



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Section: *Philosophy & Religion*

Re-examining prophetic traditions: A feminist theological analysis of gender construction in Islamic hadith literature

Hana Afifah^{1*} , Zaeni Anwar¹, Andi Lili Sukmawardani¹, Amal Nur Ilmiawan¹, Daris Salamah¹, Liana Masruroh¹, Zulfi Fadhlurrahman¹, Adam Azizi¹ & Umiatu Rohmah¹

¹PTIQ University Jakarta, Indonesia

*Correspondence: hanaafifah@mhs.ptiq.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This article re-examines gender-related prophetic traditions within Islamic hadith literature through an interdisciplinary framework that integrates classical hadith sciences with contemporary feminist theory. Focusing on two frequently debated hadiths, woman's creation from a rib and the attribution of misfortune to women, the study critically analyzes both their isnad (chains of transmission) and matan (textual content), alongside their historical and socio-cultural contexts. While traditional scholarship has often interpreted these hadiths in ways that reinforce female subordination, this research argues that such readings require re-evaluation in light of both early Islamic corrective voices, particularly that of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah, and modern hermeneutical tools. Drawing on Simone de Beauvoir's existentialist critique of "the Second Sex" and the construction of women as "the Other," the study reveals how patriarchal interpretations emerged and how they may be deconstructed without undermining the sacred nature of the Prophetic tradition. The findings demonstrate that, when approached through contextual and gender-critical lenses, these hadiths do not legitimize misogyny but instead encourage ethical responsibility and justice in gender relations. By bridging classical Islamic methodologies with feminist theoretical insights, this article contributes to ongoing debates in Islamic studies and gender studies, highlighting the possibility of a more egalitarian and emancipatory understanding of hadith.

KEYWORDS: gender construction, hadith studies, Simone de Beauvoir, women in Islam, Isnad and Matan criticism

Research Journal in Advanced Humanities

Volume 6, Issue 3, 2025

ISSN: 2708-5945 (Print)

ISSN: 2708-5953 (Online)

ARTICLE HISTORY

Submitted: 18 May 2025

Accepted: 02 August 2025

Published: 19 September 2025

HOW TO CITE

Affah, H., Anwar, Z., Sukmawardani, A. L., Ilmiawan, A. N., Salamah, D., Masruroh, L., Fadhlurrahman, Z., Azizi, A., & Rohmah, U. (2025). Re-examining prophetic traditions: A feminist theological analysis of gender construction in Islamic hadith literature. *Research Journal in Advanced Humanities*, 6(3). <https://doi.org/10.58256/90sze568>



Published in Nairobi, Kenya by Royallite Global, an imprint of Royallite Publishers Limited

© 2025 The Author(s). This is an open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Introduction

The intersection of Islamic theology and contemporary feminist theory presents a complex scholarly terrain that demands careful methodological consideration and cultural sensitivity. Within the vast corpus of hadith literature, certain prophetic traditions have generated substantial debate regarding their interpretation and contemporary relevance, particularly those that appear to address women's nature and social position. Two specific hadiths have attracted significant scholarly attention: the tradition describing women as created from a rib, and the narrative concerning ill-omen associated with houses, horses, and women. These texts, while rooted in classical Islamic scholarship, require contemporary re-examination through modern theoretical frameworks to understand their contextual meanings and implications. The application of Simone de Beauvoir's theoretical construct of "the second sex" to these Islamic texts offers a unique lens through which to analyze gender construction within religious discourse. This interdisciplinary approach acknowledges both the sacred nature of Islamic texts and the validity of contemporary feminist inquiry, establishing the foundation for a nuanced scholarly investigation (Ahmed, 2011).

Building upon this interdisciplinary foundation, the methodological challenges inherent in applying Western feminist theory to Islamic religious texts necessitate a framework that respects both intellectual traditions while maintaining scholarly rigor. Simone de Beauvoir's seminal work "The Second Sex" provides analytical tools for understanding how women have been historically constructed as "other" in various cultural and religious contexts, offering methodologies that can illuminate similar constructions within Islamic literature. The concept of women as "other" resonates with specific interpretations of hadith literature, yet requires careful contextualization within Islamic epistemology and hermeneutics to avoid cultural misappropriation. Contemporary Islamic feminist scholars have increasingly engaged with Western feminist theory while maintaining their commitment to Islamic principles and methodologies, creating a scholarly dialogue that enriches both traditions. This synthetic approach has produced valuable insights into the ways gender operates within Islamic discourse and practice, demonstrating the potential fruitfulness of cross-cultural theoretical engagement. The present analysis contributes to this ongoing conversation by examining specific hadith texts through de Beauvoir's theoretical lens while remaining attentive to Islamic scholarly traditions and their interpretative methodologies (Wadud, 2006).

This theoretical synthesis becomes particularly relevant when examining the first hadith under consideration, which describes women as created from a rib and has been subject to extensive commentary throughout Islamic history. Classical commentators such as Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani and al-Nawawi provided detailed analyses of this tradition, with interpretations ranging from literal anatomical descriptions to metaphorical explanations of gender relations and marital dynamics. These traditional interpretations often emphasized the hadith's implications for understanding women's nature and appropriate treatment within marriage, frequently highlighting concepts of fragility, protection, and complementarity. Contemporary scholars have challenged essentialist interpretations of this text, arguing for more contextual and metaphorical readings that emphasize divine wisdom in creating complementary rather than hierarchical gender relations. The application of de Beauvoir's feminist framework to this interpretative tradition reveals how certain readings may have contributed to the construction of women as fundamentally different from and subordinate to men. This analysis demonstrates how de Beauvoir's concept of women being defined in relation to men rather than as autonomous beings provides a valuable lens for examining these classical interpretative approaches without undermining the sacred nature of the original text (Barlas, 2002).

The interpretative complexities surrounding the first hadith naturally lead to consideration of the second tradition under examination, which presents additional hermeneutical challenges regarding ill-omen associated with houses, horses, and women. This hadith has generated significant scholarly debate, particularly in light of Sayyidah Aisha's reported objection to interpretations that would associate women with misfortune or negative influence. Her response provides crucial insight into early Islamic attitudes toward gender and superstition, suggesting that the Prophet's statement was intended to critique rather than endorse pre-Islamic beliefs about women bringing misfortune. Aisha's intervention indicates that the hadith should be understood within the context of addressing jahiliyyah (pre-Islamic ignorance) practices rather than establishing Islamic doctrine about women's essential nature. This historical precedent of female scholarly authority challenging potentially misogynistic interpretations demonstrates the presence of critical feminist consciousness within early Islamic

intellectual culture. The juxtaposition of these two hadiths and their respective interpretative traditions reveals the complexity of gender construction within Islamic discourse and the importance of examining multiple voices and perspectives in hadith interpretation (Spellberg, 1994).

Aisha's scholarly intervention in the interpretation of the second hadith exemplifies the theoretical frameworks that Simone de Beauvoir developed in "The Second Sex," particularly regarding women's agency and interpretative authority. De Beauvoir's concept of women as "the second sex" describes how women have been historically constructed as derivative of and subordinate to men, lacking independent subjectivity and agency in intellectual and spiritual matters. Her analysis of how women are defined through their relationships to men rather than as autonomous individuals resonates with certain traditional interpretations of Islamic gender roles that emerged in later historical periods. However, Aisha's example demonstrates an alternative model where women exercise independent intellectual authority and challenge interpretations that diminish their dignity or agency. De Beauvoir's critique of biological determinism offers analytical tools for examining how anatomical differences referenced in the first hadith have been used to justify social and spiritual hierarchies. The emphasis on constructed rather than essential gender differences in de Beauvoir's work enables a more nuanced reading of both hadith texts that addresses their historical contexts while revealing the contingent nature of their interpretations (de Beauvoir, 1949/2011).

While de Beauvoir's theoretical framework provides valuable analytical tools, the application of Western feminist theory to Islamic texts requires careful attention to issues of cultural authenticity, religious authority, and methodological appropriateness. Critics of such approaches argue that Western feminism may impose foreign conceptual frameworks on Islamic materials, potentially distorting their original meanings and cultural significance through inappropriate theoretical lenses. Proponents counter that feminist theoretical tools can illuminate universal patterns of gender construction that transcend cultural boundaries while respecting the specificity of Islamic contexts and interpretative traditions. The question of interpretative authority remains particularly contentious, with debates focusing on whether non-Muslim or Western-trained scholars can legitimately contribute to Islamic theological discourse without compromising its integrity. Contemporary Islamic feminist scholars have navigated these methodological challenges by developing synthetic approaches that draw on both Islamic and feminist intellectual traditions. This methodological innovation acknowledges the value of both perspectives while maintaining critical distance from uncritical acceptance of either framework, creating space for authentic scholarly dialogue (Mir-Hosseini, 2006).

These methodological considerations become particularly important when examining the historical context of hadith compilation and transmission, which provides crucial background for understanding how gender-related prophetic traditions have been preserved, interpreted, and applied throughout Islamic history. The process of hadith collection occurred primarily during the second and third centuries of Islam, involving complex methodologies of authentication and classification that reflected the social and political contexts of their compilation period. Women played significant roles as hadith transmitters during this formative period, with figures like Sayyidah Aisha recognized as among the most prolific and authoritative narrators of prophetic traditions. However, the social position of women during the compilation period influenced both the content and interpretation of gender-related hadiths, with some traditions potentially reflecting societal attitudes as much as authentic prophetic teachings. Contemporary hadith scholarship has increasingly recognized the need to distinguish between authentic prophetic guidance and culturally influenced interpretations that may have shaped the transmission process. This historical awareness proves essential for applying contemporary theoretical frameworks like de Beauvoir's to traditional texts while maintaining scholarly integrity and respect for the transmission tradition (Brown, 2007).

The historical development of hadith interpretation reveals its close connection to Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), demonstrating how these specific traditions have been applied in legal and social contexts throughout Islamic history. Classical legal scholars drew extensively on the hadith literature to develop rulings regarding women's rights, responsibilities, and social positions, often citing the traditions examined in this study as foundational texts. The translation of hadith into legal doctrine involved complex hermeneutical processes that reflected both textual analysis and social considerations of different historical periods, creating layers of interpretation that sometimes obscured original meanings. Contemporary Islamic legal scholars have increasingly questioned interpretations that appear to diminish women's dignity or agency, arguing for readings that

emphasize Quranic principles of gender equality and justice. The application of feminist theoretical frameworks to this jurisprudential tradition illuminates how legal interpretations may have been influenced by patriarchal assumptions rather than pure textual analysis. This examination reveals the constructed nature of certain legal positions while maintaining respect for the authority of Islamic law and its interpretative methodologies (Tucker, 2008).

Building upon this jurisprudential analysis, the examination of women's roles as religious authorities and interpreters within Islamic intellectual history provides additional context for understanding how gender-related hadith have been received and challenged throughout different periods. Sayyidah Aisha's position as a major hadith narrator and her reported critique of the ill-omen tradition establish a crucial precedent for female interpretative authority within Islamic scholarship, challenging the later marginalization of women's voices. Medieval Islamic history includes numerous examples of women scholars, hadith experts, and legal authorities who contributed significantly to Islamic intellectual development, yet whose contributions were sometimes minimized in later historical periods. The marginalization of women's voices in certain periods of Islamic scholarship may have contributed to interpretations of gender-related hadith that emphasized male perspectives while diminishing female viewpoints and alternative readings. Contemporary Islamic feminist scholars have sought to recover these historical precedents of women's religious authority as part of their effort to develop more inclusive interpretative methodologies. The application of de Beauvoir's framework to this historical material reveals patterns of marginalization and recovery that transcend specific cultural contexts while respecting the unique features of Islamic intellectual tradition (Sayeed, 2013).

This historical recovery of women's interpretative authority directly connects to the contemporary relevance of these hadith texts and their various interpretations, which extends beyond academic scholarship to influence ongoing debates about gender roles within modern Muslim communities. Modern Islamic movements have drawn on different interpretative traditions regarding these texts to support varying positions on women's social and religious roles, often reflecting broader ideological divisions within contemporary Islamic thought. Progressive Muslim scholars and activists have emphasized interpretations that support gender equality and women's empowerment, frequently citing Sayyidah Aisha's example and other historical precedents of female religious authority. Conservative voices have sometimes used traditional interpretations of these hadith to argue for more restricted gender roles and male religious authority, creating ongoing tensions within Muslim communities. The application of feminist theoretical frameworks to these texts contributes to ongoing debates about the compatibility of Islamic principles with contemporary concepts of gender equality. This academic analysis aims to inform rather than dictate these important community discussions while maintaining respect for diverse viewpoints within Islamic scholarship and recognizing the lived experiences of contemporary Muslim women (Hidayatullah, 2014).

The contemporary debates surrounding these interpretations raise important methodological implications for applying Simone de Beauvoir's theoretical framework to Islamic hadith literature, extending beyond the specific texts under examination to broader questions about interdisciplinary scholarship and cross-cultural analysis. This methodological approach requires careful attention to translation issues, cultural context, and the potential for theoretical frameworks developed in one intellectual tradition to distort understanding of materials from another. The success of such methodological innovations depends on scholars' ability to maintain respect for both intellectual traditions while pursuing genuine analytical insights that benefit both Islamic studies and feminist scholarship. Contemporary academic discourse increasingly recognizes the value of such interdisciplinary approaches while acknowledging their inherent challenges and limitations, particularly in sensitive areas involving religious interpretation. The present analysis seeks to contribute to ongoing methodological discussions about the appropriate ways to engage Islamic texts with contemporary theoretical frameworks while remaining humble about the complexities involved. This methodological contribution aims to advance scholarly understanding while promoting respectful dialogue between different intellectual traditions and interpretative communities (Shaikh, 2012).

These methodological reflections culminate in conclusions that have significant implications for both Islamic studies and gender studies as academic disciplines, demonstrating the potential value and inherent limitations of cross-cultural theoretical engagement. The examination of these specific hadith traditions through de Beauvoir's analytical lens reveals both illuminating insights and methodological challenges that must be

acknowledged in any scholarly assessment. The findings suggest that while feminist theory can illuminate important aspects of gender construction within Islamic discourse, such applications require careful attention to cultural context, religious sensibilities, and established interpretative methodologies. The analysis demonstrates the crucial importance of engaging with indigenous voices and interpretative traditions, particularly women's perspectives like that of Sayyidah Aisha, when examining gender-related religious texts. These conclusions contribute to ongoing scholarly debates about methodology, authority, and interpretation within both Islamic studies and feminist scholarship, while recognizing the need for continued dialogue and methodological refinement. The ultimate goal of such cross-cultural analysis is to advance understanding while promoting respectful dialogue between different intellectual traditions, interpretative communities, and contemporary Muslim voices seeking to understand their religious heritage in light of modern challenges (Hammer, 2012).

Research Gap

Scholarly investigations of hadiths pertaining to women have been extensively conducted by both classical Muslim scholars and contemporary academics. Classical scholars emphasized sanad and matan analysis to determine hadith authenticity, while Muslim feminist scholars such as Amina Wadud, Asma Barlas, and Fatima Mernissi have offered reinterpretations grounded in gender justice principles. Nevertheless, the majority of previous research has remained focused on descriptive and apologetic approaches, or has merely contrasted traditional perspectives with contemporary feminist methodologies.

Unfortunately, few studies have systematically integrated sanad-matan hadith analysis with Simone de Beauvoir's existentialist-feminist framework, particularly her concepts of the second sex and otherness. This constitutes the distinctive position of the present research: providing an interdisciplinary investigation that not only considers the aspects of sanad authenticity, matan variations, and classical interpretations, but also examines how hadith texts contribute to the construction of women as "other" within patriarchal societies, while simultaneously opening possibilities for more egalitarian reinterpretations.

This research addresses a significant gap in gender-hadith discourse by connecting classical Islamic intellectual traditions with existentialist-feminist critique to generate a hermeneutical framework that is more contextual and relevant to contemporary debates.

The intellectual genealogical examination of hadiths concerning women reveals complex interactions between Islamic teachings and pre-Islamic narrative heritage, including Isra'iliyyat. The narrative of women's creation from the rib bone, for instance, demonstrates striking similarities to the Genesis account (Genesis 2:21-23) within Judeo-Christian traditions. John Wansbrough characterizes this phenomenon as "scriptural borrowings," representing intertextuality between early Islamic texts and Biblical narratives that had circulated widely throughout the Arabian Peninsula. Several classical scholars, including Ibn Kathir (d. 774/1373), explicitly acknowledged the potential infiltration of Isra'iliyyat elements into creation narrative interpretations, although he continued to emphasize sanad verification principles for distinguishing authentic materials. Ignaz Goldziher adopted a more definitive stance, asserting that numerous hadiths "exhibit traces of pre-Islamic beliefs subsequently wrapped in religious legitimization." Regarding hadiths about shu'm (women's inauspiciousness), the pre-Islamic Arabian tradition of tathayyur provides crucial contextual background, enabling the counter narrative of Umm al-Mu'minin Aisha to be understood as an internal deconstructive effort against the infiltration of jahiliyyah culture. Aaron W. Hughes emphasizes the importance of such genealogical approaches for dismantling discursive constructions frequently regarded as pure heritage, when they actually represent products of historical negotiation.

Research Methodology

This research employs a qualitative and interdisciplinary methodological framework that integrates classical hadith studies with contemporary feminist theory. The approach is structured into three interrelated levels of analysis:

1. Isnad and Matan Criticism

A critical evaluation of the chains of transmission (isnad) and textual variations (matan) of the selected hadiths is conducted to establish their authenticity and identify interpretative differences. This involves cross-examination

of primary hadith sources including Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Musnad Aḥmad, al-Mustadrak, Sunan al-Dārimī, and Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān. The methodology draws upon classical hadith sciences (‘ulūm al-ḥadīth), focusing on narrator reliability (‘adl, ḍabt), continuity of transmission (ittiṣāl al-sanad), and the presence of textual anomalies (shudhūdh) or defects (‘illah).

2. Historical-Contextual Analysis

Each hadith is situated within its socio-historical context to discern whether its wording reflects authentic Prophetic teachings or the influence of pre-Islamic cultural narratives such as Isrā’īliyyāt or Jāhiliyyah superstitions. Special attention is given to the interventions of early female authorities, particularly Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah, whose corrections to certain misogynistic interpretations demonstrate the existence of internal mechanisms for deconstructing patriarchal readings within early Islamic scholarship.

3. Feminist Hermeneutical Approach

The study applies Simone de Beauvoir’s existentialist-feminist framework, particularly her notions of “the Second Sex” and “the Other,” to analyze how these hadiths have been interpreted in ways that construct women as subordinate or as bearers of misfortune. This theoretical lens is employed critically and dialogically—acknowledging the risks of cultural imposition while recognizing the potential for productive cross-cultural insights. The synthesis of Islamic hermeneutics and feminist critique aims to illuminate both the limitations of patriarchal interpretations and the emancipatory potential inherent in Islamic textual traditions.

By combining classical isnad-matan analysis, historical-contextualization, and feminist hermeneutics, this research establishes a comprehensive methodology that both respects the integrity of Islamic scholarship and engages with contemporary discourses on gender justice.

Discussion

A. Critical Study of Hadiths on Women

The discourse surrounding gender in Islam is undergoing significant development, propelled by a growing awareness of gender equality and justice in the modern era. As the second primary source of Islamic law, the Hadith holds a strategic position in shaping the understanding and attitudes of Muslims toward gender issues. Certain hadiths addressing gender relations often provoke debate due to differing interpretative standpoints. (Abdul Mustaqim, 2008) A precise understanding of gender-related hadiths is crucial, given their extensive implications for the social lives of Muslims. Textual interpretations that neglect historical and sociological contexts can engender detrimental gender biases, particularly against women (Mulia, 2007). Contemporary analysis of gender-focused hadiths necessitates a comprehensive methodology that considers various aspects, from the critique of the chain of transmission (isnad) and the content (matn) to an understanding of the historical context and its relevance to present-day conditions. A multidisciplinary approach is imperative to achieve a holistic comprehension. (Ahmad, 2013)

A hadith narrated by al-Bukhari from Abu Hurairah, which states that woman was created from a crooked rib, is frequently referenced in discussions regarding the origin of woman’s creation.

Abu Kuraib and Musa bin Hizam narrated to us, they said: Husain bin Ali narrated to us from Za’idah, from Maisarah Al-Asyja’i, from Abu Hazim, on the authority of Abu Hurairah. may Allah be pleased with him, who reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said: “I enjoin you to treat women well, for verily they were created from a rib. The most crooked part of the rib is its uppermost part. If you attempt to straighten it, you will break it; and if you leave it, it will remain crooked. Therefore, I enjoin you to treat women well. (al-Bukhārī, n.d.)

There exist at least eight additional hadith narrations with minor textual variations, including:

1. Al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-Sahihayn - Hadith 7427 Ibn ‘Ajlan, from his father, from Abu Hurayra (may Allah be pleased with him) The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) said: “*Woman was created from a crooked rib. If you attempt to straighten her, you will break her. If you leave her, you will live with her while she remains crooked.*” This is an authentic chain of transmission according to

Muslim's criteria, though neither (al-Bukhari nor Muslim) included it in their collections. (al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī, n.d.)

2. Al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihayn - Hadith 7426 Abu Sahl Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Ziyad al-Nahwi in Baghdad informed me, narrated by al-Hasan ibn Mukram, narrated by Abu 'Asim, from 'Awf, from Abu Raja', from Samura ibn Jundub (may Allah be pleased with him) The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) said: *"Indeed, woman was created from a rib. If you seek to straighten her, you will break her. Therefore, be gentle with her and you will live harmoniously with her"* [he repeated this] three times. This hadith has an authentic chain of transmission according to the criteria of the two Shaykhs (al-Bukhari and Muslim), though they did not include it in their collections. (al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī, n.d.)
3. Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal - Hadith 20410, Muhammad ibn Ja'far narrated to us, 'Awf narrated to us. He said: A man narrated to me, saying: I heard Samura delivering a sermon from the pulpit of Basra, saying: I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) say: *"Indeed, woman was created from a rib. If you seek to straighten the rib, you will break it. Therefore, be gentle with her and you will live harmoniously with her."* (Ahmad ibn Hanbal, n.d.).
4. Sunan al-Darimi - Hadith 2267 From the Book of Marriage - Chapter on a Man's Gentle Treatment of His Family, Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah al-Raqashi informed us, 'Abd al-Warith narrated to us, al-Jurayri narrated to us, from Abu al-'Ala', from Nu'aym ibn Qa'nab, from Abu Dharr The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: *"Indeed, woman was created from a rib. If you straighten her, you will break her. Therefore, be gentle with her, for she contains crookedness and serves her purpose."* (al-Dārimī, n.d.)
5. Sahih Ibn Hibban - Hadith 4179 Mention of the information regarding what is incumbent upon a person in terms of being gentle with his wife so that his harmonious life with her may endure, Abu Khalifa informed us, Ibrahim ibn Bashshar narrated to us, Sufyan narrated to us, from Abu al-Zinad, from al-A'raj, from Abu Hurayra The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: *"Indeed, woman was created from a rib, and she will never be suitable for you in a single manner. If you enjoy her company, you will enjoy it while she has crookedness. If you seek to straighten her, you will break her, and breaking her means divorcing her."* (Ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī, n.d.)
6. Sahih Ibn Hibban - Hadith 4178 Abu Ya'la informed us, Ishaq ibn Ibrahim al-Marwazi narrated to us, Ja'far ibn Sulayman narrated to us, 'Awf narrated to us, from Abu Raja', from Samura ibn Jundub The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: *"Indeed, woman was created from a rib. If you straighten her, you will break her. Therefore, be gentle with her and you will live harmoniously with her."* (Ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī, n.d.)
7. Sahih Muslim - Hadith 1468 'Amr al-Naqid and Ibn Abi 'Umar narrated to us - the wording being that of Ibn Abi 'Umar - they said: Sufyan narrated to us, from Abu al-Zinad, from al-A'raj, from Abu Hurayra The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: *"Indeed, woman was created from a rib and will never be straight for you in any single manner. If you enjoy her company, you will enjoy it while she has crookedness. If you attempt to straighten her, you will break her, and breaking her means divorcing her."* (Sahih Muslim)
8. Sahih al-Bukhari - Hadith 5185 Ishaq ibn Nasr narrated to us, Husayn al-Ju'fi narrated to us, from Za'ida, from Maysara, from Abu Hazim, from Abu Hurayra, from the Prophet (peace be upon him) *"Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should not harm his neighbor. Treat women well, for they were created from a rib, and the most crooked part of the rib is its uppermost portion. If you attempt to straighten it, you will break it, and if you leave it, it will remain crooked. Therefore, treat women well."* (al-Bukhārī, n.d.)

9. Sahih al-Bukhari - Hadith 3331 Abu Kurayb and Musa ibn Hizam narrated to us, they said: Husayn ibn ‘Ali narrated to us, from Za’ida, from Maysara al-Ashja’i, from Abu Hazim, from Abu Hurayra (may Allah be pleased with him) The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: “*Treat women well, for woman was created from a rib, and the most crooked part of the rib is its uppermost portion. If you attempt to straighten it, you will break it, and if you leave it, it will remain crooked. Therefore, treat women well.*” (al-Bukhārī, n.d.)

When analyzing the *isnad* (chain of narrators) based on the Companion narrators transmitting a specific hadith, the researcher finds that the Companion Abu Hurairah may Allah be pleased with him. serves as the primary narrator in several sources, including *Al-Mustadrak* (7427), *Sahih Ibn Hibban* (4179), *Sahih Muslim* (1468), and *Sahih al-Bukhari* (5185, 3331). The *isnad* chains exhibit variation: *Al-Mustadrak* utilizes the path Ibn ‘Ajlan → his father → Abu Hurairah, whereas Sahih Muslim and Sahih al-Bukhari transmit via Sufyan → Abu az-Zinad → al-A’raj → Abu Hurairah and Za’idah → Maisarah → Abu Hazim → Abu Hurairah, respectively. Al-Hakim deemed the *isnad* of *Al-Mustadrak* (7427) authentic (*sahih*) according to Muslim’s criteria, while al-Bukhari’s and Muslim’s narrations are more concise via distinct paths. Samurah bin Jundub (may Allah be pleased with him) transmits a similar hadith in *Al-Mustadrak* (7426), *Musnad Ahmad* (20410), and *Sahih Ibn Hibban* (4178). His *isnad* chain remains consistent through the path ‘Auf → Abu Raja’ → Samurah, authenticated (*sahih*) by both Shu’aib al-Arna’uth and al-Hakim. Meanwhile, Abu Dhar (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates the hadith via Nu’aim bin Qa’nab → Abu Dhar in *Sunan al-Darimi* (2267), an *isnad* also judged authentic (*sahih*) by Husain Asad.

Principal variations in the *matan* (textual content) are evident in the differing wording. For instance, the description of the rib’s «crookedness» varies: *Al-Mustadrak* (7427) emphasizes that the crookedness persists (أَفِيضَ جَوَعًا), *Sahih al-Bukhari* (5185) specifies that the crookedness is at the top of the rib, while *Sunan al-Darimi* (2267) adds the metaphorical phrase «inclination and need» (دَعْنُ بَوَائِثًا). The concept of divorce (*talaq*) as an analogy for breaking appears in Ibn Hibban’s (4179) and Muslim’s (1468) versions with the phrase أَفْطَأَ أَفْطَأَ (“and breaking it is divorcing her”), absent from both al-Bukhari and *Al-Mustadrak*. Furthermore, *Al-Mustadrak* (7426) mentions the Prophet’s statement being repeated three times, a detail omitted in other transmissions like *Musnad Ahmad*. Differences in emphasis are also observable: *Sunan al-Darimi* uses the verb اِفْرَأْفَ (“be gentle with her”), whereas al-Bukhari (5185) employs the phrase اِرْئِيْخْ ءِاسْنَ لِّاِبِ اَوْصُوْتْسِنَا (“I command you to treat women well”).

Discrepancies in transmission paths (*isnad*) constitute the primary cause of *matan* variation. The narrations from Abu Hurairah via divergent paths (Ibn ‘Ajlan, Sufyan, Za’idah) yield diverse wording, while Samurah bin Jundub’s narration demonstrates greater consistency due to the single, stable path ‘Auf → Abu Raja’. Contextualization by narrators also plays a role—some add explanations such as the divorce analogy, while others focus on the injunction to treat women well (al-Bukhari) or the consequences of divorce (Muslim). Despite variations in wording, all hadiths concur that woman was created from a “crooked” rib and emphasize gentleness (فَارَأَدُمُ) in dealing with her. The *matan* differences are complementary: some add the divorce analogy, others elaborate on anatomical aspects or psychological needs. All cited *isnad* chains are authenticated (*sahih*) by scholars, although the narration from Abu Dhar is less prevalent. This variation reflects the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) methodology in conveying messages contextually and served as the foundation for classical scholars in formulating legal rulings concerning spousal relations, divorce, and domestic ethics.

No	Hadith Source	Companion Narrator	<i>Isnad</i> Chain	Authenticity Status	<i>Matan</i> (Textual) Differences
1.	<i>Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī</i> 3331	Abū Hurayrah (ra)	Zā'idah → Maysārah → Abū Ḥāzim → Abū Hurayrah	Shahih al-Bukhārī	Anatomical specification: “جَوَعًا” “هَالَعًا عَلَٰى رِجْلِهَا يَفِ عِيْشَنَ” “The crookedest part of the rib is its upper portion.”

No	Hadith Source	Companion Narrator	Isnad Chain	Authenticity Status	Matan (Textual) Differences
2.	<i>Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī</i> 5185	Abū Hurayrah (ra)	Zā'idah → Maysārah → Abū Ḥāzim → Abū Hurayrah	Shahih al-Bukhārī	Emphasis on ethical injunction: “ارْزُقْ عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَتَسْأَلُ” (I enjoin you to treat women kindly).
3.	<i>Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim</i> 1468	Abū Hurayrah (ra)	Sufyān → Abū al-Zinād → al-A'raj → Abū Hurayrah	Shahih Muslim	Explicit statements: “لَنْ يَسْتَقِيمَ لَكَ” «It will never straighten completely for you» and “افْقُطْ اَوْ رُسُكَ” “Breaking it constitutes divorce”.
4.	<i>Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Hibbān</i> 4178	Samurah ibn Jundub (ra)	Ja'far ibn Sulaymān → 'Awf → Abū Rajā' → Samurah	Shahih (al-Arna'ūt)	Similar to <i>al-Mustadrak</i> 7426, without the tripartite repetition.
5.	<i>Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Hibbān</i> 4179	Abū Hurayrah (ra)	Sufyān → Abū al-Zinād → al-A'raj → Abū Hurayrah	Shahih (al-Arna'ūt)	Emphasis on divorce as consequence: “افْقُطْ اَوْ رُسُكَ” (And breaking it is her divorce).
6.	<i>Sunan al-Dārimī</i> 2267	Abū Dharr (ra)	Nu'aym ibn Qa'nab → Abū Dharr	Shahih (Ḥusayn Asad)	Additional metaphorical phrase: “فَعَلَيْهَا دَوَاءٌ اَوْ اِيْفٌ” (Within her is [an innate] inclination and need).
7.	<i>Musnad Aḥmad</i> 20410	Samurah ibn Jundub (ra)	'Awf → Abū Rajā' → Samurah	Shahih (al-Arna'ūt)	Concise text: “شُعْرَتِ اِفْرَاقَتْ” “اَدَبِ” “Act gently towards her, and you will live harmoniously with her”.
8.	<i>al-Mustadrak</i> 7426	Samurah ibn Jundub (ra)	'Awf → Abū Rajā' → Samurah	Shahih (<i>al-Bukhārī-Muslim</i> criteria)	Tripartite repetition of the Prophetic statement.
9.	<i>al-Mustadrak</i> 7427	Abū Hurayrah (ra)	Ibn 'Ajlān → His Father → Abū Hurayrah	Shahih (<i>Muslim</i> criteria)	Directive of accommodation: “If you leave it (uncorrected), you may live with it despite its crookedness” with explicit mention of persistent crookedness (جَوْعِ اَدِيْفٍ).

Textually, this hadith is often interpreted as legitimizing male superiority over women. This perspective stems from the understanding that women are secondary beings created from and for the benefit of men. Such an interpretation has become deeply entrenched in various classical exegeses (Umar, 2001). M. Quraish Shihab offers a distinct perspective on understanding this hadith. He contends that the expression “a bent rib” should be understood as a *majāz* (metaphorical expression), not in its literal sense. According to him, the hadith serves as an admonition to men to treat women with wisdom (Shihab, 2009). A differing perspective is also presented by Husein

Muhammad, who asserts that this hadith must be understood within the context of 7th-century Arab culture. He argues that the use of the rib metaphor reflects a common rhetorical device employed to convey a moral message, not a factual statement concerning the creation process. (Muhammad, 2012)

Amina Wadud reinforces this argument by analyzing that no single Quranic verse explicitly mentions the creation of woman from a rib. Surah An-Nisa (4:1), often associated with this hadith, employs the gender-neutral term “*nafs wāhidah*” a single soul (Wadud, 1999). Historically, scholarship indicates that the narrative of woman’s creation from a rib bears resemblance to the Judeo Christian tradition in the Book of Genesis. Fatima Mernissi contends that the infiltration of *Isra’iliyyat* narratives into hadith comprehension has influenced interpretations leaning towards misogyny. (Mernissi, 1991) From a contemporary hadith studies perspective, this narration is considered authentic (*ṣaḥīḥ*) in terms of its chain of transmission (*sanad*). However, regarding its content (*matn*), it requires understanding through a hermeneutical approach that considers socio-historical context and the intended moral objective (Hidayat, 1996). Muhammad Syahrur interprets the hadith as conveying a message about the distinct nature (*fiṭrah*) of creation between men and women. This distinction, he argues, signifies not superiority or inferiority, but rather complementarity in achieving perfection within human relationships. (Syahrur, 2004)

The practical implication of a contextual understanding of this hadith is a paradigm shift in viewing gender relations. Rather than legitimizing female subordination, the hadith teaches the importance of understanding and appreciating the unique characteristics of women to build harmonious relationships. Within the Indonesian context, the reinterpretation of this hadith has made a significant contribution to the gender equality movement. Progressive Islamic organizations such as Fatayat NU and ‘Aisyiyah have utilized this contextual understanding as a theological foundation for their women’s empowerment programs.

B. The Hadith Concerning Women as Harbingers of Misfortune: A Simone de Beauvoir Perspective

Simone de Beauvoir, in her seminal work *The Second Sex* (1949), presents a revolutionary analysis of women’s position within patriarchal society. (de Beauvoir, 2011) Beauvoir not only critiques the social structures that position women as “the Other” (*l’Autre*), but also deconstructs the philosophical underpinnings of female subordination. Her concept of “second sex” refers to the systemic positioning of women as secondary, inferior, and dependent upon men as the primary subject. Employing an existentialist approach, Beauvoir demonstrates that female inferiority is not a biological destiny, but rather the product of mutable social and cultural constructions. This foundational idea significantly influenced the development of modern feminism and contemporary gender theory. Beauvoir argues that women have been conditioned to accept passive societal roles, thereby forfeiting their capacity to become autonomous subjects. Her work provides not only a trenchant critique of patriarchal systems but also offers a vision for female emancipation through existential awareness.

Beauvoir commences her analysis by adapting the existentialist concept of the Other (*l’Autre*) to elucidate women’s position within gender relations. (de Beauvoir, 2011) In Beauvoir’s view, men have positioned themselves as the One (*le Sujet*) or the universal subject, while women are defined as the relative and dependent Other. This concept illustrates that female identity is never self-defined but is perpetually constructed in relation to men as the normative standard. Women become “the Other” because they are denied the opportunity for self-definition, instead being defined by and for men. Beauvoir exemplifies this by noting that within language, culture, and social institutions, men are treated as the universal norm, while women are perceived as deviations or complements. This situation creates a fundamental asymmetry in gender relations, preventing women from attaining the status of equal subjects. Beauvoir emphasizes that this “Other” status is not a natural condition, but the result of historical and social processes that can be transformed through collective consciousness and action.

From Beauvoir’s existentialist perspective, women confront a unique existential situation, conditioned towards “being-for-others” (*être-pour-autrui*) rather than “being-for-itself” (*être-pour-soi*). This situation deprives women of the opportunity to develop their own existential projects and achieve transcendence. Beauvoir explains that women are often confined to immanence a condition marked by the repetition of routine activities devoid of the creation of new value or meaning. This limitation is reinforced by social structures restricting women’s access to education, employment, and political participation. Beauvoir observes that many women accept this situation due to socialization that directs them to find satisfaction in traditional roles as wives and

mothers. However, Beauvoir stresses that this acceptance often constitutes “bad faith” (*mauvaise foi*), a denial of the existential freedom inherent to every individual. She contends that women must become conscious of their existential situation and assume responsibility for creating meaning and value in their own lives.

Beauvoir’s concept of woman as the “second sex” finds concrete manifestation across various world cultures through the construction of women as harbingers of misfortune or sources of ill luck. (Douglas, 1966) This phenomenon exemplifies how patriarchy not only positions women as “the Other” but also associates their very existence with calamity and cosmic instability. In traditional Hindu culture, the concept of *Kali Yuga* (the Age of Darkness) is frequently linked to the dominance of destructive feminine energy. Within certain Islamic traditions, specific hadiths depict women as constituting the majority of Hell’s inhabitants due to their purported “deficiency in religion and intellect.” Orthodox Judaism maintains the concept of *niddah*, isolating menstruating women deemed ritually impure and potentially curse-bearing. Among various African tribes, the birth of a daughter is often considered an ill omen for the family. In some East Asian cultures, women are associated with *yin* or negative energy capable of disrupting harmony. These stereotypes are perpetuated through folklore, mythology, and religious practices that consistently associate femininity with chaos, evil, and disaster. Beauvoir would analyze these phenomena as extreme forms of female objectification, wherein women’s existence is not only defined relative to men but also perceived as inherently threatening to the patriarchal social order.

Cultures worldwide have developed ritual systems and taboos that systematically restrict female mobility and agency, predicated on the belief that their presence invites misfortune. (Ortner, 1974) In Hindu tradition, women are barred from entering certain temples due to perceived potential to “defile” sacred spaces. Japanese culture features the concept of *kegare* (ritual impurity), associating women, particularly during menstruation and childbirth, with contamination, resulting in their temporary isolation from social and religious activities. Among various Papuan and Melanesian tribes, women are confined to «menstrual huts» (*haus menstruasi*) as menstrual blood is believed to weaken male spiritual power and damage agricultural yields. Ancient Celtic and Germanic traditions viewed menopausal women (those who have changed) as potential witches capable of cursing the community. In traditional maritime cultures globally, the presence of women aboard ships was believed to invite storms and bad luck – a superstition persisting in some modern fishing communities. Even within Islam, women are viewed as bearers of misfortune (*syum*), as recorded in a hadith narrated by Imam al-Bukhari. Beauvoir interprets these phenomena as systematic mechanisms for maintaining patriarchal hegemony by creating supernatural justifications for excluding women from spheres of power and decision-making.

C. The Hadith Regarding Misfortune Being Attributed to Women

One hadith that attributes misfortune (*syum*) to women can be found in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* as follows:

يُضِرُّ رَمْلٌ نَبْطٌ وَلِلَّاءِ دَبْعٌ نَبْطٌ يَنْبَأُ لِجَاسِرٍ ، فَرَمَحَ نَع ، بِإِمْنٍ نَبْطٌ نَع ، لِقَالِمْ يَنْتَدَخُ : لَأَق ، لِيْ عَامِسٍ إِنْ تَدَخَّ حَيِّصٌ يَفْ هَدْرًا : يَرَاخِبَلَا . « سَرَفَقَلْ أَوْ رَادَلْ أَوْ دَارَمَلْ أَوْ يَفْ مُؤْشَلْ » : لَأَق ، مَلَسَوْ هَيْلَعُ هَلَّلَا أَلَّصَ هَلَّلَا لَوْسُرَ نَأ ، أَمْهُنَعُ هَلَّلَا (8/7) : يَرَاخِبَلَا حَيِّصٌ

Translation:

Ismā‘īl narrated to us, saying: Mālik narrated to me, from Ibn Shihāb, from Ḥamzah and Sālim (both sons of ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar), from ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar (raḍiy Allāhu ‘anhumā): The Messenger of Allāh (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam) said: “Misfortune (*al-syummy*) lies in three things: women, dwellings, and horses.” (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Vol. 8, Book 73, Ḥadīth 7).

Commentary by Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī in *Fatḥ al-Bārī*

دول و ريغ تناك اذ إةأرمل مؤش لوقي شي دحلا اذه رسفي نم تعمس رمعم نع هفنصم يف قازرلا دب ع لاقو

Translation:

‘Abd al-Razzāq stated in his *al-Muṣannaḥ* from Ma‘mar: “I heard someone interpret this hadith, saying: ‘The misfortune in women refers to infertility (inability to bear children).’ (Ibn Hajar, 1379)

The above commentary appears to legitimize the notion that women bring misfortune due to their perceived failure to produce offspring. However, this interpretation is contested by another hadith recorded in *Musnad*

Aḥmad, which clarifies that the Prophet's (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam) statement about misfortune pertains to the pre-Islamic Arab practice of *al-ṭiyarah* (superstitious omens) concerning the three entities mentioned in the Bukhārī narration.

قَتْنِيَاغَ يَلْعَ رِمَاعٍ يَنْبُ نُمُ نَالٍ جُرْ لَخَدَ : لَأَقُ ، نَاسَحَ يَبِا نَعُ ، فَدَاتِقُ نَعُ ، يَخِي نُبُ مَامَةٌ اَنْرَبْخُ : لَأَقُ ، دُيْزِي اَنْشَدَحُ ، ثَبَضْغَفُ ، « سِرْفَلْ اَوْ قَارْمَلْ اَوْ رَادَلْ نَمُ قُرِيْطَلْ » : لَأَقُ هُنَّا مَلَسَوْ وَيْلَعُ قَلَلْ اِلَّصَّ يَبِيْلْ نَعُ ، ثُدَحِي قَرِيْرَهْ اَبَا نَا ، اَدَارَبْخُ أَفَ وَيْلَعُ قَلَلْ اِلَّصَّ يَلَلْ لُوسَرُ اَقْلَاقِ اَمْ ، يَمَحْمُ يَلْعَ نَاقَرَفَلْ لَزْنُ اِيْذَلْ اَوْ : شَلْاقُو ، ضِرْأَلْ اِيْفَ قُقْشُو ، اَمَسَلْ اِيْفَ اَنْمُ قُقْشُ شَرَاطَفَ دَمَحْ اَنْسَمُ مَلَسَمُ طَرَشُ يَلْعَ حِي حَصْ هَدَانَسْ : طُوْنَرَأَلْ اَبِي عَشْ . « كَلِيْدُ نُمُ نَوْرِيْطَتِي قِيْلْ اِجَلْ لُذْ اَنْكَ » : لَأَقُ اَمْنَا ، طُقْ مَلَسَوْ (158/43) : طُوْنَرَأَلْ اَبِي عَشْ جِيْرَخَت

Translation:

Yazīd narrated to us, saying: Hammām ibn Yaḥyā reported to us from Qatādah, from Abū al-Ḥasan, who said: “Two men from the Banū ‘Āmir tribe visited ‘Ā’ishah (raḍiy Allāhu ‘anhā) and informed her that Abū Hurayrah had narrated from the Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam): ‘Ill omens (al-ṭiyarah) exist in dwellings, women, and horses.’ ‘Ā’ishah became furious and swore: ‘By Him Who revealed the Qur’ān to Muḥammad, the Messenger of Allāh (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam) never said this! He only said: “The pre-Islamic Arabs (ahl al-jāhiliyyah) used to attribute ill omens to these things.” (Musnad Aḥmad, Ḥadīth 25657)

Prior to examining the content (*matn*) of these narrations, it is imperative to conduct a critical analysis of their chains of transmission (*sanad*), tracing their transmission from the Prophet Muḥammad (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam) to Imām al-Bukhārī and Imām Aḥmad.

a. Analysis of the Chain of Transmission (Sanad)

The hadith narrated by ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Umar (منع دللا يضر), recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Hadith No. 5093), possesses a *muttasil* (continuous) chain of transmission via the path: Ismā’īl bin Abī Uways al-Ashbahī al-Madanī → Mālik bin Anas → Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī → Ḥamzah bin ‘Abdillāh bin ‘Umar and Sālim bin ‘Abdillāh bin ‘Umar → ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Umar (منع دللا يضر). As part of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, this hadith automatically holds the status of *ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic) by virtue of satisfying all stringent authenticity criteria stipulated by Imām al-Bukhārī. Its *isnād* is *muttasil* (uninterrupted), with every narrator (*rāwī*) being *thiqah dābiṭ* (trustworthy and precise in transmission). The distinction of this chain is further reinforced by dual transmission paths (*al-tasalsul*) from both sons of Ibn ‘Umar (منع دللا يضر) (Ḥamzah and Sālim), alongside the inclusion of eminent authorities such as Mālik bin Anas and al-Zuhrī pillars of hadith transmission. Thus, this hadith represents the highest standard of authenticity (*ṣiḥḥah*) within Sunni hadith literature.

1. Ismā’īl bin Abī Uways al-Ashbahī al-Madanī

Known by the *kunya* Abū ‘Abdillāh, he was a Medinan hadith narrator and a *ḥalīf* (ally) of Banū Taym bin Murrah. His death is recorded in 226 AH, with alternative reports citing 227 AH. Scholarly evaluations of Ismā’īl reveal mixed credibility assessments. Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal deemed him “*Lā ba’sa bihi*” (unproblematic). A similar assessment was reported from Yaḥyā bin Ma’īn via ‘Uthmān al-Dārimī. However, Ibn Abī Khaythamah transmitted a more critical view from Yaḥyā bin Ma’īn, stating Ismā’īl was “*Ṣadūq ḍa’īf al-‘aql, laysa bi-dhālīk*” (truthful but weak in intellect/understanding; not proficient in transmission). Further elaboration indicates he lacked mastery in precise oral transmission (*tahammul wa adā’*) and could not reliably recite without his written notes (*qir’ah min ghayr kitābih*). Ibn ‘Adī criticized his narrations, particularly rare (*gharīb*) hadiths he transmitted solely from his uncle (Mālik bin Anas) without corroboration (*mutāba’ah*), apart from those from Sulaymān bin Bilāl and other teachers. Nevertheless, numerous scholars narrated from him. Yaḥyā bin Ma’īn, Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal, and even Imām al-Bukhārī who extensively narrated from him praised his reliability. The consensus holds that Ismā’īl bin Abī Uways was superior (*khayr*) to his father (Abī Uways). (Ibn Hajar, 1326).

2. Mālik bin Anas bin Mālik bin Abī ‘Āmir al-Aṣbahī al-Ḥimyarī

Renowned by the *kunya* Abū ‘Abdillāh al-Madanī and the honorific *Imām Dār al-Hijrah* (Imam of the Abode of Emigration), he was a preeminent jurist, hadith scholar, and eponym of the Mālikī school, born in Medina in 93 AH.

He belonged to the seventh generation (*kibār atbā' al-tābi'in*). Leading hadith compilers—al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, al-Nasā'ī, and Ibn Mājah—narrated from him. Imām Mālik died in 179 AH. He is universally recognized as a foundational authority in hadith and jurisprudence post-*tābi'in*. Imām al-Shāfi'ī declared him “*Hujjatullāh 'alā khalqihī ba'da al-tābi'in*” (God's Proof over Creation after the *Tābi'in*). Dialogues between al-Shāfi'ī and Muḥammad bin al-Ḥasan further affirm his scholarly preeminence. His credibility rested on extraordinary caution; he stated, “*I did not issue legal verdicts until seventy witnesses testified to my competence.*” His principled stance was demonstrated when he was flogged by authorities for rejecting coerced divorce oaths. Despite his stature, he displayed humility: “*I am but human I err and I correct. Scrutinize my opinions; adopt what aligns with the Sunnah.*” Regarding transmission methodology, his reception from al-Zuhrī (via *'ard*/recitation before the teacher) versus *samā'* (direct audition) was compared by Sufyān bin 'Uyaynah, with Yahyā bin Ma'in affirming Mālik as the most trustworthy (*athbat*) transmitter from Nāfi'. Al-Nasā'ī accorded him the highest praise, asserting no post-*tābi'in* scholar surpassed him in nobility, reliability, integrity toward hadith, or avoidance of weak narrators except regarding one narration from 'Abd al-Karīm. Ibn Ḥibbān, in *al-Thiqāt*, emphasized Mālik's revolutionary role as the first Medinan jurist to rigorously scrutinize narrators (*rijāl*), dismissing the untrustworthy, transmitting only *ṣaḥīḥ* hadiths, and accepting narrations exclusively from verified authorities all underpinned by his profound jurisprudence, piety, and righteousness. His most prominent student was Imām al-Shāfi'ī. (Ibn Hajar, 1326).

3. Muḥammad bin Muslim bin 'Ubaydillāh bin Shihāb al-Zuhrī

Abū Bakr al-Qurashī al-Madanī (d. 125 AH) was a paramount figure in early Islamic hadith transmission. Classified in the fourth *ṭabaqah* (mid-level *Tābi'in*), his narrations appear in all six canonical collections (*Kutub al-Sittah*). While widely respected, critical notes exist regarding his transmission methods. Al-Ḥāfiẓ (in *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*) records Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal's doubt whether al-Zuhrī directly heard from 'Abd al-Raḥmān bin Azhar, noting al-Zuhrī only cited him indirectly while students like Ma'mar claimed direct audition a practice Aḥmad deemed unverifiable. Similar criticism from Ibn Abī Ḥātim via 'Alī bin al-Ḥusayn cites inaccuracies in his attribution to 'Abd al-Raḥmān bin Ka'b bin Mālik. These critiques underscore hadith scholars' meticulousness in verifying transmission chains. (Ibn Hajar, 1326).

4. Ḥamzah bin 'Abdillāh bin 'Umar al-Qurashī al-'Adawī

Abū 'Ammārah al-Madanī was a mid-level *Tābi'in* narrator (third *ṭabaqah*) and half-brother of Sālim bin 'Abdillāh. Major compilers (al-Bukhārī, Muslim, et al.) included his narrations. Ibn Sa'd classified him among second-generation Medinan *Tābi'in*, noting his mother was an *umm walad* (enslaved concubine) who also bore Sālim. Though transmitting few hadiths (*qalīl al-ḥadīth*), he was deemed *thiqah* (trustworthy) by al-'Ijlī and Ibn Ḥibbān (*al-Thiqāt*). (Ibn Hajar, 1326)

Conclusion on Hadith 5093 (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī) Based on the foregoing, this hadith is definitively *ṣaḥīḥ li-dhātih* (independently authentic). Its absolute authenticity stems primarily from inclusion in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* universally acknowledged in Sunni tradition as the most authentic compilation after the Qur'ān due to al-Bukhārī's unparalleled criteria. The *isnād* is *muttasil* via Ismā'īl → Mālik → al-Zuhrī → Ḥamzah/Sālim → Ibn 'Umar, with all narrators fulfilling *thiqah* (trustworthiness) and *ḍabt* (precision) requirements. Criticisms of Ismā'īl (e.g., “*Ṣadūq ḍa'if al-'aql*”) do not invalidate this specific narration within al-Bukhārī's rigorous selection, especially given Ismā'īl's direct transmission from Mālik (his uncle) and al-Bukhārī's reliance on him. Dual paths from Ibn 'Umar's sons both *thiqah* despite Ḥamzah's limited output further strengthen the chain. Crucially, the *isnād* rests on twin pillars: Mālik bin Anas, the “*Hujjatullāh*” and pioneer of narrator scrutiny, and al-Zuhrī, a primary source for the *Kutub al-Sittah*. The validity of Mālik's reception from al-Zuhrī via *'ard* is established. Thus, the hadith fulfills all conditions of authenticity: continuous chain (*ittisāl al-sanad*), narrators of integrity (*'adl*) and precision (*ḍabt*), absence of hidden defects (*'illah*), and non-anomalous content (*shudhūdh*). It exemplifies Sunni hadith transmission's highest standard, rendering its authenticity conclusive (*qaṭ'i*).

Analysis of the Second Hadith (Musnad Aḥmad 26674)

The hadith narrated by Umm al-Mu'minīn 'Ā'ishah (ان ع لى اى ضر) in *Musnad al-Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal* (No. 26674) has a continuous chain (*muttasil*) via: Yazīd bin Hārūn → Hammām bin Yahyā → Qatādah bin Di'āmah → Abū al-Ḥasan Muslim bin 'Abdillāh al-A'raj → 'Ā'ishah (ان ع لى اى ضر). Contemporary hadith experts,

notably al-Muḥaddith Shu‘ayb al-Arnā‘ūṭ, grade it *Ṣaḥīḥ ‘alā shart Muslim* (Authentic by Muslim’s standards), as all narrators are *thiqah* (trustworthy) and cited in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*.

Narrator Profiles

1. **Yazīd bin Hārūn al-Wāsiṭī** (118–206 AH): Abū Khālīd, a freedman of Banū Sulaym. Ibn Ḥajar rated him *thiqah mutqin ‘ābid* (trustworthy, precise, devout). (Ibn Hajar, 1326)
2. **Hammām bin Yahyā al-Baṣrī** (d. 163–165 AH): Abū Bakr, a freedman of al-Azd. Judged *thiqah* but noted for occasional errors (*rubbamā wahima*). (Ibn Hajar, 1326)
3. **Qatādah bin Di‘āmah al-Baṣrī** (61–118 AH): Abū al-Khaṭṭāb, a blind (*al-a‘mā*) *ḥāfiẓ* (memorizer) of the *Tābi‘īn* generation. Universally deemed *thiqah thabt* (trustworthy and accurate). (Ibn Hajar, 1326)
4. **Muslim bin ‘Abdillāh al-A‘raj** (d. 130 AH): Abū al-Ḥasan, a Basran *Tābi‘īn*. Rated *ṣadūq* (truthful) despite allegations of Kharijite leanings (*rumiya bi-ra’y al-Khawārij*). (Ibn Hajar, 1326)

Conclusion on Hadith 26674 (Musnad Aḥmad) This hadith is definitively *ṣaḥīḥ ‘alā shart Muslim* per al-Arnā‘ūṭ’s assessment. The *isnād* satisfies all conditions of Imām Muslim: continuity, narrators of integrity (*‘adālah*) and precision (*ḍabt*), absence of defects (*‘illah*) or anomalies (*shudhūdh*). The collective strength of narrators particularly the unimpeachable credibility of Yazīd and Qatādah offsets minor weaknesses in Hammām and al-A‘raj’s ideological context, confirming its authenticity.

b. Analysis of Seemingly Contradictory Matn (Hadith Texts)

Two narrations appear superficially contradictory concerning omens (*shum*). The narration from Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah (امنع لئلا يضر) explicitly states that the Prophet (مسلو هيلع لئلا يضر) never affirmed the existence of omens in houses, women, or horses. He merely conveyed that this superstitious belief was held by the people of the Jāhiliyyah (pre-Islamic era). Conversely, the narration from ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar (امنع لئلا يضر) quotes the Prophet’s saying: “Ill omens are found in women, houses, and horses” (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*).

This discrepancy can be reconciled through contextual analysis. Ibn ‘Umar’s narration is understood as the Prophet’s report (*ikhbār*) of pre-Islamic societal beliefs, not as an establishment of Islamic law or an endorsement of such superstition. This interpretation is substantiated by ‘Ā’ishah’s narration, which functions as an authoritative corrective (*taṣḥīḥ*), clarifying that the Prophet was solely transmitting the false beliefs of the Jāhiliyyah without validating them. ‘Ā’ishah’s crucial role as the Prophet’s wife and a renowned authority in hadith exegesis underscores her scholarly credibility in elucidating the context of the Prophet’s statements.

In terms of creedal principles (*‘aqīdah*), Islam rejects the concept of intrinsic misfortune residing in creatures or objects. The Qur’an asserts that any adversity befalling humans stems from their own sins and negligence (Qur’an 36:19). These two hadiths are mutually complementary when analyzed using the methodology of reconciling narrations (*al-jam‘ bayn al-riwāyāt*), where ‘Ā’ishah’s narration acts as the clarifier (*mubayyin*) for Ibn ‘Umar’s narration. Consequently, misfortune (*shum*) is not an inherent attribute of women, houses, or horses; rather, it represents a vestige of Jāhiliyyah superstition eradicated by Islam through the establishment of monotheism (*tawḥīd*) and rationality.

c. Beauvoir’s Critique of the Construction of Women as “Bearers of Misfortune”

Within Simone de Beauvoir’s theoretical framework, the belief that women bring misfortune (as seemingly reflected in the hadith narrated by Ibn ‘Umar) constitutes a concrete manifestation of the concept of the “Other” (*l’Autre*). Beauvoir argues that patriarchy systematically constructs narratives associating femininity with chaos, calamity, and cosmic instability to legitimize female subordination. The claim of women’s inherent misfortune within the Jāhiliyyah tradition (corrected by ‘Ā’ishah) exemplifies how men, as “the One” (universal subject), define women as dangerous entities threatening the social order. According to Beauvoir, this construction is not biological destiny but a cultural strategy to maintain male dominance by scapegoating women for all misfortune. (de Beauvoir, 2011)

Beauvoir’s theory on the social function of superstition in sustaining the patriarchal imagination enables us to analyze the “woman as bearer of misfortune” stereotype as serving a dual purpose:

1. Alienating women from public spaces (temples, ships, religious rituals), evident in practices like *niddah* (Judaism), *kegare* (Japan), or prohibitions against women on fishing vessels. (H. Eilberg-Schwartz,

2. Perpetuating female immanence by confining women to domestic roles, as their participation in the social sphere is deemed “disaster-invoking”. (Barlas, 2002)

In the hadith corrected by ‘Ā’ishah, the Prophet (ﷺ) is essentially deconstructing the Jahili patriarchal logic identified by Beauvoir: superstitious belief functions as a tool to deny female agency and impose a state of “being for others” (*être-pour-autrui*). A surprising parallel emerges between ‘Ā’ishah’s corrective (*taṣḥīḥ*) of Jahiliyyah superstition and Beauvoir’s critique rejecting the determinism of female misfortune. ‘Ā’ishah affirms that the Prophet did not legitimize attributing misfortune to women; this aligns with Beauvoir’s rejection of the notion that “woman is destiny” whose very existence brings misfortune, as posited in some cultures. ‘Ā’ishah’s distinction between reporting a Jahili belief (Ibn ‘Umar’s narration) and its annulment (her own narration) underscores the severing of the chain of female objectification. This textual deconstruction resonates deeply with Beauvoir’s project of dismantling the myth of femininity.

Furthermore, the creedal principle that true misfortune originates from human sin (Qur’an 36:19) aligns with Beauvoirian existentialism: humans bear full responsibility for their fate; they are not victims of objects or gender. Applying Beauvoir’s theory, we can read the “woman as bearer of misfortune” hadith as part of a religious instrument codifying misogyny. However, ‘Ā’ishah’s correction reveals the emancipatory potential within the religious tradition. Her scholarly authority as a woman wielding authentic religious interpretation constitutes a powerful counter-narrative to patriarchal discourse, demonstrating that religion can become a space of resistance when interpreted critically. Here, ‘Ā’ishah embodies the “woman as subject” (in line with Beauvoir’s emancipatory vision), not a passive object of male exegesis.

It becomes evident that this superstition arises as a reflection of patriarchal anxiety. From a Beauvoirian perspective, the superstition of female misfortune projects men’s fear of female autonomy. The Jahili belief reported by the Prophet (and corrected by ‘Ā’ishah) mirrors patriarchal anxiety when women transcend the “wife-mother” role into the public sphere. Islam, through ‘Ā’ishah’s deconstruction, offers a solution: rejecting superstition via *tawḥīd* (affirming that only Allah decrees fate) and restoring responsibility to humans. This harmonizes with Beauvoir’s call: «Woman is not a mysterious ‘Other’; she is a myth created by men to evade their own freedom and responsibility.» (Barlas, 2002)

Conclusion

The study of gender-related hadiths reveals a complexity of interpretation that necessitates a multidimensional approach. Analysis of the four principal categories of gender hadiths yields several key conclusions. First, understanding gender hadiths is inseparable from their historical and sociological context during the revelation period. For instance, the hadith describing woman’s creation from a bent rib must be interpreted as a *metaphorical expression* conveying moral guidance not a literal account of creation. Such contextual approaches enable interpretations more aligned with gender equality principles. Second, critical examination of *matn* (content) and *sanad* (chain of transmission) indicates that certain traditional interpretations require reevaluation. While the authenticity of two key hadiths ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar’s narration in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (authentic *li-dhātihī*) and ‘Ā’isha’s narration in *Musnad Aḥmad* remains established, their apparent contradiction is resolved through *al-jam‘ bayn al-riwāyāt* (harmonization of narrations). Here, ‘Ā’isha’s account functions as a clarifier (*mubayyin*), demonstrating that Ibn ‘Umar’s narration reports (*ikhbār*) a pre-Islamic Jahili belief not a prophetic endorsement or legal ruling.

‘Ā’isha’s (RA) authoritative correction of the “women as bad omen” hadith constitutes a systematic deconstruction of pre-Islamic Arab patriarchal superstitions. She not only rectified the wording but also contextualized it as a reference to the Jahili practice of *ṭiyarāh* (ill-omen superstition) rejected by Islam. This exemplifies an internal Islamic mechanism for countering patriarchal constructs detrimental to women. Notably, the research identifies a striking convergence between Islam’s deconstruction of Jahili myths and Simone de Beauvoir’s existentialist critique of femininity’s mythology. Both perspectives fundamentally reject deterministic frameworks that cast women as:

1. The inherently calamitous “Other” (*L’Autre*),
2. Passive objects defined relative to men,
3. Scapegoats for societal misfortunes.

Ultimately, when contextualized and analyzed through gender-critical lenses, the “women as bad omen” hadith reveals Islam’s commitment to dismantling patriarchal constructs. ‘Ā’isha’s (RA) correction demonstrates the emancipatory potential within Islamic tradition resonating with Beauvoir’s existentialist feminism. This convergence confirms that religion, when critically and contextually engaged, can become a space of resistance against patriarchal narratives. The study affirms that women are not the “ill omened Other,” but *autonomous subjects* capable of shaping societal meaning and values. Both Islam through ‘Ā’isha’s corrective and Beauvoir’s existentialism urge rejection of gender-based determinism that constricts human potential. Finally, contemporary hadith hermeneutics have enriched gender hadith studies through linguistic analysis, *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah* (higher objectives of Islamic law), and contextual methodologies providing vital tools for progressive reinterpretation.

Recommendations and Implications

Based on the comprehensive analysis above, the following recommendations and practical implications are proposed for Islamic studies and contemporary socio-religious practice:

Academic Recommendations

An interdisciplinary methodology integrating classical hadith sciences with contemporary approaches such as hermeneutics, sociology, and anthropology requires development within gender hadith studies to enrich analytical perspectives and yield more comprehensive textual understanding. Concurrently, establishing a comprehensive database of gender-related hadiths, supported by rigorous historical and linguistic analyses, is essential to facilitate advanced research and provide a robust foundation for gender-responsive Islamic intellectual development. Furthermore, strengthening scholarly engagement with *maqāṣid al-sharī‘a* (the higher objectives of Islamic law) through a gender lens is imperative to formulate clear evaluative parameters for gender justice (*‘adl*) and societal benefit (*maṣlaḥa*), thereby mitigating risks of biased or discriminatory interpretations.

Practical Implications

Islamic educational institutions must undertake a revision of curricula and teaching materials pertaining to gender to integrate a contextual understanding of gender-related hadiths. This integration is essential for fostering a more inclusive and equitable religious perspective. Concurrently, gender-based community empowerment programmes should be developed, informed by progressive interpretations of hadith. Such initiatives are crucial for addressing persistent gender disparities across various spheres of life. Furthermore, a reformulation of laws and policies concerning gender issues is imperative, requiring careful consideration of the contextual understanding of relevant hadiths. This legal and policy reform constitutes a vital step towards realising gender justice within the public sphere.

Acknowledgment

The authors gratefully acknowledge the financial support provided by the Indonesia Endowment Fund for Education (LPDP), Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia, through the Indonesian Ulama Cadre Program at Istiqlal Mosque. All authors are LPDP scholarship awardees, and this research was entirely funded by the LPDP.

References

- Abdul Mustaqim. (2008). *Paradigma Tafsir Feminis: Membaca Al-Qur'an dengan Optik Perempuan (Studi Pemikiran Riffat Hassan tentang Isu Gender dalam Islam)*. Logung Pustaka.
- Ahmad, A. (2013). *Metodologi Pemahaman Hadis: Kajian Ilmu Ma'ani al-Hadis*. Alauddin University Press.
- Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal. (n.d.). *Musnad al-Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal* (Vol. 33).
- Ahmed, L. (2011). *A quiet revolution: The veil's resurgence, from the Middle East to America*. Yale University Press.
- al-Bukhārī, M. ibn I. (n.d.). *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*.
- al-Dārimī, 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān. (n.d.). *Sunan al-Dārimī* (Vol. 3).
- al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī, M. ibn 'Abdillāh. (n.d.). *Al-Mustadrak 'alā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn* (Vol. 4).
- Barlas, A. (2002). *'Believing Women' in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'an*. University of Texas Press.
- de Beauvoir, S. (2011). *The Second Sex*. Vintage Books.
- Douglas, M. (1966). *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. Routledge.
- Eilberg-Schwartz, H. (1992). The Problem of the Body for the People of the Book. In H. (Editor) Eilberg-Schwartz (Ed.), *People of the Body: Jews and Judaism from an Embodied Perspective* (pp. 17–46). SUNY Press.
- Goldziher, I. (1971). *Muslim Studies (Muhammedanische Studien)*. George Allen & Unwin.
- Hidayat, K. (1996). *Memahami Bahasa Agama: Sebuah Kajian Hermeneutik*. Paramadina.
- Hughes, A. W. (2012). *Theorizing Islam: Disciplinary Deconstruction and Reconstruction*. Routledge.
- Ibn Hajar, M. bin H. al-'Asqalani. (1326). *Tahzīb al-Tahdzīb. Da'irah Ma'arif al-Nizamiyah*.
- Ibn Hajar, M. bin H. al-'Asqalani. (1379). *Fath al-Bari Syarh Sahih al-Bukhari: Vol. Juz I. Dar al-Ma'rifat*.
- Ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī, M. (n.d.). *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān* (Vol. 9).
- Ibn Kathīr, A. al-F. I. ibn 'Umar. (1999). *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm* (Vol. 1). Dār al-Fikr.
- Mernissi, F. (1991). *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*. Perseus Books.
- Muhammad, H. (2012). *Fiqh Perempuan: Refleksi Kiai atas Wacana Agama dan Gender*. LKiS.
- Mulia, S. M. (2007). *Islam dan Inspirasi Kesetaraan Gender*. Kibar Press.
- Ortner, S. B. (1974). Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture? In M. Z. dan L. L. (Editor) Rosaldo (Ed.), *Woman, Culture, and Society* (pp. 67–87). Stanford University Press.
- Shihab, M. Q. (2009). *Membumikan Al-Qur'an: Fungsi dan Peran Wahyu dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat*. Mizan.
- Syahrur, M. (2004). *Metodologi Fiqih Islam Kontemporer*. eLSAQ Press.
- Umar, N. (2001). *Argumen Kesetaraan Gender Perspektif Al-Qur'an*. Paramadina.
- Wadud, A. (1999). *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective*. Oxford University Press.
- Wansbrough, J. (1977). *Quranic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*. Oxford University Press.