

The Role of 'Āisha in the Transmission and Critique of Hadīth

Āiše'nin Hadīs Rivāyeti ve Tenkītindeki Rolü

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Öz

Bu makale, Hazreti Āiše'nin hadīs ilmindeki rolünü ele almaktadır. Hazreti Āiše, Hazreti Peygamber'in eşlerinden en genç olanıdır ve uzun süre boyunca ona eşlik etmiştir. Hz. Peygamber'in hayatının her ince ayrıntısını koruyabilen keskin hafızasıyla sahabe içinde öne çıkmış ve müksirûn arasında önemli ve seçkin bir konuma sahip olmuştur. O, sahabe ve tabiîn için her zaman birinci dereceden önemli bir kaynak olması nedeniyle hadīs rivâyetinde merkezî bir rol oynamıştır. Onun rivâyetleri üzerinde yapılan titiz incelemeler, onun aktardığı hadīslerin diğer râvîlerin rivâyetlerinde nadiren bulunan bilgileri içerdiği sonucunu göstermektedir. O sadece bir râvî değil, aynı zamanda döneminin büyük bir müfessiri, muhaddisi ve fakihiydi. Sahabe, bir hadīsı araştırmak ve tasdik etmek, bir âyetin tefsîrini ve İslâmî bir hükümün izahını öğrenmek için onu ziyaret ediyorlardı. Dahası, Hazreti Āiše, sahabenin Hazreti Peygamber'e isnad ettikleri rivâyetleri de ilmî bir yöntemle eleştirmiştir. Eleştirileri hakkında yapılan ayrıntılı incelemeler, ona bir rivâyet ulaştığında veya bir hadisin sıhhati sorulduğunda, onu Kur'ân-ı Kerim'e, sahih hadislere, tarihi gerçeklere ve aklî kıyasa arz ettiğini göstermektedir. Nakledilen hadīsler, bu kıstaslardan birine ters düştüğünde o, bu konudaki endişesini göstermekte ve bu çalışmada açıklayıcı örneklerle tartışıldığı gibi, râvînin anlayışını veya hafızasını sorgulamaktaydı.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hadīs, Āiše, Rivâyet, Yöntem, Karşılaştırma, Tenkît.

Abstract

This article deals with the role of 'Āisha in the science of hadīth. She was the younger wife of the Prophet peace be upon him and accompanied him for a long time. She has been distinguished with the sharp memory among Prophet's companions, that preserved every tiny detail of his life and got a prominent position among the muksirûn al-hadīth. She played a pivotal role in the transmission of hadīth, hence, she was the primary source of referring to the Prophet's companions and their successors. It is concluded from a thorough review of her narrations that her hadīths were contained those pieces of information which rarely found in the narrations of other transmitters. She was not a transmitter solely, but she was also a great mufassira, muhaddītha, and faqīha of her time. The companions were visiting her for the investigation and attestation of a hadīth, the exegesis of a Quranic verse, and the explanation of an Islamic provision. Moreover, she criticised the narrations of fellow Prophet's companions that they attributed to the Prophet peace be upon him with a scientific method. A detailed study of her critique showed that whenever she was informed by a narration and asked for attestation she was presenting it to the Holy Qurān, the authentic hadīth, the proven history, and qiyās al-'Aqlī. If there was any conflict among the transmitted hadīth with these sources, she was showing her

concern about it and questioning the understanding or the memory of the narrator, which are discussed with explanatory examples in this study.

Keywords: *Hadīth, 'Āisha, Transmission, Methodology, Comparison, Critique.*

Extended Summary

This study highlighted that 'Āisha was bestowed with a sharp memory and curious nature which has led to her vast knowledge of the *Holy Qurān* and Prophet's *hadīth*. It is summarised from her biographical pieces of information that, she was born in the fifth year of the Prophethood, and has the honor of the third and youngest wife of the Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him. She is one of those pious Muslims whose ears have never heard the sound of idolatry and polytheism and opened their eyes to Islam. She grew up in a house where Islam was not strange for householders. She was listening to the *Holy Qurān* since childhood because her father was a famous reciter. Moreover, she was brought up in a prosperous and educated family, her father was one of the richest merchants and educated people of *Makkah* and was considered an expert on '*Ilmu'l-Ansāb* and ancient Arabic poetry among his contemporaneous, It is concluded from various incidents that *Abū Bakr* was very strict in the education of his children, even after '*Āisha's* marriage, whenever he noticed something wrong in her dealing, attitude, or irresponsibility in her everyday life, he has been scolded her, that had a great impact on her personality and education. Whenever she tied the knot with the Prophet peace be upon him then got the opportunity of witnessing the revelation of the *Holy Qurān*. Due to her curious nature, she asked for every ambiguous word or verse again and again, and the Prophet peace be upon him explained to her. Based on her knowledge and closeness to the Prophet peace be upon him she had a distinguished contribution to the *hadīth's* sciences among the '*ummuhātu'l-muminin* and other Prophet's companions. She was one of the *muksirin al-hadīth* and played an important role in the transmission of *hadīth*. The reason for her transmission on a large scale is that she has got the opportunity of spending more time with the Prophet peace be upon him than other '*ummahātu'l-muminin*, and was bestowed with extraordinary intelligence, and was interested in acquiring knowledge. As per her narrations, *Muhaddithūn* recorded two thousand, two hundred, and ten *hadīths* on her account regarding the different branches of Islam. A comparative study of her narrations in the canonical books of *hadīth* shows that her narrations were contained those pieces of information which are rarely noticed in the other transmitters' narrations, like, the description

of *'Illat* for the obligation of a provision, the description of abrogation of a provision, and the important exegesis details like *shāni nuzūl* that are the helping materials in the understanding of the *Holy Qurān* and *Prophet's Sunnah* as well. It is concluded from the study that she was not a wife of the Prophet peace be upon him or the transmitter of *hadīths* solely, but she was also a great *mufasssira*, *muhaddītha*, and *faqīha* of her time, and was considered the primary source in *fiqhu'l-hadith* among Prophet's companions. They were often visiting her on those subjects which were the matter of discussion among them, and her wording was considered the final as it was noticed in the discussion of many Islamic provisions. It is also concluded from the study that she was a great critic of *hadīths* and played an essential role in the investigation of the authenticity of the Prophet's *hadīths*, even those companions that had been transmitted more *hadīths* than her like *Abū Huraira* were visiting her for the attestation of his *hadīth*. She has a scientific method in the critique of *hadīths* that paved the way for later *muhaddithūn* to introduce a permanent branch of *hadīth's* sciences named *naqdu'l-mutūn*. She criticized several fellow transmitters by comparing their narration with the *Holy Qurān*, the other authentic *hadīths*, with the *Qiyās al-'Aqlī*, and the proven history as discussed with detailed explanatory examples.

Introduction

'Āisha bint Abī Bakr lived in the house of prophecy and quenched her thirst for knowledge from the pure source. She was known among the Prophet's companions for sharp memory, vast knowledge, scrutinizing of *hadīths*, and understanding of the *Holy Qurān* and *Sunnah*. She spent about fifty years in the transmission and dissemination of the Prophet's *hadīths* and has the credit of preserving a huge number of *sunnan al-fialia* of the Prophet peace be upon him that could not possible for other companions. Her status among the Prophet's companions was acknowledged by her fellow companions and the successors as well, therefore, she was a source of referring for them in the understanding and attestation of a *hadīth* as *Abū Musā al-Ash'arī* stated that, "never was a *hadīth* unclear to us - the companions of the Prophet of Allah - and we asked 'Āisha, except that we found some knowledge concerning it with her".¹

She is considered the most prominent transmitter among the *muksirīn al-hadīth* in Islamic writings because of her narrations that reached more than

¹ Muhammad b. Isā at-Tirmizī, *Sunan*, critical ed. Ibrāhim 'Atwah (Misar: Sharika Maktaba wa Matba Mustafa al-Bābī, 1395/1975), "Abwābu'l-Manāqib", 126 (No. 3883).

two thousand hadīths. It is concluded from a thorough review of her narrations in the canonical books of *hadīths* that, most of them she received directly from the Prophet peace be upon him, besides, they are related to those subjects that made her notable among other transmitters.²

Her room was the first school of *hadīth* for the scholars and the students of her time, they were coming there for acquiring knowledge of the Prophet's *hadīths*. Moreover, she was known among her fellows for focusing on the preserving of the wording of *hadīths*, therefore, some transmitters were visiting her for confirming the authenticity of some *hadīths*. It is reported in some sources that *Abū Huraira* was sitting in front of her room and transmitting several *hadīths*, then was asking for confirmation. It is recorded that sometimes she was commenting on his narrations that the Prophet peace be upon him did not say as you transmitted.³

A superficial review of her narrations recorded by *muhaddithūn* shows that she was not the source of knowledge for the young generation only, but she was also the source of elder companions as well, therefore, the number of her students reached more than three hundred fifty in both generations as recorded by the biographical lexicons.⁴

Additionally, the comparison of her narrations with other companions and *'ummuhātu'l-muminūn* revealed that she played a prominent role in the transmission and critique of the Prophet's *hadīths* that paved the way for later scholars to investigate and scrutinize the *hadīths* by following her method, which is discussed with details in this research article.

1. A Glance on 'Āisha's Biography

She is the daughter of the well-known companion and second caliphate of Islam *Abū Bakr al-Siddique*, she was born in the fifth year of the Prophethood, and has the honor of the third and youngest wife of the Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him. She is one of those pious Muslims

² See: Sulimān an-Nadwī, *Sīratu 'Āisha Ummi'l-Muminin*, critical ed. Muhammad Rahmatullāh Hāfīz an-Nadwī (Dimashq: Dāru'l-Qalam, 1424/2003), 320-355.

³³ See: Muslim b. Hajjāj, *Sahih Muslim*, critical ed. Muhammad Fu'ād Abdul-Baqī (Beirut: Dār 'Ihya'ut-Turath al-Arabī, n.d), "Fadhāilu's-Sahaba", 2493. *Abū Bakr b. Abi Khuthima*, *at-Tārikh al-Kabīr*, critical ed. Salāh b. Fathī Hilāl (al-Qāhira: al-Fārūq al-Hadīthia li'tabā'ati wa'n-Nashr, 1427/2006), 1/440. Shamsu'd-Dīn Muhammad b. Ahmad az-Zahabī, *Siyar 'Ālām an-Nubalā*, critical ed. Shuaib al-Arnaūt (Beirut: Muasistu'r-Risala, 1405/1985), 2/607.

⁴ See: an-Nadwī, *Sīratu 'Āisha Ummi'l-Muminin*, 320-355. Ismāil b. Kathīr, *at-Takmil fi'l Jarhi wa't-Tadīl wa Marifatu's-Thiqāt wa'd-Dhuafā wa'l-Majāhil*, Shadī b. Muhammad (al-Yemen: Markazu'l-Buhuth wa'd-Dirāsāt al-Islāmīa, 1423/ 2011), 4/271-277.

whose ears have never heard the sound of idolatry and polytheism, and opened their eyes to Islam as she stated herself, "I had seen my parents following Islam since I attained the age of puberty. Not a day passed but the Prophet visited us, both in the mornings and evenings".⁵

She did not give birth to a child but she was famous with the *Kunyah* of 'Ummi 'Abdi'llāh, which was awarded to her by the Prophet peace be upon him himself after she complained that, my fellow wives have the *Kunyah* except me as Abū Dāwūd (d. 275/888) narrated from her on the account of her nephew Urwa b. az-Zubair that 'Āisha said: O Prophet of Allah! All my fellow wives have kunyahs. He said: Give yourself the kunyah by 'Abdullāh, your son - that is to say, her nephew (her sister's son). Besides, her name was often prefixed in the Islamic writings with the title "Ummu'l-Muminin", "al-Siddiqa", and "Humairā".⁶

She was brought up in a prosperous and educated family, her father was one of the richest merchants and educated people of Makkah, he was an expert on 'Ilmu'l-Ansāb and ancient Arabic poetry, besides, Abū Bakr was very strict in the education of his children, even after 'Āisha's marriage, whenever he noticed something wrong in her dealing,⁷ attitude, or irresponsibility in her everyday life, he has been scolded her,⁸ these things

⁵ See: Muhammad b. Ismā'il al-Bukhārī, *al-Jāmi'u's-Sahih*, critical ed. Muhammad Zuhair b. Nāsir (Beirut: Dār Tawqu'n-Najāt, 1422/2001), "Kitabu's-Salāt", 82 (No. 476). Abū Alī al-Jubā'ī, *Taqīd al-Muhmal wa Tamīzu'l-Mushkil*, critical ed. Muhammad Abū'l-Fadhl (al-Mamlaka al-Maghribia, 1418/1997), 606. an-Nadwī, *Sīratu 'Āisha Ummi'l-Muminin*, 41.

⁶ See: Ibn. Sa'ad, *al-Tabaqātu'l-Kubra*, critical ed. Muhammad Abdul-Qādar (Beirut: Dāru'l-Kutub al-Ilmia, 1410/1990), 8/53. Ibn. Abī Khuthīma, *at-Tārikh al-Kabīr*, 3/130. Muhammad b. Hibbān, *al-Thiqāt*, critical ed. Muhammad Abdul-Mua'id (India: Dāiratu'l-Ma'ārif al-'Uthmānia, 1393/1973), 3/332. Ibn. 'Abdul-Bar, *al-Istiāb fi Marifati'l-Ashāb*, critical ed. Alī Muhammad al-Bajāwī (Beirut: Dāru'l-Jabal, 1412/1992), 3/1250. Ibn. Kathīr, *at-Takmil fi'l Jarhi wa't-Tadīl*, 4/365. an-Nadwī, *Sīratu 'Āisha Ummi'l-Muminin*, 27, 37.

⁷ Abū Dāwūd narrated on the account of Nu'mān b. Bashir that, "when Abū Bakr asked the permission of the Prophet to come in, he heard 'Āisha speaking in a loud voice. So when he entered, he caught hold of her in order to slap her, and said: Do I see you raising your voice to the Prophet of Allah? The Prophet began to prevent him and Abū Bakr went out angry. The Prophet said when Abū Bakr went out: You see I rescued you from the man". See: Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, critical ed. Muhamma Mahi'ud-Dīn 'Abdul-Hamid (Beirut: al-Maktabatu'l-Asria, n.d.), "Kitābu'l-'Ādab", 91 (No. 4999).

⁸ Mulsin narrated on the account of 'Āisha that, "we went with the Prophet of Allah on one of his journeys and when we reached the place Baida' or Dhat al-jaiish, my necklace was broken (and fell somewhere). The Prophet of Allah along with other people stayed there for searching it. There was neither any water at that place nor was there any water with them (the companions of the Prophet). Some persons came to my father Abū Bakr and said: Do you see what 'Āisha has done? She has detained the Prophet of Allah and persons accompanying him, and there is neither any water here or with them. So Abū Bakr came there and the Prophet of Allah was sleeping with his head on my thigh. He (Abū Bakr) said: You

had a great impact on her personality and education. Later, she tied the knot with the Prophet peace be upon him, she got the opportunity of education under the supervision of a person who was sent as a teacher and educator for mankind, she was blessed with his knowledge directly and honored a prominent interpreter of the *Holy Qurān*, an expert of *hadīth* literature, and a great jurist among the Prophet's companions.

'*Āisha* was one of the most intelligent, well-literate, and influential among her contemporaries. She was not only the center of knowledge for the female companions after the death of the Prophet, but the male companions were also benefiting from her knowledge and referring to her in those subjects which were the matter of discussion among them. She was interested in the social issues of the Muslim community and was rising her voice for justice in society as it appears from her struggle for the *qissās* of '*Uthmān b. 'Affān* after his killing by rebels. She played a pivotal role in the politics of *hiḡāz* after the first and great *fitna*, and led a bulk of Muslims in the battle of the camel, demanding the blood of *Uthmān* and justice for his family. She died on 17th Ramadhan 58/678, *Abū Huraira* prayed her funeral prayer, while her nephews *Abdullāh* and *Urwa* brought down her to the grave.⁹

2. '*Āisha*'s Narrations and their Characteristics

'*Āisha* is one of the *muksirin al-hadīth* and played an important role in the transmission of *hadīth*. The reason for her transmission on a large scale is that she has got the opportunity of spending more time with the Prophet than other '*ummahātu'l-muminin*, and was bestowed with extraordinary intelligence, and was interested in learning as well. It is reported that she was quenching her thirst for knowledge by asking again and again from the Prophet peace be upon him regarding the verses of the *Holy Qurān* and basic provisions of Islam. Consequently, *muhaddithūn* recorded two thousand, two hundred, and ten *hadīths* on her account regarding the different branches of Islam, which have been distinguished by consisting of the details that are rarely noticed in the narrations of other transmitters. The characteristics of her narrations with descriptive examples are discussed in the following

have detained the Prophet of Allah and other persons and there is neither water here nor with them. She ('Āisha) said: Abū Bakr scolded me and uttered what Allah wanted him to utter and nudged my hips with his hand. And there was nothing to prevent me from stirring but for the fact that the Prophet of Allah was lying upon my thigh". See: Muslim b. Hajjāj, Sahih Muslim, "Kitabu'l-Haidh", 367.

⁹ See: Hākim an-Nisāburī, *al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihain*, critical ed. Mustafa Abdul-Qādar (Beirut: Dāru'l-Kutub al-'Ilmiya, 1411/1990), 4/7 (No. 6717). az-Zahabī, *Siyar 'Ālām an-Nubalā*, 2/193.

lines.

2.1. Describing the 'Illat of Islamic Provisions

'Āisha does not narrate the Islamic provision merely but rather she describes their 'Illat as well, which helps the followers to understand the logic behind their obligation. For instance, she is narrating a *hadīth* about the *ghusl* (taking bath) for the *Jumu'a* prayer and describing the logic behind the Prophet's encouragement of his companions to take bath before coming to the mosque on Friday as well. She described various reasons, one of them is most of the people did not have servants, they were doing their works by themselves and were coming to the mosque in that condition as *Imām al-Bukhārī* (d. 256/870) recorded on her account, "the people (mostly) were workers and they would come for Friday prayer in the same condition, so it was said to them: If only you were to take a bath".¹⁰

Besides, some of them were coming from a long distance in hot and dry weather, while wearing woolen garments, which emitted a foul smell that might be caused of disturbing other worshipers, therefore, the Prophet peace be upon him requested them to clean themselves on Friday as *Imām Muslim* (d. 261/875) reported from her that "the people came for *Jumu'a* prayer from their houses in the neighboring villages dressed in woolen garments on which dust was settled and this emitted a foul smell. A person among them (those who were dressed so) came to the Prophet of Allah while he was in my house. The Prophet of Allah said to him: Were you to cleanse yourselves on this day".¹¹

It is deduced from the study of the aforementioned and similar narrations regarding other subjects in the canonical books of *hadīths* that 'Āisha did not simply narrate the Prophetic *hadīths* related to the Islamic provision, she trying to describe the logic behind them as well.¹² Moreover, the mentioned *hadīths* show that the 'Illat for the taking bath on *Jumu'a* prayer was to remove the stench of dust and sweat to not harm the other worshipers.

2.2. Describing the Abrogation

The conflict between two *hadīths* is a matter of discussion among *muhaddithūn* and *fuqahā'a* in the early ages, they introduced a permanent

¹⁰ al-Bukhārī, "Kitābu'l-Jumu'a", 14 (No. 903).

¹¹ Muslim, "Kitābu'l-Jumu'a", 847.

¹² See: Ahmad b. Hanbal, *Musnad*, critical ed. Ahmad Muhammad Shākir, (al-Qāhira: Dāru'l-Hadīth, 1416/1995), 41/236 (No. 24707). al-Bukhārī, "Kitāb Manāqibu'l-Ansār", 45 (No. 3900). Muslim, "Kitābu'l-Hajj", (No. 1311)

branch in the *hadīth's* sciences named "*Mukhtalafu'l-Hadīth*", which is dealing with those narrations that have a conflict with each other, they described the basic principles of dealing with such narrations, like, the chronological study of both narrations to find out their dating, that will help in reaching to the abrogated one, however, it is only possible by explicating of the Prophet himself or a companion that whichever is ahead of time or abrogated.¹³

It is concluded from the study of the canonical books of *hadīths* that 'Ā'isha was an expert in this department, therefore, her narrations were often contained on the description and details related to the abrogation. For example, the *hadīths* related to the subject of *nikāh al-mut'ah* (temporary marriage) are conflict with each other, some of them indicate that temporary marriage is permissible,¹⁴ and some of them are explicitly reported its prohibition.¹⁵ 'Ā'isha is among those transmitters who discussed this subject and called those permissible narrations abrogated as *Hākim an-Nisāburī* (d. 405/1012) recorded that someone asked her about *mut'ah* she said: its prohibition and abrogation is in the *Holy Qurān*, "*Those who guard their private parts except their wives or those their right hands possess, for indeed, they will not be blamed. However, those who seek (sexual pleasure) beyond that are the transgressors*" and a woman in the temporary marriage is neither a wife nor a slave, therefore, it is not permissible.¹⁶

2.3. Describing the *Shāni Nuzūl*

'Ā'isha was a prominent exegetist of the *Holy Qurān*. The companions and successors were often coming towards her for the acquiring of exegesis of Quranic verses. The reasons behind her deep knowledge of the *Holy Qurān* were; she grew up with the *Holy Qurān* as she was listening to it since her childhood from her father, who was a well-known reciter among the Prophet's companions, besides, she got the opportunity of witnessing the revelation that enabled her more to learn the *Holy Qurān* from the first source directly.

She spent a long time with the Prophet peace be upon him and memorized every little incident that helps in the understanding and

¹³ Ibn. as-Salāh, *Marifat 'Ānwā' ai'l-Ulum al-Hadīth*, critical ed. Nuru'd-Din Attr (Beirut: Dāru'l-Fikr, 1406/1986), 277.

¹⁴ See: al-Bukhārī, "Kitabu'n-Nikāh", 32 (No. 5116, 5117). Muslim, "Kitabu'l-Hajj", 1217.

¹⁵ See: al-Bukhārī, "Kitabu'z-Zabāih", 29 (No. 5523), "Kitabul-Maghazī", 42 (No. 4216), Muslim, "Kitabu'n-Nikāh", 1406, 1407.

¹⁶ See: Hākim an-Nisāburī, *al-Mustadrak*, 2/427 (No. 3484).

exegesis of the *Holy Qurān*, which are called the *shāni nuzūl* in the Quranic sciences that is considered an integral part of the Quranic exegesis. The 'Āisha's narrations have the quality of consisting of the *shāni nuzūl*, which are reported and highly ranked by the *muhadīthūn* and *muffasirūn* in their compilations. For example, 'Urwa b. az-Zubair narrated that, I said to 'Āisha, how do you interpret the statement of Allah: "*Verily, Safā and Marwā (i.e. two mountains at Makkah) are among the symbols of Allah.*" So it is not harmful to those who perform the *Hajj* to the house of Allah or perform the 'Umra, to ambulate (*Tawāf*) between them. In my opinion, it is not sinful for one not to ambulate between them. 'Āisha said: Your interpretation is wrong for as you say, the verse should have been. This verse was revealed in connection with the *Ansār* who (during the pre-Islamic period) used to visit *Manāt* after assuming their *Ihrām*, and it was situated near *Qudaīd*, and they used to regard it sinful to ambulate between *Safā* and *Marwā* after embracing Islam. When Islam came, they asked Allah's Messenger about it, whereupon Allah revealed: "*Verily, Safā and Marwā (i.e. two mountains at Makkah) are among the symbols of Allah. So it is not harmful of those who perform the Hajj of the House (of Allah) or perform the 'Umra, to ambulate (Tawaf) between them.*"¹⁷

To sum up, the narrations of 'Āisha are consist of such fine points, which are helpful in the understanding of the *Holy Qurān* and the Prophet's *sunnah*. Therefore, the Islamic scholarship gave great importance to her narrations on every subject and presented them in the support of their theories related to the primary and subsidiary provisions.

3. 'Āisha and Fiqū'l-Hadīth

'Āisha was the primary source after the death of the Prophet peace be upon him in the domestic and those personal issues, which supposedly know better than someone else. There are lots of examples that the companions referred to her in most crucial subjects like inheritance, *shāni-nuzūl*, *shāni-wurūd*, *halāl*, *harām*, and the subjects related to the personal life of the Prophet peace be upon him because they acknowledged her understanding and knowledge.

She had many students among Prophet's companions and successors, and every one of them was appreciative of her knowledge and understanding of the *Holy Qurān* and *Sunnah*. Her nephew 'Urwa b. az-Zubair was one of those, who spared a long time with her to acquire the knowledge.

¹⁷ al-Bukhārī, "Kitābu'l-Hajj", 79 (No. 1643). Hākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 2/297 (No. 3069).

He admitted that she had an unmatched knowledge of the *Holy Qurān*, inheritance, history, and ancient Arabic poetry. Whenever there was a conflict in the understanding of a *hadīth* among companions they were often going to 'Āisha and asking her opinion as *Abū Musā al-Ash'arī* stated: "never was a *hadīth* unclear to us - the companions of the Prophet of Allah - and we asked 'Āisha, except that we found some knowledge concerning it with her".¹⁸

Moreover, she was not a center of learning for the young generation, the senior companions were also visiting her for acquiring knowledge like *Ibn. Sa'ad* (d. 230/845) recorded on the account of *Qabisa b. Zūwaib*, and *Hākīm an-Nisāburī* on the account of *Masrūq* that "I witnessed the senior companions asking 'Āisha the inheritance issues".¹⁹

She was bestowed with a sharp memory, and curious nature. She was asking from the Prophet until her satisfaction as *Imām al-Bukhārī* reported about the accountability on the day of judgment, and elaborated that whenever 'Āisha heard anything and did not understand, she used to ask again and again till she understood it completely, as she stated that once the Prophet peace be upon him said: "Whoever will be called to account (about his deeds on the Day of Resurrection) will surely be punished." I said: "Doesn't Allah says: "He surely will receive an easy reckoning." The Prophet peace be upon him replied, "This means only the presentation of the accounts but whoever will be argued about his account, will certainly be ruined".²⁰

This discussion shows eagerness for knowledge, which made her distinguished among her fellows because as much as she was acquainted with the personal life of the Prophet peace be upon him and the *Holy Qurān*, neither the other spouses nor his close companions had any knowledge of it.

4. The Methodology of 'Āisha in the Critique of Hadīths

The subject of *matan* criticism is a matter of discussion in Western and Muslim scholarship. *Ignaz Goldziher* (d. 1340/1921), *Leone Caetani* (d. 1354/1935), *Gaston Wiet* (d. 1391/1971), *Sir Syed Ahmad Khan* (d. 1316/1898), *Ahmad Amin al-Misrī* (d. 1374/1954), and *Ahmad 'Abdul Mun'am* argued that *muhaddīthūn* did not criticize the *mutūn* of *hadīths* like 'āsānīd. However, the dating of *matan* criticism goes back to the early years of the first century. There are several companions of the Prophet like *Abū Bakr*, 'Umar, 'Āli,

¹⁸ at-Tirmizī, "Abwābu'l-Manāqib", 126 (No. 3883).

¹⁹ Ibn. Sa'ad, *al-Tabaqātu'l-Kubra*, critical ed. Muhammad Abdul-Qādar (Beirut: Dāru'l-Kutub al-'Ilmiya, 1410/1990), 2/286. Hākīm, *al-Mustadrak*, 4/12 (No. 6736).

²⁰ al-Bukhārī, "Kitābu'l-'Ilam", 35 (No. 103).

'Āisha, and Ibn. 'Abbās who criticized the circulated *mutūn* that attributed to the Prophet peace be upon him in early ages.²¹

It is indisputable fact, that the discussion of *hadīth's matan* criticism without 'Āisha is incompleting because she played a great role in the critique of *hadīth*, and criticized a huge number of *hadīths* that are permanently studied and collected by *muhaddithūn* titled "*Istidrākāt 'Āisha*". *az-Zarkashī* (d. 794/1392) was the first one who compiled those narrations named "*al-'Ijāba fī'ma Istadrākāthu 'Āisha 'ala al-Sahaba*" which is considered one of the most important and collective studies on this subject. Later *al-Suyūṭī* (d. 911/1505) summarised the compilation of *az-Zarkashī* and prepared a comprehensive study named "*Ainu'l-Isāba fī'ma Istadrākāthu 'Āisha 'ala al-Sahaba*". Likewise, *Jihān Rafat Fawzī* also compiled a valuable study named "*al-Syeda 'Āisha ve Tawthiquha li'l-Sunnah*".

Such scientific studies concluded that it is not more than a claim that Muslim scholarship did not focus on *matan* criticism in the early ages like 'āsānīd. *Muhaddithūn* criticized the *mutūn* and 'Āisha is a living example of it, who criticized a huge number of narrations following a unique scientific method that is going to be discussed as follows.

4.1. Comparison with the Holy Qurān

There is no doubt that the *Holy Qurān* and the authentic *hadīths* have come from one source, both are the revelation of Allah. Therefore, it is never possible for any authentic legal text to contradict another text in all respects so that they cannot be combined at all. *al-Shāfi'ī* (d. 204/820) drew attention to this aspect by explaining that the *Sunnah* is the interpretation of the *Holy Qurān*, and the contradiction between both is impossible. *al-Ghazālī* (d. 505/1111) also put a glance on this subject and explicitly stated that there is no *Qurān* without *Sunnah*, and there is no *Sunnah* without *Qurān*, both are could not separate each other as could not contradict each other. However, if there is an apparent contradiction between the *Holy Qurān* and *hadīth*, the *hadīth* would be subjected to the research for finding the reasons that explain this contradiction as it was the methodology of companions in such

²¹ See: Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim studies*, critical ed. S. M. Stern (London: George Allen & Unwin LTD, 1971), 3-24. Syed Ahmad Khan, *Maqālāt*, (Lahore: Majlis Taraqī 'Adab, 1404/1984), 1/23-128. Alam Khan, Ali Kuzudişli. "The Critique of Abul A'la Mawdudi on the Hadīth Deniers in the Indian Subcontinent". *Amasya İlahiyat Dergisi* 1/ 14 (June 2020): 81-98. 'Amar Fattāne. "Hadīth Textual Criticism among the Prophet's Companions: the Example of 'Āisha". *at-Tajdīd* 17/33 (June 2014): 83-118.

conditions.²²

The related studies and the canonical books of *hadīths* show that the Prophet's companions were presenting the *hadīth* into the *Holy Qurān*, and if there was an apparent contradiction they often questioned the *hadīth* by transmitter's mistake or lack of accuracy or not transmitting the narration completely. The prominent *hadīth*'s expert *az-Zarkashī* recorded about eleven narrations in his book "*al-Ijāba*" where 'Āisha followed this method in the critique of those *hadīths* that she heard from other companions. For instance, *Amad b. Hanbal* reported on the account of 'Ābdullāh b. Abī Mulaikah that "A daughter of 'Uthmān b. 'Affān died in Makkah and Ibn. 'Umar and Ibn. 'Ābbās attended her funeral. I was sitting between them and Ibn. 'Umar said to 'Amr b. 'Uthmān, who was facing him: why don't you tell them not to weep? For I heard the Prophet of Allah says: The deceased is tormented because of his family's weeping for him".²³ The same narration is recorded by *Imām Muslim* with extra details that *Ibn. 'Ābbās* described an incident, when 'Umar was wounded, *Suhaib* came walling: Alas, for the brother! alas for the companion! 'Umar said: O *Suhaib*, do you wail for me, whereas the Prophet of Allah said: "The dead would be punished on account of the lamentation of the members of his family"? *Ibn. 'Ābbās* said: When 'Umar died, I made a mention of it to 'Āisha. She said: "May Allah have mercy upon 'Umar! I swear by Allah that the Prophet never said that Allah would punish the believer because of the weeping of any one of the members of his family, but he said that Allah would increase the punishment of the unbeliever because of the weeping of his family over him. She said: The *Holy Qurān* is enough for you, no bearer of burden will bear another's a burden". Thereupon *Ibn. 'Ābbās* said: Allah is he who has caused laughter and weeping. *Ibn. Abī Mulaika* said: By Allah, *Ibn. 'Umar* said nothing.²⁴

In this *hadīth*, 'Āisha compared the narration of 'Umar as well as his understanding of the *Holy Qurān* and concluded that it is not about the Muslims as 'Umar understood because no one will punish on the account of his family's lamentation as Allah clearly stated in the *Holy Qurān* that, "no bearer of burden will bear another's burden". After questioning the mentioned *hadīth*, she narrated the actual text of that *hadīth* which indicates that it was said about the unbelievers that, Allah would increase their punishment

²² Muhammad b. Idris al-Shāfi'ī, *al-Risāla*, critical ed. Ahmad Muhammad Shākir (Beirut: Dāru'l-Kutub al-'Ilmiya, n.d), 222-223. Muhammad al-Ghazālī, *'Ilal wa Adwīa*, (Misr: Dāru'n-Nahdha, n.d), 44.

²³ Ahmad b. Hanbal, *Musnad*, 1/388 (No. 290).

²⁴ Muslim, "Kitābu'l-Janāiz", 928-929.

because of the weeping of their families over him.

Another example of 'Āisha's method of criticism is the narration reported by *Imām al-Bukhārī* that *Masrūq* asked her; Did Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him see his Lord? She said: "What you have said makes my hair stand on end! whoever tells you that Muhammad saw his Lord, is a liar." Then she recited the verse of the *Holy Qurān*: "No vision can grasp him, but his grasp is over all vision. He is the most courteous well-acquainted with all things. It is not fitting for a human being that Allah should speak to him except by inspiration or from behind a veil". Besides, she explained to the *Masrūq* that "the Prophet did not see Allah, he saw Gabriel in his true form twice."²⁵

In the aforementioned hadīth, she criticized those who believe that the Prophet peace be upon him saw his Lord, and supported it with the verse of the *Holy Qurān* by describing the misunderstanding of the transmitter that the Prophet saw the *Gabriel*. However, this method is a matter of discussion in Muslim scholarship. *az-Zarkashī* presented a detailed study about it and concluded that it is not a general principle to present every *hadīth* into the *Holy Qurān*. The *muhaddīthūn* used it in the investigation of a *Khabr wāhid*. Whenever a *Khabr wāhid* contradicts the definitive source (*Qurān*), and their combination is not possible in any way then they questioned the authenticity of the *hadīth*.²⁶

4.2 Comparison with other Authentic 'Āhadīth

A thorough review of the 'Āisha's critical narrations in the canonical books of *hadīths* shows that sometimes she used this method in the criticism of some *mutūn* transmitted by other fellows. For example, *Abū Bakr b. 'Abdīr-Rahmān b. al-Hārith* says, "my father and I were with *Marwān b. al-Hakam* at the time when he was amir of Madīna, someone mentioned to him that *Abū Huraira* used to say, If someone begins the morning *junub*, he has broken the fast for that day". *Marwān* said: I swear to you, 'Abdur-Rahmān, you must go to the two 'ummu'l-muminin, 'Āisha and 'Ummi Salamā, and ask them about it.

He went to visit 'Āisha and I accompanied him. He greeted her and then said: 'ummu'l-muminin, we were with *Marwān b. al-Hakam* and someone mentioned to him that *Abū Huraira* used to say that if someone had begun the morning *junub*, he had broken the fast for that day. 'Āisha said: 'It is not as *Abū Huraira* says. *Abdur-Rahmān!* Do you dislike what the Prophet of

²⁵ al-Bukhārī, "Kitābu't-Tafsīr", 272 (No. 4755).

²⁶ Muhammad b. 'Abdullāh az-Zarkashī, *al-Bahru'l-Muhīt fi 'Usūl al-Fiqha*, critical ed. 'Abdul-Qādar 'Abdullāh (al-Kwait: Wazāratu'l-Awqāf wa'l-Shaūn al-Islāmīa, 1413/1992), 6/263-264.

Allah used to do?', *Abdur-Rahmān* said: 'no, by Allah. 'Ā'isha said: "I bear witness that the Prophet of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, used to get up in the morning *junub* from intercourse, not a dream, and would then fast for that day".²⁷

'Ā'isha compared the narration of *Abū Huraira* with the action of the Prophet and found it contradicted, thus, she criticised the *matan* transmitted by him. Her criticism is valuable because the reported *hadīth* is about something related to his personal life that she knows better than someone else.

Another example of 'Ā'isha's criticism through this method is *Muhammad b. al-Muntashir* asked *Ibn. 'Umar* about using perfume when entering *Ihrām* and he said: If I were to be daubed with tar that would be dearer to me than that, I mentioned that to 'Ā'isha and she said: May Allah have mercy on *Abū Abdur-Rahmān*. "I used to put perfume on the Prophet of Allah then he would go around his wives, then enter *Ihrām* in the morning the smell of perfume coming from him".²⁸

In this *hadīth*, she compared the narration of *Ibn. 'Umar* with what she witnessed in her accompanying with the Prophet in the performing of pilgrimage and found it contradicted with the action of the Prophet, therefore, she questioned the credibility of *Ibn. 'Umar's* narration and his understanding as well.

4.3. Comparison with *Qiyās al-'Aqlī*

If a *hadīth* contradicts the '*aqal* and does not possible its interpretation it will be put in question by investigating the *sanad* and *matan* because the sharia could not consist of something contradicting *aqal salīm*. It was one of 'Ā'isha's methods in the criticism of other companions. It is concluded from her criticised narrations that if she found any *hadīth* contradicted the '*aqal*, she questioned its authenticity and the understanding of the transmitter as well. For example, *Imām Muslim* recorded on the account of *Abū Huraira* that the Prophet peace be upon him said: "A woman, an ass and a dog cut off the prayer, but something like the back of a saddle guard against that". When it was mentioned to 'Ā'isha she said: "You have compared us (women) to donkeys and

²⁷ Mālik b. 'Ānas, *Muwatta*, critical ed. Muhammad Mustafa al-'Āzamī (al-'Imārāt: Muasisatu'z-Zāyed b. Sulimān, 1425/2004), "Kitābu's-Siyām", 1017.

²⁸ Muslim, "Kitābu'l-Hajj", 1192. an-Nisā'ī, *as-Sunan as-Sughrā*, critical ed. Abdul-Fattāh Abū Ghudah (Halb: Maktabu'l-Matbua'at al-Islāmia, 1406/1986), "Kitābu'l-Gusal wa't-Tayyamum", 25 (No. 431).

*dogs. By Allah! I saw the Prophet praying while I used to lie in (my) bed between him and the Qibla. Whenever I needed something, I disliked to sit and trouble the Prophet. So, I would slip away by the side of his feet”.*²⁹

This critical discussion shows, that 'Āisha denied the authenticity of *Abū Huraira's* narration using her 'aqal that it contains on the similarity between women and animals, then she explained the Prophet peace be upon him was praying at night and I was laying in front of him, which is a piece of explicit evidence of the weakness of *Abū Huraira's* narration because if a woman could cut off the prayer as he narrated, the Prophet peace be upon him could order her on the changing of place, but he did not and continued his prayer.

4.4. Comparison with the Proven History

History is considered one of the most important tools in the investigation of information, which is used by scholars in proving the authenticity or fabrication of narration since early ages. 'Āisha was among those who used this method in questioning the authenticity of different *hadīths*, as *Imām Muslim* reported on the account of *Āswad b. Yazid* that, “they said in 'Āisha's presence that 'Alī was appointed by the Prophet peace be upon him before he died, she said: 'When was he appointed? I had been providing support to him with my chest, or in my lap, he called for a tray, then he fell in my lap and died, and I did not realize it. So when did he appoint him?’”³⁰

'Āisha resorted to the history that she was present at the time of the Prophet's death and noted everything she witnessed carefully, however, there was not made such discussion about the appointment of 'Alī as caliph as the people believe.

Another example of this method is the narration of *Mujāhid* that he and *'Urwa b. Zubair* entered the mosque and found *'Abdullāh b. 'Umar* sitting near the apartment of 'Āisha and the people were observing the forenoon prayer. We asked him about their prayer, and he said: It is *bid'a*. *Urwa* said to him: O *Abū Abdir-Rahmān*, how many 'umras did Allah's Prophet perform? He said: Four 'umras, one he performed during the month of *Rajab*. We were reluctant either to believe him or reject him. We heard the noise of brushing her teeth by 'Āisha in her apartment. 'Urwa said: Mother of the believers, are you not hearing what *Abī 'Abdir-Rahmān* is saying? She said: What is he saying? Thereupon he said: *Ibn. 'Umar* states that Allah's Apostle performed

²⁹ Muslim, “Kitābu's-Salāt”, 512.

³⁰ Muslim, “Kitābu'l-Wasiyat”, 1636.

four *'umras* and one of them during the month of *Rajab*. Thereupon she remarked: May Allah have mercy upon *Abū 'Abdir-Rahmān*. Never did Allah's Prophet perform *'Umra* in which he did not accompany him, and he (Allah's Apostle) never performed *'umra* during the month of *Rajab*.³¹

She proved the mistake of the transmitter by inferring from historical pieces of information that she witnessed and lived. *Ibn. 'Umar* was not the only one who performed the *'umara* with the Prophet peace be upon him, there were other companions too like *'Āisha*. As a family member, she knows better than others that when the Prophet peace be upon him left for *'umara*? According to her knowledge, he never performed *'umra* in the month of *Rajab*.

Conclusion

The study put a glance at *'Āisha's* biography that she was the daughter of the second caliph and the younger wife of the Prophet peace be upon him, besides, she was bestowed with a sharp memory and curious nature that has been led to her vast knowledge of the *Holy Qurān* and Prophet's *hadīth*. Moreover, she was born in Islam and grew up in a house where Islam was not strange for householders. She was listening to the *Holy Qurān* since childhood because her father was a famous reciter. Whenever she tied the knot with the Prophet peace be upon him then got the opportunity of witnessing the revelation of the *Holy Qurān*. Due to her curious nature, she was asking for every ambiguous word or verse again and again, and the Prophet peace be upon him was explaining to her. Based on her knowledge and closeness to the Prophet peace be upon him she had a distinguished contribution to the *hadīth's* sciences among the *'ummuhātu'l-muminin* and other Prophet's companions.

It is concluded from the study that she was not a wife of the Prophet peace be upon him or the transmitter of *hadīths* solely, but she was also a great *mufasssira*, *muhaddītha*, and *faqīha* of her time, and was considered the primary source in *fiqhu'l-hadīth* among Prophet's companions. They were often visiting her on those subjects which were the matter of discussion among them, and her wording was considered the final as it was noticed in the discussion of many Islamic provisions.

A comparative study of her narrations in the canonical books of *hadīth* shows that her narrations were contained those pieces of information which

³¹ Muslim, "Kitābu'l-Hajj", 1255.

are rarely noticed in the other transmitters' narrations, like, the description of *'Illat* for the obligation of a provision, the description of abrogation of a provision, and the important exegesis details like *shāni nuzūl* that are the helping materials in the understanding of the *Holy Qurān* and *Prophet's Sunnah* as well.

It is also concluded from the study that she was a great critic of *hadīths* and played an essential role in the investigation of the authenticity of the Prophet's *hadīths*, even those companions that had been transmitted more *hadīths* than her like *Abū Huraira* were visiting her for the attestation of his *hadīth*. She has a scientific method in the critique of *hadīths* that paved the way for later *muhaddithūn* to introduce a permanent branch of *hadīth's* sciences named *naqdu'l-mutūn*. She criticized several fellow transmitters by comparing their narration with the *Holy Qurān*, the other authentic *hadīths*, with the *Qiyās al-'Aqlī*, and the proven history as discussed with detailed explanatory examples.

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