lā*, *Hadīth al-Khiraqī, Ziyādāt Amālī Imām Mālik*, and other works and crried this knowledge to his home city (Nadwi, 2007, p. 95-96).

Fātimah was married to Ibn Najā al-Wā'iz. Both went to to Damascus, and later on settled in Egypt. Her presence inspired a new era of *hadīth* science among the women of Egypt. A large number of scholars were those who were granted permission of narration from Fātimah. Some of her notable disciples were: Hāfiz Dia al-Maqdisī (d. 643/1245), Abū 'Abdullah Khatīb Mardā (d. 656/1258), Muhammad bin al-Shaykh al-Shatibī, Abū Mūsa' bin al-Hāfiz , 'Abdullah bin Alan, Zakaria al-Dīn 'Abdul 'Azīm (d. 656/1258), and Muhammad bin Muhammad bin al-Wazan. She passed away in Cairo in 600/1203 and was buried in Al-Maqtam (Shaukat, 2017, p. 513-514).

3. Fātimah bint Abdillah al-Jūzdāniyyah

Fātimah bint 'Abdillah al-Jūzdāniyyah learned both Mu'jams of al-Tabarānī from Ibn Rīdhah: most famous narrator of these books (Nadwi, 2007). She herself became the narrator of these two books and most of the scholars of that time narrate these books through her. It is recorded that Hāfiz Diya al-Dīn al-Maqdisī studied the Mu'jam al-Saghīr of al-Tabarānī with As'ad ibn Abi l-Futūh, who studied it with Fātimah al-Jūzdāniyyah (Nadwi, 2007, p. 208). *Hadīth* learners from around the Islamic world came there in order to study *hadīth* with Fātimah (Nadwi, 2007, p. 271-72).

3.1 Fātimah bint Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Samarqandī

Fātimah's (d. 540/1145) father Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Samarqandī authored the book *Tuhfat al-fuqahā'*. He was a great *muhaddith* and jurist. Her husband 'Ala' al-Dīn Abū Bakr ibn Mas'ūd al-Kāšānī authored the book *Badā'i' al-Sanā'i'*. It is documented that she had a good grip on the knowledge of Hanafī madhhab. Al-Kāšānī sometimes would have doubts in writing fatwas. He would consult with her for correction and explanation (Nadwi, 2007, p. 144).

3.2 Umm al-Khayr Fātimah hint Abī l-Hasan 'Alī ibn al-Muzaffar al-Baghdādīyyah

Umm al-Khayr Fātimah hint Abī 1-Hasan 'Alī al-Baghdādīyyah (d. 532/1137) had the honour of studying the book *Gharīb al-hadīth* written by Abū Sulayman al-Khattābī with Abū l-Husayn 'Abd al-Ghafīr al-Fārisī. She studied *Sahīh al-Bukhārī* with Abū l-Husayn 'Abd al-Ghafīr al-Fārisī (Nadwi, 2007, p. 117-118). Umm al-Khayr Fātimah was also a famous teacher of *Sahīh Muslim* (Nadwi, 2007, p. 202).

3.3 Other Distinguished *Hadīth* Scholars of Sixth Century *Hijrī*

Āminah bint Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Dimishqiyyah (d. 595/1198) had the opportunity of studying *hadīth* science with Abū Muhammad Abd al-Karīm ibn Hamzah and her grandfather Qādī Abū 1-Mufaddal Yahyā ibn 'Alī al-Qurashī. Āminah's father provided her with a copy of the book of *Sunan of Abū Dāwūd*. She was honoured with reading part of *Sunan of Abū Dāwūd* with 'Abd al-Karīm ibn Hamzah. Many other scholars along with Qādī Muhyi l-Dīn al-Qusī studied *hadīth* with her (Nadwi, 2007, p. 257-258).

The renowned *hadīth* scholar Umm al-Kīram Karīmah daughter of Ahmad al-Marwaziyyah (d. 465/1072) is from one of the most famous narrators of *Sahīh of Imām Bukhārī* (Nadwi, 2007, p. 57). She was much sought after for her high isnād. In quest of hadith knowledge, she travelled to Isfahan, Sarakhs, Palestine, and Hijāz (Makkah). She had the honour of studying the *Sahīh of Imām Bukharī* with Abū l-Haytham al-Kushmihānī. She also studied with 'Abdullah ibn Yūsuf al-Asbahānī and Zāhir ibn Ahmad Sarakhsī (Nadwi, 2007, p. 75). The version of *Sahīh al-Bukhārī* which was used by Āminah al-Dimashqiyyah has always been particularly

popular. It was identical to the one which her Shaykh al-Kushmihānī had. *Hadīth* seekers from around the world came to her in Makkah and would hear the whole *Sahīh* from her (Nadwi, 2007, p. 57).

Zaynab al-Shi'riyyah (d. 615/1218) narrated *Musnad al-Sarraj*. Sayyidah al-Mārāniyyah narrated *Musnad al-Sarraj* from her. Abū l-Fath ibn Sayyid al-Nās studied it with Umm Muhammad Sayyidah bint Mūsa' ibn 'Uthmān al-Mārānī. He affirmed that four Shaykhs: Abū Rawh 'Abd al-Mu'izz al-Harawī, Abū Bakr al-Saffār, Zaynab daughter of 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Shi'riyyah, and Ismā'īl al-Qārī narrated to them (Nadwi, 2007, p. 207). Fākhirah al-Baghdādīyyah narrated the book *Forty Hadīths* of Hasan ibn Sufyān al-Nasawī. It is written by Hāfiz Diya al-Maqdisī that he read this with Mu'ayyad al-Tusī, who actually read al-Nasawī's book with Fākhirah (Nadwi, 2007, p. 209).

Shaykhah Asmā' daughter of Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Dimishqiyyah (d. 595/1198) had the opportunity of studying *hadīth* with Abū Muhammad 'Abd al-Karīm al-Sulamī and the Qādī Abū l-Mufaddal Yahyā al-Qurashī who was serving in her home town (Nadwi, 2007, p. 102). Umm al-Hayā Hafsah daughter of Abi 'Abdillah Ahmad al-Baghdādīyyah (d. 612/1215) learnt *Sahīfah* of Hammām ibn Munnabih (d. 131/748) from Abū l-Fadl Muhammad al-Urmawī (Nadwi, 2007, p. 109-116).

Umm al-Khayr Halīmah daughter of al-Hāfiz ibn Asākir studied *Juz' 'Ali ibn Muhammad al-Himyarī* with her father in 541 AH. The great Shaykhah of high esteem Tajannī daughter of 'Abdillah al-Wahbāniyyah (d. 575/1179) studied *Amālī al-Mahāmilī* and hadīth al-Mukharran ī wal Marwazī with Husayn ibn Ahmad ibn Talhah al-Ni'ālī. Tajannī studied *Juz' Hilal* with Tirād ibn Muhammad al-Zaynabī, who was provided with it by its author (Nadwi, 2007, p. 109-116). Shaykhah Azīzah daughter of Abi l-Hasan 'Alī (d. 600/1203) was provided with complete book *al-Kifāyah fī Qawānīn al-Riwāyah* of Abū Bakr al-Khatīb (d. 463/1070) by her grandfather. He received it from Abū Bakr al-Khatīb himself (Nadwi, 2007, p. 117-118).

Fātimah daughter of al-Mubārak had the honour of studying Imām al-Bukhārī's *al-Ta'rikh al-Kabīr* in 503 AH with Hāfiz Abū l-Ghanā'im al-Narsī. Sitt al-Taraf duaghter of al-Imām Abū 1-Qāsim 'Abd al-Rahmān

al-Tinnīsī had the opportunity of studying part of *Tā'rikh Jurjān of al-Sahmī* (d. 427/1035) with al-Imām Abū l-Qāsim – her father – in 597 AH (Nadwi, 2007, p. 117-118). In 529 AH, Rabī'ah daughter of Sa'd al-Khayr read *al-Jāmi' li-Akhlāq al-Rāwī wa ādāb al-Sāmi'* with Abū l-Qāsim al-Mubārak ibn al-Buzūrī and *al-Du'afa' wal Matrūkīn* with Imām Abū Mansūr Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Mālik (Nadwi, 2007, p. 117-118).

Umm al-Husn Kamāl daughter of al-Hāfiz Abi Muhammad 'Abdillah (d. 558/1162) studied *Khatīb al-Baghdadī's Taqyīd al-'ilm* with her father. Asma' daughter of Abī Bakr ibn Mūsa' ibn al-Khallāl had the opportunity of studying *Su'alat al-Hāfiz al-Silafī* with Shaykh Imām Abū l-Fad1 Ja'far al-Hamadhānī in the year 635 AH (Nadwi, 2007, p. 117-118). Umm al-Fadl Zaynab bint Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm al-Qaysī (d. 610/1213) studied *al-Asmā' al-Mubhamah fil-Anbā' al-Muhkamah of Khatīb al-Baghdādī* with Imām Abū l-Fath Nasrullah ibn Muhammad al-Misīsī (Nadwi, 2007, p. 117-118). The great Shaykhah of Isfahan, Umm al-Bahā' Fātimah daughter of Abī l-Fadl al-Asbahānī (d. 539/1144) studied *Sahīh al-Bukhārī* with Sa'īd al-'Ayyār (Nadwi, 2007, p. 124-125).

Umm al-Haya Zuhrah daughter of Muhammad al-Anbārī (d. 633/1235) was honoured to study *Musnad Musaddad ibn Musharad* with great *muhaddith* Yahyā ibn Thābit ibn Bundār. Asmā' bint Ibrāhīm al-Abahāniyyah (d. 630/1232) studied *Musnad 'Abd ibn Humayd* with 'Abd al-Awwal al-Harawī (Abū l-Waqt). 'A'yishah daughter of Ma'mar ibn 'Abd al-Wāhid al-Asbahāniyyah (d. 607/1210) received Abū Ya'lā's *Mu'jam* from Sa'īd al-Sayrafī (Nadwi, 2007, p. 129-134). Fākhirah al-Baghdādīyyah learnt Hasan ibn Sufyān *al-Nasa'ī's al-Arba'ūn* from 'Abd al-Ghafīr al-Fārisī. Umm al-Bahā' Fātimah bint Abi l-Fadl Muhammad al-Baghdādī (d. 539/1144) received al-Jawzaqī Muhammad ibn 'Abdillah's (d. 388/988) *al-Arba'ūn* from Abū 'Uthmān Sa'īd al-Sūfī. Umm al-Diya' Sitt al-Jalīl daughter of Abī 1-Husayn Muhammad al-Warkānī studied *Juz' Luwyn* with Abū Bakr ibn Majah. Umm al-Bahā' Fātimah daughter of Abī l-Fadl Muhammad al-Baghdādī (d. 539/1144) received *Juz' al-Baytūta* from Sa'īd al-Ayyār. Nūr Sittī daughter of 'Abd al-Karīm al-Rāzī studied *Kitāb Thawāb al-a'mal* of 'Abd a1-Rahmān ibn Hātim al-Rāzī with 'Abū l-Hasan 'Alī ibn 'Abdillah al-Bayādī (her grandfather). Umm al-Hayā Zuhrah daughter of Muhammad al-Anbārī (d. 633/1235) studied *Juz' al-*

Bānyāsī with Ibn a1-Battī. Umm ‘Abd al-Hakam Sitt al-‘Ibad al-Misriyyah (d. 616/1219) studied *al-Khila‘iyyat* with its renowned narrator Ibn Rif‘ah (Nadwi, 2007, p. 129-134).

In the sixth *Hijrī* century, Bibi Safriyya bint Qādī Ya‘qūbb bin Sulaymān emerged as a prominent scholar. She acquired the art of *hadīth* from her family. She had been arranging *hadīth* classes for many students (Hashmi, 2000, p. 252). Bibi Shams al-Dhahabīyyah bint Shaykh Muhammad bin ‘Abdul Jalīl (505-579 AH) was a famous scholar and Sūfī of the sixth AH century from Damascus. After gaining knowledge of *hadīth* through hard work, she inclined towards Sūfism. She acquired Sūfi teachings from Shaykh Dia al-Dīn Abū al-Najīb Suharwardī (Al-Hashmi, 2000, p. 233).

Bibi Taqiyya Shamia bint Abū al-Faraj (505-579 AH) was known for her exemplary character. She excelled in various conventional sciences, particularly mastering the field of *hadīth*, obtaining knowledge from prominent scholars of her time, including Abū Tahir Ahmad bin Muhammad Salafī Isfahanī. She was excellent in poetry as well. Her teaching of *hadīth* enlightened many hearts (Hashmi, 2000, p. 256).

Umm Khayr Nisā Boriya (d. 533/1138) was a woman of exemplary character, deeply devoted to the *Qur’ān* and charitable deeds. She imparted *Qur’ān*ic education to children and had a fervent interest in *hadīth* studies. Fātimah bint Husayn (d. 521/1127) was a devout woman dedicated to worship. She had the honour of hearing *hadīth* from Abū Ja‘far bin Muslimah, Abū Bakr Khatīb, and others (Shaukat, 2017, p. 49). Umm Abdullah Hūr Sati bint Abū al-Fath Nasr Sarkhasī (d. 542/1147) served in the field of *hadīth* in Sarkhas. Her family was renowned for their knowledge in *hadīth* (Shaukat, 2017, p. 38). Umm al-Khair Fatūh (d. 625/1227) was known for her noble character. She rendered her services in the field of hadith (Shaukat, 2017, p. 51). Umm Khair (526/1131) transmitted parts of Hassan bin Sufyan’s book Al-Arba‘īn and Amalī of Hāfiz Abū Ahmad Hakīm, as well as portions of *Hadīth* Abdan al-Jawaliqī. She devoted her life to acquiring knowledge without marrying. Her father and brothers were scholars (Al-Salman, 1994, p. 442).

Some of the other distinguished *hadīth* scholars include: Shaykhah Khadījah bint Hāfiz Abū Tahir Ahmad al-Salafī (d. 623/1226), Umm

Hayāt Farah bint Quratāsh al-Awfī from Baghdad (d. 598/1201), Umm-ul-ulā Atka bint Hāfiz Abū Alā Hasan Hamdānia (d. 609/1212), Umm ʻAbdur Rahmān Sayyidah Kutbah bint Abū Al-Baqā Yahyā Baghdādī (d. 611/1214), Um Hayyah Hafsah bint Ahmad Baghdādiah (d. 612/1215), Qurt al-Ayn bint Yaʻqūb Baghdādia (d. 624/1226), Umm Alwahid Safiyah bint Abdul Jabbar Baghdādī (d. 623/1226), Umm Fadl Lubabah bint Al-Shaykh Abū Al-ʻAbbās Ahmad Baghdādī (d. 625/1227), Fātimah bint Abū Bakr bin Mawhab bin ʻAbdul Mālik (d. 637/1239), Shaykhah Umm Habibah ʻĀ'ishah bint Hāfiz Abū Ahmad Muammar Asfahānī (d. 617/1220), Umm al-Nūr Ayn al-Shams bint Ahmad Thaqafī (d. 610/1213), Umm Muʻīd Zainab bint Shaykh ʻAbdul Rahmān from Nishapur (d. 615/1218), Shaykhah Fātimah bint Hasan from Hamadān (d. 617/1220), From Damascus, Shaykh ah Umm Al-Fadl Zainab bint Ibrāhīm Qaysī (d. 610/1213), Shaykhah Um Muhammad Rabʻia bint Ahmad al-Muqdisīyyah (d. 620/1223), Shaykhah Zahidah bint Muhammad al-Muqdisīyyah (d. 631/1233). These esteemed women scholars contributed significantly to the preservation and dissemination of *hadīth* knowledge (Al-Salman, 1994, p. 38 & 54).

3.4 Distinguished Sixth Century *Hijrī* Women Jurists

Born in Cordoba, Bibi Umm al-Hana holds a distinguished position in the sixth century AD jurists. Her father Abū Muhammad ʻAbdul Haq bin Atiyya, was a renowned jurist and Qādī of his time. He paid a pivotal role in nurturing her expertise, particularly in jurisprudence. She also excelled as a prolific poet and writer. She was an intelligent, cultured, polite, and virtuous lady. Her brother, Abū Muhammad Hamza, was also among the scholars of his time. She authored an esteemed book titled *Al-Qubūr wal Muhtazirīn*. She left this world in the late sixth century AH and buried in the vicinity of Cordoba (Hashmi, 2000, p. 251).

Umm ul Walid Al-Kalabiyyah was the daughter of a distinguished scholar from Andalusia. She pursued knowledge zealously under her father's guidance. She became a prominent jurist, earning the title of Qādī Al Qudā (Shaukat, 2017, p. 516). Khadijah daughter abīrī (d. 570/1174) exemplified herself in jurisprudence and *hadīth*. Her mother, Fakhru un Nisā, was a woman of exemplary character. She read *hadīth* with

prominent scholars of her time, further imparting knowledge of jurisprudence and narrating *hadīth*.

Hafsah bint Abū Imrān Mūsa' al-Sanhajī was born in 519 AH. Her father was an esteemed Qādī of Andalusia. She was married to Qādī Abū Bakr Muhammad Al-Ghasani Al-Marshani. She was regarded as an expert in Islamic inheritance law. She passed away in Granada and was buried in the Bab al-Baira cemetery (Shaukat, 2017, p. 517). Bibi Zainab bint 'Abdul Rahmān (524-615 AH) dedicated her life to acquiring knowledge, particularly in jurisprudence, and became known as one of the leading jurists of her time. She was granted authorization from the 'Abbasid caliph to establish a school in Baghdad (Hashmi, 2000, p. 238).

'Afifa bint Ahmad al-Fānī (d. 606/1209) was also a scholar who studied under Fātima Jūzdāniyyah. She had *samā'* from Fātimah of *Al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr* and *Al-Mu'jam al-Saghīr* by al-Tabarānī, and *Kitāb al-Fitan* by Naeem ibn Hammād. Ibn Nuqta also heard some *hadīth* narrations from 'Afīfah. Fātimah bint Ustad Abū 'Alī Daqqāq (d. 524/1129) had the honour of *samā'* from Abū al-Barakat Abdullah Faradī some portions of *Musnad Abi Awanah*. 'Ā'ishah bint Mamr (d. 607/1210) studied and transmitted narrations from Sa'īd bin Abū Rijaa Sairfī. Atika bint Hāfiz Abū ul 'ula Hasan (d. 609/1212) transmitted narrations from Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī and Abū Bakr Hibtullah bin Al-Faraj. She completed the entire book of *Sunan* in Baghdad (Al-Salman, 1994, p. 92).

Hamda bint Wasiq al-Haytiyya (466-621 AH) was one of the most famous scholars and jurists of her time. Her circumstances are mentioned in the *Masha'ir ul Nisa*. She obtained her initial education from her father, emphasizing the importance of *hadīth* and jurisprudence. She acquired further knowledge from other scholars, including the famous traditionist Abū Bakr Ahmad al-Hulwani and the renowned jurist Imām al-Sama'anī. She went to Medina and then settled in Baghdad, where she continued to benefit from scholars and jurists. She organized gatherings for preaching and guidance (Bhatti, 2012, p. 213-215).

3.5 Conclusion

Humanity's first school is the nurturing lap of a mother. Throughout Islamic history, the role of women scholars in dissemination of knowledge

has not only been complementary but also exemplary, spanning various fields such as mathematics, medicine, science, arts, calligraphy, warfare, and trade. They excelled particularly in the field of *hadīth* and jurisprudence. They have been the bearers of the legacy of knowledge from generation to generation. Women have contributed prominently to the compilation and narration of *hadīth*s. Efforts have been made to recognize the scholarly services of these women *hadīth* scholars and jurists of the fifth and sixth *Hijrī* centuries. Women in religious fields have been keeping prominent positions. Eminent *hadīth* shaykhs obtained knowledge of hadith from women *hadīth* scholars in the past. This review article sheds light on the hadith science icons of sixth century AH.

Incorporating the voices of women *hadīth* and jurisprudence scholars into modern Muslim jurisprudential texts is essential for demonstrating the depth and richness of Islamic jurisprudence. The science of *hadīth* is also critical component of Islamic studies. Neglecting the contributions of women to Islamic knowledge is akin to erasing a luminous chapter from the history. We must bring to light the significant achievements of remarkable women in Islam, who have been obscured by the passage of time and the upheavals of war and politics. Addressing the neglect of women's roles in educational institutions and social circles can have a profound and far-reaching impact.

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