

".Fatimah (A.S.) is the Master of All the Women of the Worlds"

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In one of these statements (on which both Shiites and Sunnites agree) the Great Prophet (S.A.W.) says: "Fatimah is the master of all the women of the worlds." Although it is mentioned in the Holy Quran that Mary (A.S.) is the best woman in the worlds and has high position and is considered to be chaste and continence and is one of the four greatest women, she was the best woman of her life's period, but Fatimah's (A.S.) superiority is not restricted to her life's period and is history time. That is why Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) named her as the greatest women of all the women from the first to the last in another saying. Another point that can be inferred from these narratives is that because Fatimah (A.S.) is the greatest woman and no other has competence with her, knowing and recognizing all her life and every moment of her life is extremely valuable, as we can reach high spiritual states by deliberating it. Furthermore, by referring to the Holy Quran we find out that several verses are descended to state her position: (33:33) (known as Tat'hir verse), (3:61) (known as Mubahilah verse), (17:26)², the beginning verses of chapter 76 (al-Insan) , the whole chapter 108 (al-Kawthar).³ In this article, .we discuss her life and personality briefly

Names, titles and nicknames

Her name is Fatimah and her other names are: Zahra, Seddiqah, Tahirah, Mubarakah, Batool, Radiah and Mardiah. The word Fatimah means separated. She is named Fatimah because her followers are separated from the Hell because of her. Zahra means luminous. Imam Sadiq (A.S.) (the sixth Imam) said: "When Fatimah prayed, she shined for the heavens as the stars shine for people on earth".

Seddiqah means someone who says nothing except the truth. Tahirah means pure and clean, Mubarakah means full of favour and blessing Batool means separated from uncleanness and Radiah means satisfied with Allah's (SWT) fate and destiny and Mardiah means laudable. The following are some of her titles: Ensiah (heavenly lady), Haniah (sympathetic), Shahidah (martyr), Afifah (chaste), Sabirah (patient), Alimah (learned), Madhloomah (oppressed), Ma'soomah (infallible), Umm al-Hassan (mother of Hassan (A.S.)), Umm al-Hussain (mother of Hussain (A.S.)), Umm al-A'immah (mother of Imams) and Umm Abiha. Umm Abiha means mother of her father.

Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) has given her this title and this shows that Fatimah (A.S.) treated

Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) as his mother. This fact was proved throughout the history as she cured her father during the wars and when she was at home and many other cases.

Her father and mother

As we said, her father was Muhammad ibn-Abdullah (S.A.W.)-the Great Prophet of Islam, the last prophet and the best creature. Her mother was Khadijah bent Khuwaylid, one of the richest women of Quraish, who spent all her wealth on propagating Islam and did not even have a shroud when she passed away. She was so famous for her chastity that people called her .Tahirah (pure) before Islam. She was the first woman who converted to Islam

Her birth

Fatimah (A.S.) was born on 20th of Jamadi al-Thani, five years after the appointment of the Prophet(S.A.W.), in Mecca. When she was born, she started talking with divine power and announced that: "There is no God except Allah, my father is the messenger of Allah and the master of the prophets, my husband is the master of successors and my two sons are the master of grandchildren". Most of the Shia and some of the Sunni commentators such as Fakhr al-Razi express that the first verse of Kawthar refers to Fatimah (A.S.). He has known her as Kawthar (extreme blessing) and the reason for maintenance and spread of the Prophet's progeny. The last verse of chapter 108 (al-Kawthar) proves this fact, as Allah (SWT) tells the .Prophet(S.A.W.): "Your enemy will be without progeny

Moral virtues

Fatimah (A.S.) had high moral virtues and her life is full of spiritual behaviour. We explain two of them below noticing that these are only a very little part of her moral virtues:

1. Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari, the Prophet's (S.A.W.)companion, says that a poor emigrant (Muhajir) came to the Prophet (S.A.W.)and asked for help. The Prophet (S.A.W.)answered: "I do not have anything. Go to my daughter whose house is beside mine". Then Bilal, the Prophet's (S.A.W.)muezzin, guided him. He went to Fatimah's (A.S.) house and said: "Peace be upon you, O The family of the Prophet!" and asked for help. When Fatimah (A.S.) got aware of his poverty, although she and her father and husband did not have anything to eat for 3 days, she brought out the necklace which Hamzah's (A.S.) son -her cousin- had presented her and told the man: "Take this and sell it. I hope that Allah gives you better than this". The man took the necklace and went to the Prophet (S.A.W.)and described what had happened. The Prophet (S.A.W.)cried and prayed for him. Ammar Yasir (the Prophet's (S.A.W.)companion) stood up and after asking for permission, bought the necklace instead of

giving him food, cloth, an animal and cost of travelling. The Prophet (S.A.W.)asked the man: "Are you satisfied?" The man felt ashamed and thanked. Ammar put the necklace in a Yemeni cloth and perfumed it and dedicated it to the Prophet (S.A.W.)with his slave. The slave came to the Prophet (S.A.W.)and told the story. The Prophet (S.A.W.)offered the necklace and the slave to Fatimah (A.S.). The slave came to Fatimah (A.S.). She took the necklace and let the slave free. Then the slave smiled and when he was asked for the reason, he answered: "What a blessed necklace! It fed a hungry, covered a naked, made a pedestrian have an animal, made someone free from want, let a slave free and finally returned to its owner".

2. Prophet (S.A.W.)bought Fatimah (A.S.) a new dress for her marriage ceremony. Fatimah (A.S.) owned a patchy dress before. A poor man came to her house and asked for a used cloth. Fatimah (A.S.) decided to give him the old dress as the man had asked but remembered the verse: "You never attain to righteousness until you spend out of what you like"⁴. So she gave him the new dress

Her marriage

Fatimah (A.S.) had many suitors. Umar and Abubakr asked for her hand in marriage. The Prophet (S.A.W.)replied: "Allah has her authority". Anas ibn Malik says that Uthman and Abd al-Rahman ibn Ouf did the same and volunteered to pay a high dowry (marriage portion). At that time, Gabriel descended to Prophet (S.A.W.)and said:" Muhammad! Allah sends regards and orders: Marry Fatimah to Ali." Imam Ali (A.S.) asked for Fatima's (A.S.) hand in marriage and Prophet (S.A.W.)agreed on this marriage according to divine will. It is mentioned in the narratives that the Prophet (S.A.W.)said:" If Ali didn't exist, there would be no mate for Fatimah". Fatimah (A.S.) had a little dowry⁵. They had 5 children: Hassan, Hussain, Zainab, Umm al-Kulthum and Muhsin (PBUT) (who miscarried in the happenings after Prophet's (S.A.W.)death). Imam Hassan and Imam Hussain (PBUT), who are trained by such mother, are of the 12 Imams and the other 9 (except Imam Ali and Imam Hassan (PBUT)) are of Imam Hussain's (A.S.) progeny and are related to Prophet (S.A.W.)by Fatimah (A.S.).⁶ This is the reason we call her Umm al-A'immah (Mother of Imams). Zainab, her older daughter, was a learned and chaste and pious woman. She declared Imam Hussain's (A.S.) rising after him so properly that people opposed Yazid's oppressions several times and many risings shaped up and Yazid's throne was to be overthrown. We can obtain that she never quit worshipping even during the worst conditions and this was based on her knowing of Allah (SWT). Umm al-Kulthum, also trained by Fatimah (A.S.), was an honourable, wise and eloquent woman who .was with Zainab (A.S.) after Ashura and had a principle role in awaking people

Fatimah (A.S.) at home

Fatimah (A.S.), with all her virtues, was a good wife for Imam Ali (A.S.). It has been narrated that Imam Ali's (A.S.) sadness and grief removed whenever he looked at Fatimah (A.S.). She never asked him for something that he couldn't afford. It is worthy to find out their matrimonial relation from Amir al-Mu'minin's (A.S.) words as he named Fatimah (A.S.) the best woman and was proud of her and said: "I swear to Allah that I never made her angry and never ordered her .to do something she didn't like and she also never made me angry and never disobeyed me

Her dignity and knowledge

Although Fatimah (A.S.) is not an Imam, but her dignity and position among the Muslims and specially Shiites is not lesser than the Imams. She is actually mate of Ali's (A.S.) and she is higher than other Infallible Imams (PBUT). To understand how knowledgeable she was, it is worthy to read Fadakhiah sermon, in which she says firm sentences on Monotheism, declares her knowing of Prophet (S.A.W.)and explains Imamah briefly. This sermon, including her argumentation from the Holy Quran and expressing the reason for establishing religious laws, proves her knowledge to be revelational (a part of the sermon will come at the end of this article). Another proof to show her high knowledge from Islam history is that some woman and .even some men of Medina used to come and ask her about their religious problems

Infallibility

To prove her infallibility and her immunity of sins and even mistakes and faults, it is sufficient to refer to Tat'hir verse. To avoid elongation, we only mention that her infallibility is proved the same as Prophet (S.A.W.)and other Imams (A.S.). We recommend you to see the related .article

Fatima's (A.S.) magnificence in Prophet's (S.A.W.) words

Prophet (S.A.W.)praised Fatimah (A.S.) frequently. He said:" Her father is sacrificed for her." He used to repeat this sentence many times and sometimes bended and kissed her hand. He used to bid farewell to her as the last person before going to a journey and visited her first after returning. Most of the narrators and Muslim of all schools with any belief have narrated this Prophetic statement:" Fatimah is a part of me. Anyone who annoys her has annoyed me." On the other hand, the Holy Quran states that Prophet (S.A.W.)never says something with carnal desire and all his sayings are revelational, so we obtain that praising Fatima (A.S.) has a reason beyond emotions of a father and daughter. Prophet (S.A.W.)pointed out this fact himself and told the cavillers:" Allah has ordered me to act like that". He said:" I savour smell of

heaven from her."

From another aspect, if we consider the Prophetic narratives and the holy Quran together, we will find out that anyone who annoys Prophet (S.A.W.) will have a painful chastisement: "Anyone who annoys Prophet, will be away of Allah's compassion and will have a debasing chastisement." So, it is declared that Fatimah's (A.S.) consent and satisfaction is Allah's (SWT) consent and satisfaction and her anger is Allah's (SWT) anger. In fact she is the symbol of Allah's (SWT) consent and anger, because it is impossible that someone does something annoying Fatimah (A.S.) and so annoys Prophet (S.A.W.) and deserves divine punishment, but Allah (SWT) is pleased with him. Another point that is obtained considering this narrative and verses of the Holy Quran is that Fatima (A.S.) is satisfied and becomes consent only by passing the way of truth and she becomes angry only for deviating from the way of truth. Carnal desires and emotions are not determinant in her consent and anger, for that would be .against Allah's (SWT) justice to punish someone on one's desires or emotions

Fatima (A.S.) after Prophet's (S.A.W.) heavenly departure

Fatimah (A.S.) was mournful after Prophet's (S.A.W.) death. Not only had she lost her father, but also the best creature and seal of the prophets. The one who had high moral virtues and was said to have good humour by Allah (SWT) and the one by whom revelation ended. Moreover, his successor's right was usurped and Islam was getting out of its correct way. Fatimah (A.S.) never hid her sorrow. Sometimes she went to Prophet's (S.A.W.) shrine and mourned there and sometimes to the shrines of martyrs of battle of Uhud martyrs and Hamzah (A.S.), Prophet's (S.A.W.) uncle. Even when women of Medina asked the reason of her sorrow, she clearly noticed the death of Prophet (S.A.W.) and usurpation of his successor's right. It hadn't passed much long from Prophet's (S.A.W.) death that his recommendation and conveying Allah's (SWT) command on Ghadir, introducing Ali (A.S.) as Muslim's ruler was forgotten. They gathered in a place named Saqifah and chose one as their ruler and began to get people swear allegiance. Therefore some of the Muslim gathered in Fatimah's (A.S.) house showing their objection to usurpation of governorship and ignoring Allah's (SWT) command appointing Ali (A.S.) as Muslim's ruler and Master. When Abubakr - who was only chosen by the people gathered in Saqifah - got aware of this meeting, he sent Umar to Fatimah's (A.S.) house in order to bring Imam Ali (A.S.) and the others to the mosque for swearing allegiance by force. So, Umar and some others went there carrying some fire. When he arrived there, Fatimah (A.S.) came behind the door and asked the reason for his coming. Umar answered to take Imam Ali (A.S.) and the others to mosque for swearing allegiance. Fatimah (A.S.) prohibited them not to do this and reproached them. Therefore some of the people following

Umar dispersed. At this time Umar threatened to put the house with all the people inside in fire knowing that Fatimah (A.S.) was inside. Then, some of the objectors exited the house and Umar fought them and broke some of their swords.

But still Imam Ali (A.S.), Fatimah (A.S.) and their children were inside. Then Umar ordered some firewood and put the door in fire and entered the house by force and inspected the house with his followers and then carried Imam Ali (A.S.) by dragging, reluctantly, by force to the mosque. During these happenings, Fatimah (A.S.) was injured a lot and experienced great hardship but she didn't calm down and went to the mosque because of her duty to defend her Imam of time and addressed Umar and Abubakr and the others and cautioned them of Allah's (SWT) anger and punishment, but they continued what they were doing.

Fatima (A.S.) was also oppressed on Fadak after the Prophet's (S.A.W.) death. Fadak is a village 165 kilometres from Medina, which has productive soil and a spring and lots of date palms. Fadak belonged to Jewish and they granted it to the Prophet (S.A.W.) without any wars. So it was of "Anfal", which belongs to Allah (SWT) and Prophet (S.A.W.) as the Holy Quran says. After the verse "Give the near kin their rights ..." came down the Prophet (S.A.W.) granted Fadak to Fatima (A.S.) as Allah (SWT) had ordered. Imam Ali and Fatimah (P.B.U.T) had some agents in Fadak who worked there and sent the income for Fatimah (A.S.) after harvest. She gave the agents' salary first and divided the remaining among the poor, although her living was as simple as possible.

They sometimes granted their daily food and slept hungry, but considered the poor first and this was sincerely for Allah (SWT) (as mentioned in the beginning of chapter 76). After the death of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.&H.P), Abubakr imputed a narrative to the Prophet (S.A.W.) saying that prophets bequeath nothing, and claimed that Prophet's inheritance belonged to all Muslims. Fatima (A.S.) defended her right in two ways. First she introduced some people witnessing that Prophet (S.A.W.) had granted Fadak to her when He was alive, and so Fadak was not an inheritance. Then, she made a resplendent speech containing deep meanings about

Monotheism, Prophecy and Imamah, in Prophet's mosque.

She proved invalidity of Abubakr's claim in this extremely eloquent and clear speech. She asked Abubakr: "Why do you contradict the Holy Quran?" and then mentioned some Quran verses naming Solayman (A.S.) as Dawood's (A.S.) heir or saying that Zakaria (A.S.) asked Allah for a heir of himself and Yaghoob's family. Therefore, assuming that Prophet (S.A.W.) hadn't granted Fadak to Fatimah (A.S.) when he was alive, it belonged to Fatima (A.S.) after His death and the claim that prophets bequeath nothing and imputing it to the Prophet (S.A.W.) is against the truth according to her proof. Since it is impossible that the Prophet

(S.A.W.) talks in contravention with Allah's (SWT) sayings. Allah (SWT) has insisted on this fact in the holy Quran many times. However, Fadak wasn't returned to its real owner and was usurped. We should notice that Fatimah's (A.S.) speech and her proof was so clear that nobody was doubtful and many of the denier had accepted it inwardly. The reason is that Umar, the second caliph, returned Fadak to Imam Ali (A.S.) and Fatimah's children after Islamic conquest was expanded and the government didn't need Fadak's income. But it was .again usurped when Uthman became the caliph

Fatimah's (A.S.) illness and visiting her

Finally, Fatimah (A.S.) became sick as she was injured terribly in the attack to her home. Sometimes she got up with pains and did the housework, or sometimes went to Prophet's (S.A.W.) shrine or to Hamzah's (A.S.) and shrines of other martyrs of the battle of Uhud with her children and told out her grievances there. On one of these days the emigrants' (Muhajir) and helpers' (Ansar) wives, who were informed of her illness, visited Fatimah (A.S.). In this visit Fatimah (A.S.) expressed her dissatisfaction with usurping caliphate and commented the people who kept quiet about ignoring their divine orders and Prophet's (S.A.W.) command about Imam Ali (A.S.) and cautioned them of the result of this happenings and Islam's deviation from its right path and mentioned the blessing which could have been given to them as a result of accomplishment of their religious orders and obeying Prophet's (S.A.W.) real successor.

It was in these days that Umar and Abubakr went to visit Fatimah (A.S.). Although Fatimah (A.S.) rejected them and didn't let them in at first, they finally came to her bed. Then, Fatimah (A.S.) reminded them Prophet's (S.A.W.) statement: "Anyone who makes Fatimah angry has made me angry and one who pleases her has pleased me." They confirmed that Prophet (S.A.W.) had said such a thing. Then, she called Allah (SWT) and angels to witness that: "You (Abubakr and Umar) had made me angry and never pleased me and I would certainly complain ".to the Prophet of you

Her will

One day, when she still sick, she called Imam Ali (A.S.) and wanted him to be the executer of her will. She commanded by will to wash her body at night, shroud her at night, bury her at night and nobody of the people who had oppressed her shouldn't be present at the burying and .saying prayer

Martyrdom

It was third of Jamadi al-Thani, year eleven after Hijrah. Fatimah (A.S.) asked some water and washed her body and performed ablution with it. Then she wore a new cloth and lied in bed and put her hand under her cheek and said: "I will pass away now." And then she was martyred as a result of hard blows and injuries. At that time, she was only 18 (according to common words) and she had been alive only 95 days after Prophet's (A.S.) death (according to common words).

She passed away being angry with Abubakr and Umar as most of the Sunni reliable books and Shiite greatest books mention. She did not talk to them at the end of her life and naturally .Abubakr's regret about attacking Fatimah's (A.S.) home when he was dying was useless

Performing her ablutions and burying her

When people of Medina realized Fatimah's (A.S.) martyrdom, they gathered in front of her house and waited for the burying ceremony. But it was announced that the ceremony was delayed. At night, when all people were asleep, Imam Ali (A.S.) started to wash Fatimah's (A.S.) body and shroud her, in absence of the people, who had oppressed her greatly, according to her will. When ablutions was finished, he told Imam Hassan (A.S.) and Imam Hussain (A.S.) - who were only two little children at that time - to call some of Prophet's (S.A.W.)real companions whom Fatimah (A.S.) was satisfied with, to participate in the burying ceremony. (They were not more than 7 as it has been narrated). After they arrived; he said prayers and then buried her while his children were sad and were secretly crying for losing their mother. When the burying ceremony ended, he turned to Prophet's (S.A.W.)shrine and said:

"Regards to you, O the messenger of Allah! From me and your daughter, who has reposed besides you, and has joined you within a little time. O Prophet ! I have lost my patience in separation from your beloved and I have lost my self-control. We are from Allah and will return to him. Your daughter will inform you how she was oppressed by your community. Ask her what has happened, because it hasn't passed a lot and you haven't been forgotten yet."

Today, after passing many years, still her shrine is hidden and nobody knows where it is located. Muslims, and specially Shiites, wait for Imam Mahdi's (A.S.) reappearance. He is the Saviour and is the eleventh child of Fatimah's (A.S.) progeny. She will show us his mother's .shrine and will eradicate oppression in the world

Her sayings

Fatimah (A.S.) has left many sayings. Some of them are narrated directly from her which indicate her great knowledge and high position. Some others are narrated by the Prophet (S.A.W.)which indicates their close relationship and her high understanding and intelligence.

We mention two of directly narrated sayings here briefly:

1-If someone sends his pure prayer up to Allah, Allah will send down best welfare to him.

2-Allah has obligated faith to make you clean of polytheism, saying prayers to make you clean of haughtiness, alms to make your spirits clear and increase your sustenance, fasting to maintain your sincerity, Hajj to stand your religion, justice to strengthen your hearts, obeying us for your community's order and comfort, our governing to prevent separation, Jihad for Islam's splendour, patience to help you get eligible for reward, calling people to goodness for everybody's welfare, being generous to parents to avoid his anger, union of kindred to increase the population, retaliation to save bloods, vowing to be exposed to Allah's forgiveness, Allah has made bankruptcy the result of using short weights, and has forbidden drinking wine to keep you away from uncleanness, Qadhf (false accusation of intercourse) to avoid imprecation and curse and stealing for remaining chaste. Allah has forbidden polytheism so that people be sincere in their obedience to Allah .So "Fear Allah as much as He deserves. Be pious and don't die other than you are Muslim." Obey Allah in his obligations and prohibited things, because"

Only aware people fear Allah". Footnotes:

1- Although these narratives are different in words, they have the same meaning.

2- "And give to the near kin their right ..."

3- God willing some of these verses will be discussed in other articles separately.

4- The Holy Quran, (3:92)

5- Against the pre-Islamic traditions that dignitaries had high dowry.

6- Just like Jesus (A.S.) who is related to Abraham (A.S.) by his mother. This fact is .mentioned in the Holy Quran