

# Hazrat Fatima (S.A.) was a Mine of Knowledge and Wisdom

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As he neared the city in the burning heat of the mid-day sun, he shaded his eyes with his hands and cast a look at the green date- palms of Medina behind which were a row of modest houses. He breathed a heavy sigh as a waft of air blew from the direction of the Prophet's city. The fresh air brought a familiar scent. It was the fragrance of the Almighty's Last Messenger to mankind, Prophet Muhammad (blessing of Allah be upon him and his progeny). Although the Prophet was no longer physically present, having passed away a couple of months ago, the fragrance was obviously from Masjid an-Nabi or the Prophet's Mosque, where for years he had recited the Azaan or 'the call to the faithful to assemble for the daily prayers'. On entering the city he stood silently for a while, dusting off his clothes and casting a look at the people around. The people of Medina were engaged in the hustle and bustle of daily life and it seemed none had noticed his entry. He slowly made his way to the quarters of the city where stood the houses of the Prophet's clan, the Bani Hashem. He entered the narrow lane where he used to stand every day to greet the Prophet before going to the mosque. He advanced toward the house, at whose door it was the habit of the Prophet to salute every morning. It was the house of the Prophet's daughter Hazrat Fatema and her husband Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (peace be upon them). He was eager to meet the Prophet's family, although he had decided after the passing away of the Prophet not to return to the city that had turned its back on the blessed Household of the Prophet. He approached the closed door and said in a gentle tone: "Greetings to the Ahl ol-Bayt, the blessed household of the Prophet of God".

His voice was familiar to the People of the House. The door suddenly opened as the Prophet's two young grandsons, Imam Hassan and Imam Hussein (peace be upon them) rushed out. There was joy on their faces as they said in an enthusiastic tone: "It is Bilaal! It is Bilaal! He has come back".

Bilaal, the black Abyssinian, who had the honor of serving the Prophet as the official mu'ezzin or Caller to Prayer, embraced the boys and broke into tears at their affection for him. Their sight brought to him memories of the past as he could feel the fragrance of the Prophet from his grandsons. A moment passed and Bilaal enquired about the lady of the house, the Prophet's daughter who had been deprived of her inheritance. The two boys held the hands of Bilaal and ushered him into the courtyard of their small house. Everything appeared like in the past in the modest home of Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (PBUH). Inside the house in a small room,

the Prophet's grief-stricken daughter, Hazrat Fatema (SA) lay bedridden. She heard the familiar voice of her father's Mu'ezzen as he saluted her respectfully from the courtyard. From inside she answered: "Greetings to you O' the Mu'ezzen of my father, the Prophet of God". The voice was weak. Bilaal felt concerned and asked whether the noble lady was ill. There was no reply. After a few moments of silence, the voice from inside the room told Belaal to go to the Prophet's Mosque and recite the Azaan as he used to do in the Prophet's lifetime. She said: "O Bilaal, before I depart from the mortal world, I want you to recite the Azaan so that I can reminisce the good old days of Prophet Muhammad (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny)".

Bilaal was struck with deep sorrow. He knew before he left Medina two months ago that Hazrat Fatema (SA) had been denied her inheritance by the new rulers who had also usurped the political rights of her husband Imam Ali (AS), the Prophet's divinely-designated successor. But he was not aware that matters had reached such a state that she was about to leave the world. He obeyed and hastened toward the Prophet's Mosque. He climbed to the roof of the Mosque and cast a look around the city of Medina, which now appeared to be different from what it was during the days of the Prophet. His gentle voice pierced the atmosphere as he recited Allaho Akbar or "God is the Greatest". The people stopped work when they heard his familiar voice. Has Belaal returned, were the queries. He then recited: Ashhadoo An La Ilaha Illa Allah, which means "I bear witness there is no deity except God". People rushed enthusiastically toward the Prophet's Mosque. Belaal continued the Azaan and recited the next phrase: Ashhadoo Anna Muhammadan Rasoulallah, which means "I bear witness that Muhammad is the Prophet of God."

Tears rolled from the eyes of the people. As Bilaal was about to recite the next phrase of the Azaan, he saw the Prophet's two young grandsons rushing towards him. Imam Hassan and Hussein (peace be upon them), said with one voice: "O Bilaal, do not recite the Azaan anymore.

Our mother recalling the days of the Prophet has fallen unconscious on the prayer mat".

Bilaal came down and with tears in his eyes embraced the two young boys. Before her passing away, Hazrat Fatema (SA) asked for water. She took ablution, put on neat clothes, faced the Qibla or the direction of the prayer and supplicated: "O God make death appear like a dear one coming from journey whose return I have been longing for. O God, shower Your mercy and blessings upon me, place my soul among the ranks of the souls of pure, my life among the life of the virtuous, my body among the bodies of the ritually clean, and accept my deeds".

Hazrat Fatema (SA) was virtue personified. In fact, she is considered the greatest lady that

ever graced Planet Earth. Whatever the Prophet said about her was to make people aware of her position and status that would serve as an example for women of all time. It was the habit of the Prophet to stand to his feet whenever his noble daughter entered his presence. He demonstrated to the people the lofty status of women in Islam. One day when a person asked the Prophet as to why he showed such respect to his daughter, he was told: "You do not know Fatema. She has the fragrance of paradise. Do you know that God is pleased when Fatema is pleased and God is displeased if Fatema is displeased?"

She was a mine of knowledge and wisdom. Her famous sermon on the seizure of her inheritance and the usurpation of her husband's rights by the new rulers of Medina is testimony to her eloquence and knowledge. This sermon that is preserved in its original Arabic to this day and has been translated into the major languages of the world, presents the gist of the Islamic tenets of monotheism, divine justice, prophet hood, Imamate and the Final Judgment. It is also an excellent explanation of the timeless concepts of the Holy Quran and how peaceful and virtuous people should behave in life for the progress of mankind and for salvation in the Hereafter. She says that her father, who was sent by the Almighty as the final Prophet, enlightened the human race and delivered mankind from the worship of idols and set them on the path towards paradise.

She had been promised that she would be the first one from among the family to join her father in afterlife. When she heard these words from her father on his deathbed, her tears gave way to a smile. Now, ninety-five days later she was all prepared to depart for the heavenly abode to join her father. She was happy for the final journey but sad at the circumstances leading to her departure. She was in the prime of her youth and suffered untold calamities in this short period after her father had passed away. The Prophet used to show the utmost respect to her, but after him she found that her inheritance was seized by the new rulers on the pretext that whatever the Prophets leave is charity and not inheritance. She defended her rights, not for some paltry materialistic things, but to show to all humanity that Islam guarantees the rights of women. In support of her rights she cited verses from the Holy Quran, where God Almighty says Solomon inherited David. The people had no answers to her logic but worldly greed prevented them from restoring her rights. However, the greatest blow she suffered was the usurpation of the rights of her husband, Imam Ali (AS), the divinely-designated successor of the Prophet. In a memorable sermon, rich in Arabic metaphors, she tried to show the new rulers the folly of their action in deviating from the principle of Vilayat or Islamic Leadership, but to no avail.

Hearts had hardened and the sequence of sufferings was so fast that she was not even

allowed to weep for her father in her home, because it seemed, her wailing was disturbing the sweet dreams of the new rulers. She had to go outside Medina to remember her father at a small room built by her beloved husband to protect her from the torrid heat of the Arabian sun. It was called "Bayt ol-Hozn" or "House of Grief". The magnitude of her sufferings were so much that she would recite at the tomb of the Prophet: "O Father after you such great calamities have fallen upon me, that the sorrow is enough to turn bright days into dark nights". This was the elegy of Fatema az-Zahra (SA), in whose honor the Prophet used to stand to his feet whenever the beloved daughter entered his presence. He would salute at her doorstep in the mornings, but alas, this very threshold had been desecrated by a mob of miscreants who came with fire and iron bars, threatening to burn the house if her husband does not come out and swear allegiance to the new rulers. Fatema (SA) refused to surrender Imam Ali (AS) and told them her four little children were also in the house. The thugs refused to hear the words of the daughter of their Prophet and beat down the door, which tragically fell upon her and pinned her to the wall. As a result she suffered a miscarriage. But despite this pain, she defended her husband when the rogues tried to drag him out of the house.

Fatema (SA) now lay on her deathbed, prepared to leave behind the world and its tribulations. She had spent 95 awful days after her father and was now looking forward to join him in heaven. Those who had oppressed her sought permission to see her in the last moments of her life. But she refused, since she was aware of their hypocritical nature. She told her dear husband to tell them that she was displeased with this group. She reminded them of her father's famous hadith, which says:

"Fatema is a part of me, whoever displeases her has displeased me and whoever displeases me has displeased Allah."

People acknowledged her words. Finally the moment came, when her soul flew to the ethereal heavens leaving behind a grief-stricken husband and four young children. What a sad moment was this day for her sons Imam Hassan and Imam Hussein and daughters Hazrat Zainab and Hazrat Omm Kolsoum (peace be upon them). As per her will, Hazrat Fatema (SA) was laid to eternal peace in an unmarked grave in the dead of night, with only her immediate family and few close confidantes attending the funeral. What a great tragedy it was!

Here we present to you part of the statement of her grief-stricken husband Imam Ali (AS) while laying her to eternal rest. The words are preserved in the valuable book Nahj ol-Balagha or Highway of Eloquence, read:

"O Prophet of God, peace be upon you from me and from your daughter who has come to you and who has hastened to meet you. O Prophet of God, my patience has been exhausted, and

my power of endurance has weakened, except that I have ground for consolation in having endured the great hardship and heart-rending event of your separation. I laid you down in your grave when your last breath had passed while your head was resting between my neck and chest. Surely, we are from God and unto Him shall we return. Now the trust – i.e. your daughter – is being returned and what was given is being taken back. As to my grief, it knows no bounds, and as to my nights, they will remain sleepless till God .chooses for me the house in which you are now residing