

GENDERING HEAVEN: RECONSIDERING ‘THOSE PROMISED JANNA’ IN ISLAM

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Abstrak

Paper ini mengkritisi wacana *al-mubashsharūn bi al-jannah* ("orang-orang yang dijanjikan surga") sebagai sebuah kategori sosial yang membatasi pemahaman terhadap gambaran penghuni surga sebagaimana disampaikan oleh Nabi Muhammad. Kajian ini berfokus pada sepuluh sahabat laki-laki yang secara tradisional dikenal sebagai *al-mubashsharūn*, yang kerap diposisikan sebagai teladan ideal bagi umat Islam. Status istimewa ini sebagian besar dibangun melalui narasi yang bersifat androsentris, yang menonjolkan otoritas laki-laki sekaligus meminggirkan para sahabat perempuan yang juga dijamin surga. Berangkat dari pemikiran Yasmin Amin, artikel ini meninjau kembali para sahabat perempuan sebagai teladan moral serta menyoroti minimnya representasi mereka dalam diskursus mengenai kehidupan akhirat. Tulisan ini menganalisis konstruksi wacana *al-mubashsharūn* yang berpusat pada patriarki center dalam sumber-sumber klasik Islam, khususnya literatur hadis dan *ṭabaqāt*, sembari mengangkat kembali riwayat-riwayat yang kurang mendapat perhatian mengenai perempuan yang dijamin masuk surga. Artikel ini berargumen bahwa narasi-narasi tersebut mencerminkan bias gender yang mengaburkan kontribusi perempuan dalam kesalehan Islam. Hal ini tentu saja akan menelusuri keberlanjutan bias tersebut dalam literatur Salafi pada periode-periode berikutnya dan menunjukkan bagaimana bias itu memperkuat kedudukan istimewa sepuluh sahabat laki-laki, sekaligus mengurangi visibilitas para sahabat perempuan sebagai teladan keislaman dari waktu ke waktu.

Kata Kunci : Ashra al-Mubassharūn, Sahabiyah, Wacana Gender, Androsentrisme

Abstract

This study critiques the discourse of "those promised heaven" as a limiting social category for understanding the Prophet's portrayal of heavenly inhabitants. It focuses on the ten male companions promised heaven, often depicted as "ideal" Muslims, with their promise predominantly discussed in androcentric narratives that elevate male dominance while sidelining the females also promised heaven. Building on recent scholarship by Yasmin Amin, the article reconsiders female companions as moral paragons and examines how their roles are underrepresented in discussions of the afterlife. The study explores the male-centered nature of the "al-mubashsharūn" discourse in classical Islamic texts, particularly ḥadīth and ṭabaqāt literature. It also reviews overlooked accounts of female companions guaranteed heaven. The paper challenges the gender bias in these narratives, asserting the importance of incorporating women's agency and participation in piety. Finally, it investigates the persistence of such biases in later Salafi literature, which has consequently reinforced the preferential status of the ten male companions over time.

Keywords: ‘Ashra al-Mubassharūn, Female companions, Gendered discourse, Androcentrism.

Introduction

There is institutional ruling that each companions are reliable (*aṣ-ṣaḥābat kulluhum 'udūl*) and mostly applied within the Sunni community. Ibn Hajar (d. 852/1449) affirms the credibility of the companions in relation to hadīth, drawing on the assessments of earlier scholars like Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (d. 463/1071) and Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ (d. 643/1245), who guaranteed that all companions can be relied upon. al-Barr reported that, although the companions did not always hear the Prophet's words directly, they were truthful and would narrate the hadīth to those who were absent. Additionally, some Islamic scholars like al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277) and Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373) reflected this ruling as undisputable notion regarding the honorable status of the companions as the earliest community to embrace Islam. Several Islamic literatures from the medieval era included sections on the lives of these prominent companions, such as biographical dictionary and *sīra* works. Their persistence in establishing the new faith regardless any kind of suffering they endured is a salient characteristic that highlights their status. Additionally, their intellectual efforts in memorizing and transmitting the Prophet's words further exemplify their dedication. However, some companions have unintentionally been regarded as superior to others, or at least more favorably known, due to distinctive traits mentioned in hadīth literature—particularly those who were granted the Prophet's commission of heaven.

According to reports with slight variation of *matan* and *sanad*, the Prophet mentioned nine male Quraish Companions

promised heaven¹, namely Abū Bakr, 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān, 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubayd Allāh, Zubayr ibn al-'Awwām, 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn 'Awf, Sa'd b. Abī Waqash, and Sa'd b. Zayd consecutively. Those all-male Companions, added with Abu 'Ubayd ibn al-Jarrāḥ², are categorized as *al-'ashra al-mubashsharūn bi al-janna* or the "Ten Promised to Heaven," which category becomes a particular discourse in Islamic studies, essentially for the Sunni community. Those Companions are central in Islamic tradition and perceived as the representation of "ideal" Muslim. They are often portrayed as primary figure in term of exemplary traits, evidenced by numerous reports that highlight their status as myriad pages devoted to them. Some later explanations even suggest that their rank is higher than that of the Prophet's wives³, reflecting the uneven perceptions surrounding this coveted title awarded to certain companions. While these male companions are privileged due to the guarantee of heaven they received in specific accounts, this discourse often overlooks hadīth that mention female companions also promised paradise. These female companions demonstrated significant faith and commitment as well, yet their contributions have been neglected due to the limited reports about their profiles.

A meticulous examination is required to identify every female companion who received the glad tidings of heaven from the Prophet. Therefore, this study follows Yasmin Amin's research on the theme "Deciphering Women's Lives According to History and Text," which focuses on the earliest Muslim women

¹ Muḥammad ibn Yazīd al-Qazwīnī, *Sunan Ibn Māja* (Kairo: Dār al-Ihyā' at-Kutub al-'Arabiya, 1953), 133.

² Abū al-Qāsim al-Ṭabrānī, *Al-Mu'jam al-Ṣaghīr* (Beirut: Dār 'Amār, 1985), 62; Abū 'Isā Muḥammad

al-Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmi' al-Kābir/Sunan al-Tirmidhī* (Beirut: Dār al-Ghaṭb al-Islāmi, 1996), 100.

³ Aḥmad Ibn Nāsir al-Ṭayār, *Taqrīb Fatāwā Ibn Taymiyyah* (Arab Saudi: Dār Ibn Jawzī, 2019), 125.

(*Ṣaḥābiyyāt*). As she begins her research by acknowledging their moral and societal agency, she raises an interesting question about the title of “those who were promised heaven,” which is traditionally associated with male companions. This title has been written about extensively in nuanced terms, given that there is no such list of female companions who were also awarded *Jannah* for their deeds. While there are actually at least 14 individuals who are reported to be recipients of heaven according to biographical texts from the premodern era, along with collections of ḥadīth and *sīra* literature. They include the Prophet's wife, daughter, mother-in-law, and others, most of whom underwent suffering or discrimination, along with their actions in pledging allegiance (*bay'a*) to the Prophet during the earliest days of Islam. These individuals are Khadīja bint Khuwaylid, Fāṭima bint Muḥammad, Umm Rūmān, Asmā' bint Abī Bakr, Umm Sulaym, Umm Ḥarām, Umm Zufar or Umm Zakhar, Umm 'Umāra', Umm Ayman, Al-Rabī' bint Ma'ūdh al-Anṣāriyya, Sumayya bint Khayyāt, Umm Waraqa, Ummu Sa'd, and Umm Kulthūm.

Most studies on the female companions circulated around the examination of their salient features, including their moral exemplary and scholarly contribution. Few research discusses the intellectual contributions of early muslim women to transmitting Islamic knowledge found in *ḥadīth*. The others examine their presence as moral paragons within gendered discussion. Among these are the studies by Asma Afsaruddin and Yasmin Amin, which present the lives of female companions to deepen our understanding of women's roles in advocating for gender

equality. Afsaruddin argues that these figures have been constructed in a normative way to emphasize women's domestic seclusion and enforce strict sexual segregation, influenced by narrative shifts during the later medieval period (Afsaruddin, 2010). In contrast, Yasmin Amin highlights Umm Salama to showcase her contributions, noting that her existence is often overlooked despite her significant intellectual pursuits⁴. She highlights the authority of Umm Salama through her critical and gendered questions about divine revelation and the Prophet's narrations, which later influenced the Islamic interpretative fields, including Qur'an exegesis, ḥadīth studies, and fiqh corpora. Consequently, these articles demonstrate that later compilers intervened in shaping the biographical narratives of female companions. This conclusion, while debatable regarding textual polyvalence argument, can still outline a hypothesis about the inadequacy of women's agency in Islamic literature. Furthermore, this article carefully examines the title of *al-'ashra al-mubashsharūn bi al-janna* within a gendered discussion, considering the absence of female companions in a particular list of those promised heaven in Islamic scholarly works.

Applying a qualitative method, this research investigates the mainstreaming of male hegemony in the *al-mubashsharūn* discourse within Islamic texts, particularly in *ḥadīth* collection and biographical genres, before shedding light to heaven-guaranteed female companions which narrations and treatises on them scattered in multiple sources. Adopting Yasmin Amin's study, this article follows the arranged list of female companions promised heaven by revisiting the sources where featured

⁴ Yasmin Amin, “Umm Salama's Contributions: Qur'an, Hadith, and Early Muslim History as Sources for

Gender Justice,” in *Muslim Women and Gender Justice: Concepts, Sources, and Histories* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2020).

their figure⁵. This article employs the framework used by Amin in term of gender-consciousness within the discussions about earliest muslim community. Therefore, data are collected through literature review and textual investigation to gather reliable information about the individuals associated with the Prophet's guarantee of heaven and the conceptual term of *janna* itself. Delving into premodern Islamic literature which mostly included *hadīth* corpus and biographical work, this study observes the nuance within the documentations of Prophet companion regarding the honorable title of heavenly-reward they earned. Moreover, this article stems from the uneven perception of heavenly reward within the Muslim community, in which Amin highlights objections by acknowledging several female companions worthy of Janna. The author envisions this issue as a further examination to address the topic amidst the growing interest in gender analysis.

The discussion is divided into three parts; The first section shall discusses the varying depictions of heaven and its people (*ahl al-janna*) in Islam. Section two investigates the rendering of male hegemony in the *al-mubashsharūn* discourse in early Islam. Third section highlights narratives of piety and religiosity of some *al-mubashsharāt*: Khadija, Fāṭima, Asmā', and Umm Rummān, mentioned fragmentarily in religious and historical sources; Last section, through the gendered analytical lens, discusses the overlooked significance of *al-mubashsharāt*, built upon Yasmin Amin's term, as a gendered discourse. This study affirms the quality of female companions promised of

heaven in terms of their intellectual and spiritual excellence. Their lives provide inspiration and practical hints to emulate within Muslim community. The later acknowledgment of their authority offers a reconstruction of Muslim women's agency in tandem with the flourishing of gender analysis in contemporary contexts.

Textual Depiction of Heaven and its Dwellers

The portrayal of heaven in Islam has received significant attention since the 9th century, reaching its peak in the 12th century through scholarly articulation⁶. Although not fully detailed in divine revelations, concerns about the afterlife encourage Muslims to investigate closely through the Prophet's narrations, leading to a more established understanding of heaven. While discussions about heaven have evolved from the 7th century to the present, the perception of heaven continues to hold the highest honor as a reward for the Muslim community. Eschatological studies reflect the intellectual history of how Muslims envision the afterlife over time. This progression begins with the doctrinal introduction of the Last Judgment, followed by a deeper examination in *hadīth* collections that showcase the wide-ranging discussions about heaven. The final phase involves the formalization of these concepts in manuals written between the 9th and 14th centuries, which present a more structured depiction of heaven. These three major stages allow the author to illuminate the shared imagination of heaven that shapes how Muslims appreciate the

⁵ Yasmin Amin, "Early Muslim Woman as Moral Paragons in Classical Islamic Literature: Al-Mubashsharāt Bi-l-Janna," in *The Oxford Handbook of*

Islam and Women (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), 239.

⁶ Nerina Rustomji, "Early Views of Paradise in Islam," *Religion Compass*, 2010, 166–75.

companions included in *al-mubassharūn bi al-janna*

The first stage presents the idea of heaven as a powerful tool to affirm faith and provide motivation for early believers, despite the challenges of seeking textual proof or verification of dates in this context. Disputes in approaching written sources as products of oral tradition emerge from historiographical problems, suggesting alternative ways to understand the concept of heaven in the early period through doctrinal terms. Furthermore, the next stage, which focuses on the examination of *hadīth* collections from later periods, highlights the linguistic variations defining heaven, including extensive narratives about living there. Heaven, as the ultimate reward for believers, is referred to by several terms, the most common of which in Arabic is "*al-janna*." Another term used is "*al-firdaws*," known as the highest rank of heaven in some texts. In addition to terminology, this phase depicts the landscape of living in heaven with descriptions of particular scenes, such as gardens and rivers of wine, milk, and honey. The dwellers are portrayed in the best conditions, where they rejoice, have no need to labor, reconnect with their families, and enjoy other pleasures mentioned in *hadīth* accounts and Qur'anic chapters. The depiction of heaven ultimately adapts images of the world and humanity in their finest forms. Lastly, the final stage in depicting heaven involves the process of formalization within eschatological studies, which provide manual narratives for preparing for the afterlife. For instance, reports about the gates and levels of heaven awarded to specific groups, such as prophets, companions, martyrs, and those who perform certain good deeds, serve as material for composing eschatological manuals. Despite the varied tendencies among scholars in arranging

these manuals—some intended for moral teaching, while others focused on mystical reflection, and some called upon earthly outcomes—this final stage presents a more constructive picture of heaven in an imaginable way, along with structural clues for becoming its dwellers.

According to the progression of how heaven is perceived and articulated, the entire depiction of heaven is shaped by several earthly perceptions, namely architectural forms, pleasures, and inhabitants. This depiction is derived from investigations of Qur'anic texts and *hadīth* reports, accompanied by later scholars' interpretations regarding the promises and warnings of the future afterlife. There is a wealth of academic work examining heaven and hell in Islam, along with abundant articles and lectures available online, demonstrating a fundamental concern about life after death. Beginning as a doctrinal belief, heaven does not merely serve as motivation for believers; it has been reconstructed into a more tangible image that operates multiple functions for Muslims. It allows them to project their deepest fears, hopes, and desires while providing a conceptual vocabulary for morality, piety, legality, and the relationship between God and the created world (Lange, 2016).

This article focuses on highlighting the visible and salient features of heaven as imagined by the Muslim community, addressing the various joys and the criteria for its dwellers in descriptive terms. The Qur'an textually denotes "heaven" as *al-janna* (which appears over eighty times), and its plural form, *jannāt* (found more than forty times). It often appears in phrases like *jannāt 'adn* (the gardens of Eden), *jannat/jannāt al-na'īm* (the garden/s of delight), *jannat/jannāt al-ma'wā* (the garden/s

of refuge), and *jannāt al-firdaws* (the gardens of paradise). Additionally, terms such as *'illiyyūn* (the highest) and *dār al-salām* (the abode of peace) are often interpreted by exegetes and scholars as names for paradise, although they may allow for other meanings. Despite the variety of names indicating heaven, they all refer to comfort and pleasure as the main experiences to be witnessed. Moreover, the landscape of heaven is described in architectural terms, detailing precious materials as its embellishments, along with natural scenery such as mountains and rivers. The Qur'an presents silk carpets as thrones or couches for believers to recline on (55:54), complemented by fine silk and heavy brocades as garments (44:53, 76:12), along with other adornments such as bracelets and plates made from silver and gold (70:72, 76:21). In addition to these delightful experiences, believers will relish the opportunity to reconnect with their families across generations, allowing them to meet their ancestors and descendants (13:23). They will be served food and drink by young boys (*wildān*) and servant youths (*ghilmān*), described as "youths of perpetual freshness" who appear like scattered pearls (76:19, 56:17).

Alongside those services, there are distinctive rewards aimed at fulfilling men's desires, namely companions (*houris*) who are depicted as "well-guarded pearls" (55:72) or "like gems and small pearls untouched by any man or jinn" (55:56) in the Qur'an. Their appearance is detailed in male-gaze descriptions, such as having beautifully round eyes (44:54) and perfectly curvaceous bosoms (52:20, 56:36–8, 78:31). *Hadith* further elaborates on their beauty, stating they are

adorned with jewels, have a saffron complexion, and their marrow is visible through their flesh. Regarding the presentation of heavenly rewards for male believers, which appear to satisfy them exclusively, some scholars, particularly those who are gender-conscious, address this issue by identifying the heavenly female companions as symbolic ⁷. They reveal that the depiction of *janna* begins with tangible pleasures that are interconnected, while pointing to the greatest reward beyond these material privileges: the revelation of God's glorious face (10:26, 75:22–23). This means that the reward of *houris* is not intended to be the prominent feature of heaven; thus, female believers have the same opportunity to receive companions as well, or to attain other rewards that are not mentioned. Additionally, despite the bodily descriptions of female companions in heaven, the Qur'an portrays sexuality as relatively restrained, including descriptions of *houris* as having "modest gazes" (*qaṣīrat al-ṭarf*, 37:48–9; 38:52; 55:56), resembling "hidden pearls" (56:23), and being "enclosed in tents" (55:72). The pleasures presented in heaven ultimately integrate with human desires, serving as an approach to address the primary rewards for believers.

In addition to those enjoyments in terms of materials and experiences, the eschatological manuals allow Muslims to prepare themselves to embody the qualities of heaven's dwellers. *Hadīth* collections contain narrations of the Prophet's words regarding the deeds of believers that lead to heaven, including numerous reports about certain groups assured of paradise, while others describe the physical appearance of the people living there. Compilations of the Prophet's words illuminating the people who

⁷ Nur Rofiah, *Nalar Kritis Muslimah: Refleksi atas Keperempuan, Kemanusiaan, dan Keislaman* (Yogyakarta: Afkaruna, 2020).

belong to heaven can be found in several ḥadīth collections. Abū 'Abdullāh bin Ismā'īl reports a narration from the Prophet, stating that every single person from his umma will enter paradise unless they refuse, meaning whoever disobeys him ⁸. Furthermore, a report from Hasnā' bint Mu'āwiya, who was told by her uncle to ask the Prophet about anyone who goes to heaven, notes that those people include the Prophet himself, the martyrs, the child born in a state of fitra, and the baby who dies in infancy ⁹. In contrast, the work of Muslim ibn al-Hajāj, which gathers numerous reports detailing descriptions of heaven in a section called *Kitāb al-Janna wa ṣifa na'īmihā wa ahlihā*, presents the future conditions of its inhabitants. Among these are gatherings with families in their best appearance, with their beauty elevated. One report states that the first group entering heaven will have faces as bright as the full moon at night, while the next group will have faces as bright as the shining stars in the sky ¹⁰. These narrations, which describe the people who enter heaven and their conditions there, provide only a slight depiction in this section. There are myriad descriptions regarding *ahl al-janna* (the people who belong to heaven) documented in ḥadīth collections, including specific groups of Muslims with particular performances. Unfortunately, despite the struggle to locate the actual texts within the ḥadīth works, several narrations have become prolific, such as the heavenly reward for women who perform prayers, fast in Ramadan, guard their chastity, and obey their husbands. Other groups

mentioned for entering heaven include those who recite the Qur'an, are careful with their words to avoid hurting others, feed the hungry, and fast during Ramadan.

The Mainstreaming of *al-'ashra al-mubashsharūn bi al-janna* within Islamic Discourse

Narrations about the inhabitants of heaven circulate in the manuals, along with news about certain individuals who have been guaranteed this reward, as quoted by the Prophet. While the manuals offer eschatological hints for Muslims facing the afterlife, the earliest believers who were told they belonged to heaven are seen as the epitome of goodness. Their figures are appreciated and documented with the elevated title *al-'ashra al-mubashsharūn bi al-janna*, reflecting popular ḥadīth accounts of the Prophet mentioning each male companion granted entry to heaven. Reported in multiple versions and chains of transmitters, the ḥadīth about the Prophet's glad tidings of heaven has generated an exclusive privilege for this specific group. This is evidenced by numerous Islamic literatures dedicating sections to the *al-mubashsharūn*, including ḥadīth collections, biographical works, and *sīra* texts such as *Kanz al-'Ummāl fī al-Sunan al-Aqwāl al-Af'āl*, *Faḍāil al-Ṣaḥāba*, and *Subul al-Hudā wa al-Rashād*. ¹¹. Additionally, another genre, such as the *syarḥ* of theological and ḥadīth literature, displays similar attention. *Sharḥ Lum'at al-'Itiqād*, *Sharḥ al-'Aqīda al-Ṭahāwiya* ¹², *Sharḥ Sunan*

⁸ Abū 'Abdullāh bin Ismā'īl Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī* (Beirut: Dār Ṭawq al-Najā, 2001).

⁹ Abū Dāwud Sulaymān ibn al-Ash'at al-Sijistānī, *Sunan Abī Dāwud* (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-'Aṣriya, 1972).

¹⁰ Muslim ibn al-Hajāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Beirut: Dār al-Iḥyā' at-Turāth al-Arabiyy, 1955).

¹¹ Al-Muttaqī Al-Hindī, *Kanz Al-'Ummāl Fī al-Sunan al-Aqwāl al-Af'āl* (Beirut: Muassasa al-Risālah, 1981);

Aḥmad Ibn Hanbal, *Faḍāil Al-Ṣaḥāba Li Aḥmad Ibn Hanbal* (Beirut: Muassasa al-Risālah, 1983); Muḥammad Ibn Yūsuf al-Ṣālihī, *Subul Al-Hudā Wa al-Rashād* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1993).

¹² Abī al-'izz al-Ḥanafī, *Sharḥ Al-'Aqīda al-Ṭahāwiya* (Beirut: Muassasah al-Risālah, 1997); Muḥammad al-'Uthaymīn, *Sharḥ Al-'Aqīda al-Safārīniya* (Riyad: Dār al-Waṭan, 2005).

Ibn Māja, and *Al-Musnad al-Muṣannaḥ al-Mu'alal* contribute to this discourse ¹³. Nevertheless, al-Kirmānī (d. 786/1384) states in *al-Kawākib al-Darārī fī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* that despite the quotations of the Prophet regarding those ten companions, this does not imply the exclusion of other recipients of heavenly rewards. However, the numerous narrations of the Prophet proclaiming good news for these ten figures have perpetuated over the centuries, thus reinforcing a dominant nuance that inherently opposes equality and inclusivity.

In addition to the dominant tendency, this article finds that attention toward al-mubashsharūn has flourished within the literature of salāfi, known as an ultra-conservative revival movement in the Sunni school during the late 19th century. Modern salāfi scholars such as al-'Uthaymīn (d. 1421/2001), 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Rājihī (d. 1433/2012), Bashār al-'Awād, and 'Abd al-Muḥsin al-'Abād are among those who uphold the qualities of these companions. While previous literature presented the narrations in an informative manner, salāfi works tend to admire these figures as superior to others, as indicated by some commentaries using superlative terms like "*fa al-aḥḍal al-bāqī al-'ashra*", "*faḍāil al-'ashra*", and "*al-aḥḍal*," as well as a special chapter titled *al-'ashra al-mubashsharūn bi al-janna* ¹⁴. The proliferation of this narrative continues to the present day, with the term "mubashsharūn" expanding to a broader scope beyond academic discussions, reaching religious preaching, social media posts, and even children's books. However, the tendency of

compilers to elevate certain companions, who happen to be male, is seen as an integral part of the internalization of androcentrism, especially when noting that female companions are not mentioned in discussions that are equivalent to the al-mubashsharūn discourse.

The specific quotation of *al-mubashsharūn* throughout Islamic scholarly literature is most likely influenced by the way the Prophet delivered his message: vividly and straightforwardly, without any micro-context available in the reports. According to the matan (content) of the ḥadīth accounts, the Prophet's words were explicit in delivering the glad tidings, even though there are slight variations in the quoting of individuals. In a report from Sa'īd ibn Zayd, he recounts hearing the Prophet list the names of companions who were assured of heaven, with the last person mentioned being himself after being asked by another companion about the ninth individual. ¹⁵ In contrast, a report from Ibn 'Umar reveals a total of ten male companions, including Abū 'Ubayda ibn al-Jarrā ¹⁶, which aligns with a report from 'Abd al-Rahman ibn 'Awf that mentions all these individuals ¹⁷. Moreover, the core content of the Prophet's words in delivering the glad tidings was straightforward: *Abū Bakar fī al-janna, wa 'Umar fī al-janna, wa 'Uthmān fī al-janna, wa 'Alī fī al-janna, wa Ṭalha fī al-janna, wa al-Zubayr fī al-janna, wa 'Abd al-Rahman ibn 'Awf fī al-Janna, wa Sa'd fī al-janna, wa Sa'īd fī al-janna, wa Abū 'Ubayda ibn al-Jarra fī al-janna*. Additionally, al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505) meticulously gathers these various reports and presents several commentaries from earlier

¹³ 'Abd al-Muḥsin al-'Abād, *Sharḥ Sunan Abī Dāwud Li Al-'Ibād*, n.d.; Bashār 'Awād Ma'rūf, *Al-Musnad al-Muṣannaḥ al-Mu'alal* (Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 2013).

¹⁴ 'Umar al-Ashqār, *Al-Janna Wa al-Nār* (Yordania: Dār al-Nafāis, 1998); 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Rājihī, *Syarḥ*

Sunan Ibn Māja (Maktaba al-'Ulūm al-Islāmiya, n.d.); al-'Uthaymīn, *Sharḥ Al-'Aqīda al-Safārīniya*.

¹⁵ ibn Yazīd al-Qazwīnī, *Sunan Ibn Māja*.

¹⁶ al-Ṭabrānī, *Al-Mu'jam al-Ṣaghīr*.

¹⁷ al-Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmi' al-Kābir/Sunan al-Tirmidhī*.

scholars regarding the *ḥadīth* in one of his prominent works, *Jam' al-Jawāmi' al-Ma'rūf*.

Revisiting Overlooked Figures: Female Companions Promised Paradise

The exclusive nuance within the discourse of *al-'ashra al-mubashsharūn bi al-janna* raises questions regarding the dominance of males and the absence of females in the notable list of “those promised heaven.” Given the numerous *ḥadīth* accounts mentioning female companions who are also assured entry into heaven, this study revisits Islamic texts to identify potential female figures worthy of this designation. By investigating the research of Yasmin Amin, who has highlighted female individuals in contrast to the ten male companions, this section aims to rethink the list Amin has compiled, along with providing necessary descriptions of these women. The list includes a total of 14 names, encompassing the Prophet's wife, daughter, in-law, maid, nurse, and other loyal companions who steadfastly upheld their new faith. With this list in hand, the study begins by examining these figures while evaluating their distinctive performances and roles that merit recognition as deserving of heaven, relying on biographical works for supporting information.

The first individual on the list is Khadīja bint Khuwaylid, who was the first wife of Prophet Muhammad and widely known as a successful merchant, owning the most caravans in Mecca at that time. Her full name was Khadīja bint Khuwaylid ibn Asad ibn 'Abd al-'Uzza ibn Quṣṣay ibn Kilāb. She was married twice: first to Hind ibn al-Nabash ibn Zarāra ibn Waqdān, with whom she had two sons, Hāla and Hind.

Her second marriage was to 'Ātiq ibn 'Ābid ibn 'Abd Allah ibn 'Umar ibn Makhzūm, and together they had a daughter named Hind as well.¹⁸ She was considered an honorable woman throughout her life, excelling as a successful businesswoman and being the first person to accept Islam, dedicating her life to supporting her husband's prophecy¹⁹. At one point, the Prophet even delivered her a greeting from God through the angel Jibrīl. Her integrity and sincerity were tested from the time she aimed to marry Muhammad until her last breath, earning her the title of the best woman to enter heaven (*afḍal al-nisā' ahl al-janna*), alongside three other remarkable women: Fāṭima bint Muḥammad, Maryam bint 'Imran, and Asiya bint Muzāhim.

The second individual is Fāṭima bint Muḥammad, whose privilege, as noted by Yasmin Amin, largely derives from her father being a Prophet, at least within Sunni literature²⁰. Several *ḥadīth* accounts mentioning her name highlight her great attention and affection in caring for her father when he was offended and injured by the Meccans, earning her the title *umm abīhā* (the mother of her father). When her father was nearing his death, Fāṭima was deeply emotional and cried as she sat beside him²¹. She was eventually included among the four best women to enter heaven, a title also noted in Ibn Kathīr's (d. 774/1373) works, referred to as *Sayyidāt al-Nisā'*. Furthermore, an appendix cited by Amin from al-Ḥaḍramī (d. 489/1095) states that Fāṭima's rank is that of a woman in heaven, second only to Maryam; however, due to her lineage from the Prophet, she is likely preferred above all others.

¹⁸ Muḥammad Ibn Sa'd, *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1990).

¹⁹ Yūsuf ibn 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abd al-Bar, *Al-Istī'āb Fī Ma'rifat al-Aṣḥāb* (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1992).

²⁰ Asma Afsaruddin, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Islam and Women* (Oxford University Press, 2023).

²¹ Abu Dāwūd aṭ-Ṭayālīsī, *Mustadrak Abī Dāwūd Aṭ-Ṭayālīsī* (Kairo: Dār al-Hajr, 1999).

The third individual is Umm Rūmān, the Prophet's mother-in-law through his marriage to 'Aisha. Before her marriage to Abū Bakr, she was married to Hārith ibn Sakhbarah. From her first marriage, she had a son named al-Ṭufayl, and with Abū Bakr, she had two children: a son named 'Abdullāh and a daughter named 'Aisha²². Although there are disputes regarding her complete lineage, it is commonly agreed that she was named Zaynab bint Dahmān and was a descendant of Ghanim ibn Malik ibn Kināna. She was among the early believers who migrated to Medina with the Prophet's family. The Prophet referred to Umm Rūmān as *imra'atun sālihah* (a pious woman) and called her *hūr* (a female creature in heaven with a perfectly exquisite appearance) during a conversation with other companions²³. Additionally, the Prophet honored her with a special prayer when visiting her grave, acknowledging her efforts in establishing faith to support Islamic teachings.

The fourth individual is Asmā' bint Abī Bakr, the Prophet's sister-in-law and half-sister of 'Aisha. Her mother was Qutayla bint 'Abd al-'Uzza. Asmā' is well-known in early Islamic history for her bravery; she concealed food and water in her belt and divided it between Abū Bakr and the Prophet while they were hiding in the Cave of Thawr from the polytheists on their way to Medina. Ibn Abī Khaithamah (d. 279/892) narrates this action, which led the Prophet to name her *dhāt al-niṭāqayn* (the woman of the two belts). A narration reported in *Insān al-'Uyūn fī Sīra al-Amīn al-Ma'mūn* states that the Prophet prayed for her belts to be

replaced with others in heaven²⁴, which Amin interprets as a sign of glad tidings of *al-janna*. Furthermore, Asmā's generosity is a notable aspect of her character that is rarely discussed. She earned the nickname *sakhiyah an-naḥs* due to her altruism in giving alms, reflecting the Prophet's advice not to withhold wealth so that Allah does not withhold His mercy²⁵. A report in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* includes a narration from Fātimah bint Mudzir, in which Asmā' stated that when she fell ill, she would manumit all her slaves and encourage her children and family to spend in charity without expecting anything in return.

The fifth individual is Umm Sulaym, the mother of Anas ibn Mālīk, a loyal servant of the Prophet. Her full name was Umm Sulaym bint Miḥān, although there are variations regarding her original name, including Rumailā, Malīka, Gumaiṣā', and Rumaysā'²⁶. She was known for her steadfastness in her faith, having sworn not to remarry until her son was grown and capable of speaking in public. Once Anas reached adolescence and she felt ready to marry again, Abū Ṭalḥa proposed to her, and their wedding took place after he accepted Islam, which was a primary condition for their union. Abū Ṭalḥa's new faith thus became the greatest dowry for her²⁷. Speaking about her particular deeds, Imām Muslim (d. 261/875) reports several narrations highlighting her careful attention to orphans, including her immediate response when she found her foster daughter crying after hearing the Prophet's words. The Prophet acknowledged the situation and defended himself as an

²² Ibn Sa'd, *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*.

²³ Taqī al-Dīn al-Maqrīzī, *Imtā' al-Asmā' Bimā Li an-Nabī Min al-Aḥwāl Wa al-Amwāl Wa al-Ḥafada Wa al-Mitā'* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1999); Abū al-Qāsim as-Suhailī, *Ar-Rawḍ al-Unuf Fī Syarḥ as-Sīrah an-Nabawiyah*. Edisi Pertama, 1412 H (Beirut: Dār al-Iḥyā' at-Turāth al-Arabiyy, 1991).

²⁴ 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ḥalabī, *Insān al-'Uyūn fī Sīra al-Amīn al-Ma'mūn (al-Sīra al-Ḥalabiyya)* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2006).

²⁵ Ibn Sa'd, *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*.

²⁶ Ibn al-Athīr, *Jāmi' Al-Uṣūl Fī Aḥādīth al-Rasūl* (Damaskus: Maktabat al-Ḥalawān, 1972).

²⁷ Ibn Sa'd, *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*.

ordinary human being. Moreover, according to a report from Anas ibn Mālik, Umm Sulaym participated in the Battle of Hunayn, where she carried a dagger to protect herself from enemies²⁸. Anas also noted that the Prophet would only visit the homes of female companions if it was Umm Sulaym's, indicating the close bond they shared, despite not being related by blood. Her dedication during the battle and her ultimate sacrifice led to the Prophet's tribute to her, as he expressed mercy on her. Additionally, a report from Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh recounts the Prophet seeing himself in heaven and finding the wife of Abū Ṭalḥa already there, which Amin interprets as a sign of the Prophet's glad tidings of heaven for Umm Sulaym²⁹.

The sixth individual is Umm Ḥarām. Amin notes that her variant name is not mentioned in any available sources, but it is reported that she was Umm Sulaym's sister and 'Anās ibn Mālik's aunt. She was the wife of 'Ubāda ibn al-Ṣāmit, the first Anṣārī to participate in the Pledge of al-'Aqaba, thus she was among the early converts to Islam, like her sister, and included among the *al-ṣābiqāt*³⁰. The Prophet highly respected her and would often rest in her home, frequently praying that she would become a martyr. Umm Ḥarām ultimately became one during her journey with her husband to Cyprus, where she died after falling from a mount she was attempting to climb. Amin highlights that Umm Ḥarām is known for her contributions to ḥadīth, with all her reports included in most collections.

The seventh individual is Umm Zufar, also known as Umm Zakhar. There is limited information about her identity, but available reports depict her as a tall, black female companion³¹. A transmission route from Abū 'A'ṣim mentions her name as Juthāmah al-Muzaniyyah, and the Prophet referred to her as Hadhānah, while other reports call her Hasānah. Additionally, Ibn Ḥajar noted that Umm Zufar was a māshiṭa (female hairdresser) for Khadīja and frequently visited her and the Prophet. Many narrations indicate that she suffered from epilepsy, and due to the lack of medical understanding at that time, she was mistakenly thought to be possessed by jinn, prompting other companions to perform exorcisms on her. Al-Hujjāj even described her as insane, but the Prophet affirmed her righteousness in the afterlife³². A well-known narration about Umm Zufar involves her asking the Prophet to pray for her healing. She was given a choice: to recover from her illness or to receive the privilege of passing into the afterlife without reckoning, which meant entering heaven. She chose to endure her condition in hopes of earning the reward of heaven.

The eighth individual is Umm 'Umāra', originally named Nusayba bint Ka'b, also known as Bint Hārith or Umm 'Aṭiya. She was from Basra and participated in numerous battles, where she cared for the sick and treated the wounds of the injured. Additionally, she witnessed the bathing of the deceased daughter of the Prophet and later narrated her experience with great respect³³. According to a report from Dhamra ibn Sa'd al-Mazānī, whose grandmother

²⁸ Aḥmad ibn Hanbal, *Musnad al-Imām Aḥmad ibn Hanbal* (Beirut: Muassasah ar-Risālah, 2001).

²⁹ Amin, "Early Muslim Woman as Moral Paragons in Classical Islamic Literature: Al-Mubashsharāt Bi-l-Janna"; Ibn al-Athīr, *Jāmi' al-Uṣūl Fī Aḥādīth al-Rasūl*.

³⁰ Ibn 'Abd al-Bar, *Al-Isti'āb Fī Ma'rifat al-Aṣḥāb*.

³¹ Ibn al-Athīr, *Jāmi' al-Uṣūl Fī Aḥādīth al-Rasūl*.

³² Ibn 'Abd al-Bar, *Al-Isti'āb Fī Ma'rifat al-Aṣḥāb*.

³³ Ibn 'Abd al-Bar.

witnessed her efforts during battle, the Prophet praised Nusayba's remarkable position among her peers³⁴. He observed the struggle and pain she endured, noting that she tied her cloth around her waist despite suffering from thirteen wounds, including a severe one on her shoulder that took over a year to heal. The Prophet's concern for Nusayba was evident when she could not accompany him to Hamrā' al-Asad due to significant blood loss. Upon his return, he sent Abdullāh ibn Ka'b al-Mazānī to check on her condition, and he was overjoyed to learn that she had survived. Another account describes Nusayba's heroic actions during battle. Muhammad ibn 'Umar noted that she was among fewer than ten people who defended the Prophet. She retrieved a shield thrown by an escaping soldier and fought off a horseman, striking the horse's leg until it fell. The Prophet assisted her in overcoming the enemy, allowing Nusayba (Umm 'Umāra') to defeat him. In addition to her participation in battles, she was one of only two women who pledged allegiance at al-'Aqaba, among a total of seventy companions. Umm 'Umāra' once requested the Prophet to pray that she be included among his companions in heaven, expressing her indifference to worldly matters. The Prophet assured her that her wish to accompany him in heaven had been granted³⁵.

The ninth individual is Ummu Ayman, known as Baraka bint Tha'laba ibn 'Amr ibn al-Nu'mān, and she is also referred to as Umm

Dhabā³⁶. he was married to Tha'laba ibn 'Amr ibn al-Nu'mān, and together they had a son named Usāma. Ummu Ayman served as a maid and caregiver to the Prophet, accompanying him during both of his migrations to Habasha and Medina. A report from Anas ibn Mālik recounts that after the Prophet's death, Abu Bakr and 'Umar would routinely visit Umm Ayman, who was deeply affected by the loss, as it signified the end of divine revelation³⁷. Moreover, Ummu Ayman shared a close bond with the Prophet, who referred to her as "my mother," highlighting her status within his family. Abdullāh ibn Musā reported that Umm Ayman held a special place in the Prophet's heart, noting that if anyone were to marry a woman destined for heaven, it would be Umm Ayman³⁸.

The tenth individual is Al-Rabī' bint Mu'awwidz al-Anṣāriyya, an Anṣarī woman known for her close connection with the Prophet³⁹. She actively participated in battles alongside him and was one of the female companions who pledged allegiance "under the tree," during which the Prophet declared that those who made that pledge would escape hellfire and enter heaven⁴⁰. Her position among the companions is regarded as elevated. The Prophet visited her on the occasion of her marriage, where he sat on her bed. In another account, Al-Rabī' brought the Prophet a bucket of dates and grapes, and he gifted her jewelry, encouraging her to wear it.⁴¹ Additionally, she had the honor of serving the Prophet during his ablutions, offering to pour the

³⁴ Ibn Sa'd, *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*.

³⁵ al-Maqrīzī, *Imtā' al-Asmā' Bimā Li an-Nabī Min al-Aḥwāl Wa al-Amwāl Wa al-Ḥafada Wa al-Mitā'*.

³⁶ 'Iz ad-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr, Abū al-Hasan, and Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Jazarī, *Usd al-Ghāba fī Ma'rifa al-Sahāba* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1994).

³⁷ Muḥammad ibn Mukaram ibn 'Alī, Abū al-Faḍl, and Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn Mandzur al-Ifriqī, *Mukhtaṣar Tārikh Dimashq Li Ibn 'Asākir* (Damaskus: Dār al-Fikr, 1984).

³⁸ Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī, *Al-Iṣābah fī Tamayiz al-Sahāba* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1995).

³⁹ Muḥammad ibn Hibbān et al., *al-Thiqāt li Ibn Hibbān* (Haiderabad: Dār al-Ma'ārif al-'Uthmāniya, 1973).

⁴⁰ Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī, *Tadhīb Al- Tadhīb* (Dubai: Dār al-Barr, 2021).

⁴¹ Ibn 'Abd al-Bar, *Al-Isti'āb Fī Ma'rifat al-Aṣḥāb*.

water for him. Her close relationship with the Prophet made her a trusted companion, as illustrated when Ibn ‘Umar asked her about Uthmān’s decision to divorce his wife.

The eleventh individual is Sumayya bint Khayyāt, who was the first martyr in Islam. She was a servant of Abū Ḥudhayfa ibn al-Mughīra from the Banū Makhzūm tribe. Her original name was Salmā, and she hailed from the Lakhm tribe⁴². Her husband, Yāsir ibn ‘Āmir ibn Mālik al-‘Ansī, initially traveled from Yemen to Mecca for a formal affair with Abū Ḥudhayfa, which ultimately led to his marriage with Sumayya. From this marriage, they had a son named Ammār, who was manumitted by Abū Ḥudhayfa, thus strengthening the bond between him and Yāsir⁴³. This loyalty was evidenced when Abū Ḥudhayfa avenged the man who injured Yāsir by beating him up and breaking his ribs. Despite this strong relationship, when Yāsir’s family decided to accept Islam, Abū Ḥudhayfa opposed their new faith, which eventually led to severe torment for Yāsir, Sumayya, and their son. A report from ‘Uthmān states that when the Prophet saw Yāsir’s family being tortured, he instructed them to be patient and made a supplication to God to forgive them⁴⁴. Another report from al-Faḍl ibn ‘Anbasa mentions that the Prophet urged them to be patient and gave the family the glad tidings of heaven⁴⁵.

The twelfth individual is Umm Waraqa bint ‘Abd Allah ibn al-Ḥārith ibn ‘Uwaymir ibn Nawfal al-Anṣārī. The Prophet often referred to her as *al-Shahīda*⁴⁶. She is prominent in

discussions about women serving as an *imām* in mixed-gender prayers. The Prophet once commanded her to lead a prayer for the people in her house. Ibn Athīr noted that Umm Waraqa was one of the companions who had memorized the Qur’an, making her a preferred choice to be an *imām* in her household. Abd al-Rahmān al-Khallād added other narrations indicating that Umm Waraqa was appointed to lead congregational prayers. Regarding the debates about the prayers that Umm Waraqa led, Abū Nu’aym argued that she led the prayers of female believers from the Muhājirīn⁴⁷. In addition to her role as an *imām* and her intellectual capacity, she was eager to participate in the Battle of Badr. She expressed her desire to care for the injured and look after sick people, hoping this would lead her to achieve her dream of becoming a martyr. The Prophet then replied with a prayer, wishing her to be a martyr one day. Unfortunately, she was murdered by her maid, whom she had recently manumitted, during the caliphate of ‘Umar.

The thirteenth individual is Umm Sa’d, whose name was Kabsha bint Rāfi’ ibn ‘Abīd ibn an-Nu’mān al-Ajbar ibn ‘Awf from Banī Khazraj. She was al-Anṣārī and among the early believers who pledged allegiance with other female companions after her arrival in Medina. Her entire family is said to have been committed to establishing their faith and supporting the Prophet. She had a son named Sa’d ibn Mu’ādh al-Ashhalī. Umm Sa’d was known for her heartbreaking grief and mourning over her son’s death⁴⁸. While the Prophet condemned every lamenter, mourner, and weeper, he excluded

⁴² al-‘Asqalānī, *Tadhīb Al- Tadhīb*.

⁴³ Ibn ‘Abd al-Bar, *Al-Isti‘āb Fī Ma‘rifat al-Aṣḥāb*.

⁴⁴ Jamāl al-Dīn al-Jawzī, *Ṣiḥḥa As-Ṣaḥīḥa* (Kairo: Dār al-Hadīth, 2000).

⁴⁵ Ibn ‘Abd al-Bar, *Al-Isti‘āb Fī Ma‘rifat al-Aṣḥāb*.

⁴⁶ al-‘Asqalānī, *Tadhīb Al- Tadhīb*.

⁴⁷ Abu Nu’aym Ahmad al-Isfahānī, *Hilya Al-Awliyā Wa al-Ṭabaqāt al-Aṣfiyā* (Mesir: Matba’a al-Sa’ada, 1974).

⁴⁸ Ibn al-Athīr, al-Hasan, and al-Jazarī, *Uṣd al-Ghāba fī Ma‘rifat al-Sahāba*.

Umm Sa'd and comforted her instead, by giving her the glad tidings that she and her family would enter heaven together ⁴⁹.

The last individual in this entry is Umm Kulthūm bint 'Uqba Abū Mu'īt. She accepted Islam while living in Mecca and pledged her allegiance before migrating to Madina. According to a report from Muḥammad ibn 'Umar, there was no other female Quraish willing to leave her family for the sake of accepting Islam and emigrating with the Prophet except Umm Kulthūm. She even migrated by herself, accompanied by a man from Khuz'a, until they arrived in Madina during the ceasefire period of Hudaibiya ⁵⁰. Umm Kulthūm narrated many reports from the Prophet, as she was renowned for her intellectual capability and persistent faith. She was also considered a companion who could read, write, and teach her knowledge to other Muslims. Moreover, Umm Kulthūm experienced a complicated marriage with Zubayr ibn al-'Awwām, who was known to be tough and aggressive, leading her to decide to divorce him. She eventually married four times and died just one month after marrying Amr ibn al-'Asm. ⁵¹.

Those descriptions of female companions demonstrate how their personal piety encouraged them to perform numerous good deeds, allowing them to receive glad tidings, special prayers, or appreciation, which are considered as forms of the Prophet's promise for entering heaven. However, the most notable quality embedded in these figures is their commitment to establishing faith. Among them are the companions who accepted the new faith in the early days (*al-sābiqāt*), those who took a

pledge (*bay'a*) with the Prophet as a loyalty oath, and those who endured torment and persecution. In addition to their steadfastness of faith, their excellent traits also played a significant role in earning them heavenly rewards. By revisiting these individuals through an examination of the available sources, this section presents aspects of their lives to shed light on the overarching qualities of female companions. By revisiting these individuals through an examination of the available sources, this section presents aspects of their lives to shed light on the overarching qualities of female companions. Furthermore, these descriptions help the author identify the narrative pattern in which Yasmin Amin selects them as individuals equal to their male counterparts promised heaven.

Al-Mubashsharāt bi al-Janna: Challenging Androcentric Perspectives

According to descriptions of those 14 female companions, each figure displays high qualities akin to the *al-Mubashsharūn*, reflecting their personal experiences as women in 7th century Arabia. Employing gender consciousness as a framework allows this section to explore the broader context of these companions' lives, particularly regarding the Prophet's glad tidings for them. Given the societal conditions during the formative period of Islam, the companions likely endured double struggles in establishing the new faith while contending the extreme patriarchy of their time. For instance, Umm Kulthūm faced difficulties in filing for a divorce from her violent husband, indicating that divine intervention was

⁴⁹ al-Maqrīzī, *Imtā' al-Asmā' Bimā Li an-Nabī Min al-Aḥwāl Wa al-Amwāl Wa al-Ḥafāda Wa al-Mitā'*.

⁵⁰ Abū 'Abdullāh al-Hākim, *Al-Mustadrak 'Alā Ṣaḥīḥayn Suriyah*, 2018 (Damaskus: Dār al-Manhaj al-Quwaym, 2018).

⁵¹ Ibn al-Athīr, *Jāmi' al-Uṣūl Fī Aḥādīth al-Rasūl*.

necessary to resolve this issue. Similarly, Umm Zufar was labeled a crazy woman simply because her unidentified illness caused her to behave in ways that were often seen as shameful, sometimes even revealing her 'awra unconsciously. The experience of womanhood is one of the prominent qualities of these companions that is rarely discussed, serving as a response to male-centered discourse.

Considering the narratives about these 14 female figures, this section identifies distinctive traits that some of them share, along with the unique attitudes of each individual. Most were among the earliest converts to Islam; they pledged allegiance to the Prophet as a symbol of their devotion and followed him to emigrate to Medina. Being among the first believers highlights the severity of the struggles they faced, which included threats of death, violence, injustice, and humiliation. One of them, Sumayya bint Khayyāt, is known as the first martyr in Islam. Additionally, these women exhibited courage by participating in battles with the Prophet; some, like Umm 'Umāra', bravely protected him despite suffering wounds. Besides their participation in battles, some companions also served as loyal maids and caregivers to the Prophet, building close relationships akin to mother and son, like Umm Sulaym. Furthermore, some of them possessed intellectual abilities, teaching other companions, such as Al-Rabī' bint Mu'awwidz, while Umm Waraqa even led congregational prayers and had memorized the Qur'an. Overall, they displayed remarkable qualities that have been "unintentionally" overlooked throughout Islamic history, leaving their names in the shadows despite their equal standing with male companions.

The term *al-Mubashsharāt bi al-Janna* is coined by Yasmin Amin in her book focused on Islam and women, specifically in deciphering women's lives through history and literature. Concerned with highlighting female companions as moral paragons, she addresses the existing gap in the discourse of "those promised heaven," which has been dominated by male perspectives. Discussing *al-Mubashsharāt bi al-Janna* provides an opportunity to question the perceived superiority of certain companions, as androcentrism has left its imprint on narratives that exclusively admire one gender: the male. The issue that *al-Mubashsharāt bi al-Janna* seeks to challenge is not the companions themselves, but rather how later Islamic compilers conveyed the Prophet's words in their works. Challenging this male-centered perspective means striving for a more equitable narrative, allowing Muslim women to be included as subjects in eschatological discussions.

Conclusion

The discourse of *al-Mubashsharūn bi al-janna* has begun to shape into an exclusive term through the intervention of numerous compilers within Islamic literature, endorsing the ten male companions as the most preferred above others—or, in more tendentious terms, as a superior group. This male-dominant nuance tends to marginalize the presence of other companions in terms of their standing, particularly women who hold the same noteworthy role in transmitting knowledge and establishing the new faith. The absence of female figures in the entries, despite the Prophet giving them glad tidings as well, results from a combination of an androcentric milieu that expanded during medieval periods and authors' particular tributes since modern times. The early

sources however, did not present Al-Mubashsharun in the way to approve their level as the highest one; the contents delivered to inform them as recipients of heaven whom the Prophet happened mentioning directly in order—as al-Kirmānī has been stated about the degree. In contrast, the modern Islamic literatures particularly written by *salafī* author, took shape the discourse in defining the highest status of those ten male-companions by employing terms of superlative degree to affirm their preferences. This subtle shift furthermore has been developing to a broader range within the Muslim community, evidenced by the spread of *al-Mubashsharūn bi al janna* bi al janna outside scholarly discussion. As a consequence of this matter, later commoners would likely more familiar with the ten male companions promised of heaven over several companions especially the female ones.

To challenge the androcentric discourse regarding *al-Mubashsharūn*, Yasmin Amin coins the feminine term *al-Mubashsharāt*, which includes the entries of female companions who were assured of heaven. The scattered reports make it challenging to recollect a total of 14 figures, so it is possible for the list to be expanded or debated, invoking the proliferation of *al-mubashsharat* to reconstruct a more inclusive narrative. Furthermore, the selection of these female figures is highly significant, given their devotion and roles in practicing their faith despite the struggles they endured. This article identifies some salient features of these 14 female companions regarding their heavenly rewards. Most of them were among the earliest group to accept Islam (*as-sābiqāt*) and followed the Prophet to emigrate from Mecca to Medina, leaving their families behind. Some even participated in battles to protect the Prophet and help treat the injured. A few of them died as

martyrs (*shuhadā'*). Moreover, they generally displayed distinctive traits within their personal contexts, such as patience in extreme situations that threatened their lives and devotion amidst suffering in establishing Islam. Even though the entry of *al-Mubashsharāt* could be disputed—since some glad tidings were not explicitly stated as in the case of *al-Mubashsharūn*—and in light of objections to gender-conscious reading that “disrupt” a normative Islamic discourse, this innovation remains important for questioning and provoking male-dominated narratives about “those companions assured of heaven.

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