

Chapter 2: Her Status

[In the Holy Qur'an](#)

Ahlu Bayt (as) are mentioned in the Qur'an in many verses. Here we look at three verses which mention our Lady Fatimah (as).

[1- The verse of feeding](#)

This is: **'And they give away food, out of love for Him, to the poor and the orphan and the captive. We feed you only for God's sake, we intend not of you any recompense, nor thanks! Verily, we dread from our Lord, a stern day of distress. So will God guard them from the evil of that day and cause them to meet freshness and pleasure. And shall recompense them, for what they endured with patience, with garden and silk.'** (Qur'an 76:8-12)

Commentators, from different Muslim sects, said that these honourable verses referred to Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husain (as). In *al-Kashshaf*, it is narrated by Ibn 'Abbas that 'al-Hasan and al-Husain got ill and were visited by the Messenger of Allah and the people with him. They said: O Abul Hasan! Why not make a vow for your sons? So Ali and Fatimah and Fadda – a servant – vowed that if they (the sons) became well, they would fast three days. They became completely well, so Ali borrowed from Simon, the Khaybarian Jew, three measures of barley; Fatimah grinded one amount and baked five bread discs for the five of them. When they took it in their hands to break the fast a beggar came and said: *Assalamu Alaikum Ahla Bayti Muhammad* (Peace be upon you, O progeny of Muhammad) – a needy from among the Muslims, feed me, and may Allah feed you from the banquets of Paradise! They favoured him and spent their night without taking anything but water, and fasted in the morning. When the evening came and they took the food in their hands, an orphan came and they favoured him; a captive came in the third night and they did likewise.

In the morning, Ali (may Allah be satisfied with him) took al-Hasan and al-Husain to the Messenger of Allah (sawa), who, when saw them trembling like chicks from great hunger, said: **How hard for me the**

state which I see you in; and he left with them and went to Fatimah in her prayer niche, and saw her with her back stuck to her abdomen and her eyes sunken, and was saddened. Gabriel came down and said: **Take it O Muhammad! Allah congratulates you with your progeny.** And he recited the chapter for him.¹

This is the secret of Ahlul Bayt (as): they move in all their activities in life for the sake of Allah, without asking or requesting recompense or gratitude. This is a great humanistic virtue: a person should give all that he owns to whoever needs it, without expecting for any repayment, but waiting only for the mercy of Allah. This is the value of Ahlul Bayt, and amongst them our Lady Fatimah (as): they have lived the spirit of donation and giving – in their knowledge, social position, strength, soul and blood – all for the sake of Allah and in His way.

2- The verse of Mubahalah (challenge)

This is: **'And unto him who disputeth with thee therein, after the knowledge hath come unto thee, Say! 'come ye, let us summon our sons and your sons, and our women and your women, and ourselves and yourselves and then let us invoke and lay the curse of God on the liars!'**(Qur'an 3:61)

Here, all commentators agree that our women refers to Fatimah al-Zahra (as), and that this is as the Messenger of Allah (sawa) wanted it and showed it practically.

In the story of this dialogue which the Prophet (sawa) commanded with some Christians, the Prophet (sawa) took a new route to deal with the situation when the dialogue reached a dead end, and it is this method of challenging which the verse tells us about.

The narration of the great Ali bin Ibrahim al-Qommi, from Imam al-Sadiq (as) says that: **'The Christians of Najran came (as a delegation) to the Messenger of Allah.... They prayed using the bell; the Prophet's companion objected: O Messenger of Allah! This in your mosque? He said: Leave them (to pray as they like). When they finished they came to the Prophet (sawa) and said: To what do you call? He said: To bear witness that there is no God but Allah and that I am the Messenger of Allah and that 'Isa (Jesus) (as) is created a slave (of Allah), and eats, drinks and excretes.**

They said: Then who is his father? The revelation was then revealed to the Messenger of Allah (sawa) saying: Say to them - what do you say about Adam, has he been created a slave (of Allah), eating, drinking, excreting and marrying? So the Prophet (sawa) asked them and they replied: yes. He asked them: Then who is his father? They could not answer, so Allah revealed: Verily, the similitude of Jesus with God is as the similitude of Adam; He created him out of dust, then said He unto him BE, and he became' (Qur'an 3:59) and 'And unto him who disputeth with thee... let us invoke and lay the curse of God on the liars!' The Messenger of Allah (sawa) said: So, challenge me: if I am telling the truth the curse falls unto you, and if I am a liar the curse falls

unto me. They said: You are speaking in justice.

They agreed on a date for *Mubalahah* (challenge). When they returned to the places they were staying in, their leaders al-Sayyid, al-'Aqib and al-Ahtam said: If he challenged us with his people, we accept the challenge for he is not a prophet; but if he challenges us with his family in particular we don't challenge him, for he is not going to push forward his family unless he is truthful. In the morning, they came to the Messenger of Allah (sawa) and with him the Commander of the Faithful, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husain (as), so the Christians said: Who are those? The people replied: This is his cousin and successor and son-in-law, and this is his daughter Fatimah, and these are his sons al-Hasan and al-Husain. So they became frightened and said to the Messenger of Allah (sawa): We give you the satisfaction, so give us leave from the challenge.²

.**'and our women'**: those amongst women who represent the nearest position to my humanistic and spiritual affiliation in my life, and here I put forward my daughter Fatimah, the Doyenne of the Women of the World, who is **'part of me'** and **'Allah becomes angry for her anger and satisfied for her satisfaction'** in this great challenge so as to prove that I am absolutely sure about the truth of my call, for man does not put forward his most beloved people to the places of danger unless he is certain of safety.

3- The verse of Purification (tat-heer)

This is: **'Verily, verily God intendeth but to keep off from you [every kind of] uncleanness, O ye the People of the House, and purify you (with) a thorough purification.'**(Qur'an 33:33)

Ummu Salamah (the wife of the Prophet) said: The Prophet (sawa) was in my house and also Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husain; I prepared some food for them and they ate and went to sleep and he (sawa) covered them with a robe or cloak and said: **'O Lord! These are the people of my house; keep off from them all uncleanness and purify them with a thorough purification.'**

In another narration, Ummu Salamah said that the verse was revealed in her house and 'I was sitting at the door of the house, and said: O Messenger of Allah! Am I not from the People of the House? He replied: **'You are in a good (right) way - you are with the wives of the Prophet'**. She added: And in the house (then was) the Messenger of Allah (sawa), Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husain.³

What is the meaning of the *rijs* (uncleanness) in the verses above?

Rijs in language means anything unclean which may stick to the body or other material thing; it can also refer to the non-material side of the personality. Allah called pork *rijs*, and at the same time called atheism, polytheism and the consequences of bad deeds *rijs*: **'But as to those in whose hearts is a disease, it addeth unto them uncleanness to their uncleanness, and they shall die while they are infidels.'** (Qur'an 9:125) And **'Whomsoever willeth God that He should guide him aright, He**

expandeth his breast (*heart/mind*) for Islam, and whomsoever He intendeth to leave straying, He maketh his breast straight and narrow as though he is climbing into the very skies; thus doth God lay ignominious chastisement (*rijs*) on those who believe not.'(Qur'an 6: 125)

In light of this, it seems that the word (as used in the verses in question) refers to the negative moral attributes which represent the uncleanness of the soul. In addition, the word has another meaning: the intellectual mistakes in recognizing things that appears to point to individual infallibility. This is a Divine favour that Allah effects inside the self to prevent it from false belief and wrong doing, through the fact that this word also entails a notion of repulsion and rejection, and the need to abstain from it.

This verse is a clear proof of the infallibility of Ahlul Bayt (as), because the '*lam*' (corresponding to the sound of letter L) in the word '*rijs*' (i.e. *al-rijs*) makes it inclusive of all that can cause shortfall in a person's personality, and all that causes repulsion from it when it deviates and commits mistakes by it (the *rijs*). Therefore, it points to the will of Allah to remove all deep causes of deviation or mistakes. In other words: Allah has stored in Ahlul Bayt (as) the knowledge and special attributes of sanctity and purity to remove all *rijs* from them and effect purity in them.

In the hadith

The Messenger of Allah (sawa) talked about Fatimah (as) and her virtues a great deal, and described her in a way that he did not do with other women. As the Prince of Poets Ahmad Shawki said:

He did not wish other than her for offspring

And who begets al-Zahra will not wish any others.

And the Messenger of Allah (as) when he evaluates (someone), he does not do it out of emotion or desire – God forbid! '**And nor he speaketh of (*his own*) inclination**' (Qur'an 53:3); he speaks by the tongue of revelation: '**It (*the wording*) is naught but a revelation revealed.**' (Qur'an 53:4)

And here, let us touch on some of his narrations regarding his daughter Fatimah (as).

1- The Doyenne of the Women of the World

Among the most important titles with which the truthful, pure Fatimah (as) was bestowed was narrated in the famous *hadith* from the Prophet (sawa): '**The doyenne of the women of paradise.**'⁴

In another *hadith*: '**The doyenne of the women of the world.**'⁵

In a third: '**The doyenne of believing women**'; and in a fourth: '**The doyenne of the women of the nation.**'⁶

In another *hadith*: '**O my daughter! Are not you satisfied that you are the doyenne of the women of**

the world? She said: O father! What about Mary daughter of 'Imran (then)? He said: She is the doyenne of the women of her world and you are the doyenne of the women of your world; I swear by Allah that I have married you to a master in life and the hereafter.⁷

Now, we should stop to ponder about this. Is this title, Doyenne of the Women of the World, a mere honorary title?

No! The Messenger of Allah (sawa) does not give titles without a reason, for when he moves to evaluate people, even if they are his relatives, he does so according to precise evaluation of the actual capabilities of the person in question. Otherwise, he would have been speaking out of desire, while Allah says: **'And nor he speaketh of (his own) inclination. It (the wording) is naught but a revelation revealed.'** (Qur'an 53:3-4)

Hence, for Fatimah to be the Doyenne of the Women of Paradise means that He has amassed in her mind, heart and virtues, all the mind, heart and virtues of the women of paradise, and in fact excelled on them.

And for Fatimah to be the Doyenne of the Women of the World or Believing Women, this means that all the virtues and attributes of believing and all the merits of believing women are invested and manifested in her. Otherwise, how could she be a doyenne of a people if she had not outshone them or had not acquired the merit with which she would possess that mastery.

2- Fatimah is part of me

In another word by him (sawa), regarding the distinguished position of being the Doyenne of Women, he said: **'Fatimah is part of me, whoever makes her angry makes me angry.'**⁸ And: **'Verily my daughter Fatimah is only (and nothing else) a part of me, what hurts her hurts me.'**⁹

In its different forms, this narration which came from the Truthful and Trustworthy (*al-Sadiq al-Amin*) (sawa), who – as we said before – would only speak through an Islamic revelation, not through emotion, because his emotion was that of a human, who would embrace his daughter like any human would embrace his son or daughter. But when he gives a distinctive judgement, he gives it through revelation and message, and no one can ever claim it was not what Allah has said: **'And if (Our Apostle Muhammad) had fabricated against us any of the sayings. Certainly would We have seized him by the right hand. Then certainly would We have cut off his aorta!'** (Qur'an 29:44-46)

These narrations express the spiritual intermixing and deep bond between him and her. His words **'a part of me'** are not intended to mean the material side, for this is quite obvious to anyone, but something that is deeper than that. For someone to be a part of the Messenger of Allah (sawa) means that they are related to the Messenger of Allah, in a missionary relationship, as if they are part of his body. This means that their mind contains some of the mind of the Prophet (sawa), their soul contains some of the soul of the Prophet (sawa) and their life contains the purity, spirituality, truthfulness and trustworthiness

as exhibited by the Prophet (sawa).

He (sawa) adds '**whoever makes her angry makes me angry**'. We recognize that the bearers of the Messages do not become emotional when people hurt their children; but also that a righteous father will not get angry and emotional if people rightfully make his son angry, because he does wrong to them. So, what is the meaning of '**whoever makes her angry makes me angry**'?

It means that Fatimah is the woman who can never do wrong to anyone, in words or in deeds, so that people have the right to hurt her or make her angry. In fact, if Fatimah becomes angry no one will have made her angry, because she will have become angry only for Allah. For the woman who can never harm anyone, sin or deviate, whoever makes her angry he is surely making Allah angry; and she is a person who does not get hurt unless Allah is disobeyed or people deviate from Allah's way. Therefore the Messenger of Allah is hurt if she is hurt.

By the same token, his saying as in some narrations '**What satisfies her satisfies me**' means that she is satisfied only with what satisfies Allah and His Messenger. Had the Prophet (sawa) not been fully aware of the depth of the personality of Fatimah (as), and that she was an image of his soul, thinking, way and message, and that the Message was imprinted in her personality, and her personality dissolved in the Message, it would have been incorrect for him to bind his satisfaction to hers, and his anger to hers. This proves, very clearly, that Fatimah (as) is infallible, pure and has reached the summit of perfection.

3- Allah's satisfaction and hers

In another narration, the Prophet (sawa) said: '**Surely Allah becomes angry for the anger of Fatimah and becomes satisfied for her satisfaction/if she is satisfied.**'¹⁰

This text is even stronger evidence than its predecessor in proving the greatness of Fatimah (as) and her elevated position before Allah the Most High. What does it mean that Allah becomes angry for the anger of a person, and satisfied for his satisfaction? It means that this person has lived in all the locations of Allah's satisfaction, and has stayed away from the locations of his anger. This was what was expressed by Imam al-Husain (as) when he said: '**The satisfaction of Allah is the satisfaction of us, the People of the House.**'¹¹

The Muslims

It is no secret that Fatimah (as) is the main female personality sanctified by all Muslims. If we read what the Muslim scholars, from both the Sunnah and Shi'ah, have written and the books and papers on her, we find that they talk about her with highest respect, love and glorification; this is because of what her personality contained in terms of high moral values, spiritual purity and knowledge, all of which have made her a role model to be followed by Muslims, and also from what they know about her from the

Qur'an and the sayings of the Prophet (sawa) which have clarified her position and underlined the obligation to respect, appreciate and glorify her, and avoiding everything that hurts her and angers her.

'Aisha, the Prophet's wife, described her as the most truthful after her father. And Anas bin Malik said that there was no one who resembled the Messenger of Allah (sawa) more closely than al-Hasan bin Ali and Fatimah. [12](#)

And Ibn Mas'ood, Ibn 'Abbas, Ibn 'Umar, Abu Hurayrah, Abu Sa'eed al-Khudari, Salman al-Farsi and other companions of the Prophet (sawa) told of her virtues and merits in a lot of narrations and praised her to the highest.

The same was true for the successors of the companions (*tabi'een*) and their successors (*tabi'ee al-tabi'een*), including the compilers of books of *hadith* such as al-Bukhari, Muslim, al-Hakim al-Naysaboori, al-Baghawi, Ibn 'Abdul Barr, Ibn Hajar and others, who allocated in their books chapters to narrate what was said in her regard and how Allah distinguished her from others. [13](#)

It was because of the love and sanctification that the Muslim society had for Fatimah (as), that when they attacked her house to insult her and threatened to burn the house, the only objection was that inside the house was Fatimah. They did not say that inside the house was Ali or al-Hasan and al-Husain or Zaynab, but 'inside it is Fatimah', which meant that she was living deep within the conscience of the Muslims and that she had possessed their love. Some of the attackers had their hearts beating with love for her and this was why they left weeping when they heard her voice. [14](#)

Also, we saw how the Muslims reacted to her sermon which she gave after the death of the Prophet (sawa) and the usurpation of the caliphate and confiscating Fadak; they were touched with her speech to the extent that 'People have not seen more men weeping and women weeping like that day.' [15](#)

Infallibility

Al-Zahra, al-Batool, in her knowledge, worship, faith in Allah and care for the Messenger of Allah (sawa) and the Commander of the Faithful (as), reached the position of infallibility, elevated to the degree of holiness, untarnished by sin, and left for us the highest example as a woman who lived her life for Allah and closed her eyes to depart from life, whilst reciting the praise of Allah.

We believe that Fatimah (as) is infallible – free of all wrongdoing, incorrectness, lack of awareness, or forgetfulness, and that she committed no sin whatever small.

(A) The proof on her infallibility

We can deduce her infallibility from three proofs – this is in addition to the aforementioned *hadith*:

'Fatimah is part of me; whoever makes her angry makes me angry!'

First proof – If we study her life, from birth to death, her life with her father, husband, sons and all people, we will find no error or wrongdoing in thoughts or speech, or uncertainty in deeds; thus her life has been a manifestation of infallibility in the most comprehensive way.

Second proof – She is from the People of the House (Ahlul Bayt), whom Allah kept from all uncleanness and on whom he conferred thorough purification, and so the verse of purification includes her when it includes Ali, al-Hasan and al-Husain (as) – the verse that serves as proof of their infallibility. The verse of purification is, therefore, a witness of the truth, which cannot be disputed by falsehood, that Fatimah is infallible.

When we use the verse of purification to prove her infallibility, this does not mean at all that before the revelation of the verse she had not been infallible. Rather, she had been infallible before its revelation, with an absolute infallibility for which her conduct stands as witness. The verse of purification merely confirmed this infallibility; it did not confer it upon her.

Third proof – Fatimah al-Zahra (as) is the Doyenne of the Women of the World, as was confirmed by the famous *hadith* narrated by the two schools of thought. It is inconceivable that a woman would attain the position of the Doyenne of the Women of the World without being a person who lived the whole of truth in her mind and heart, and that falsehood could ever creep into any of this at all.

(B) The nature of her infallibility

Our opinion of the infallibility of Ahlul Bayt (as) is that Allah the Most High has placed in them elements of knowledge and spirit and holiness which remove all uncleanness from them and confer purity upon them. He gave them a light by which they move, through their awareness of all the rays of light and its horizons, and that he gave them knowledge and spirituality which match the awareness and knowledge of Allah and an awareness of Islam in its full depth and breadth, so that they move dynamically with purity and awareness, and away from evil with awareness.

These elements deepen their awareness and will, but do not move them automatically and without choice. No one should suggest that the meaning of formative infallibility (*'ismah takweeniyyah*), as taken from the verse '**Verily, verily God intendeth...**', means that Allah the Most High takes away choice from them, so that they become the purified and free of uncleanness not out of their own volition like a machine without awareness; this thinking is false. Although we said that Allah was the One who conferred upon them the virtues of holiness, spirituality and knowledge, this would not mean that consequently they were deprived of choice and would become like a machine or a cane in the hands of its owner, because these virtues would actually deepen the awareness in them as we said, not deprive them of choice. [16](#)

Therefore, Fatimah's infallibility was willful infallibility, and proceeded from her awareness and from Divine favour, which gracefully saved her from prostration to idols or committing sins, like he gracefully

saved her husband Ali (as) from prostration to idols before the start of the Message and after it – this is in contrast to many Muslim men and women who prostrated to the idols before Islam. As for Fatimah (as), her prostration was to Allah from the moment she knew prostration, and her bowing was to Allah from the moment she knew bowing.

- [1.](#) Al-Kashshaf commentary, vol. 4, p. 670; Shawahid al-Tanzeel, al-Hasakani, vol. 2, p. 399; al-Baydawi, vol. 2, p. 526; al-Tha'labi in al-Kashf wal Tabyan, p. 279.
- [2.](#) Al-Qummi commentary, vol.1, p. 104; Sahih Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1871; Sunan al-Turmuthi, vol. 5, p. 638; Shawahid al-Tanzeel, vol. 1, p. 155; al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, p. 148; al-Kamil fil Tareekh, vol. 2, p. 393.
- [3.](#) Al-Tabari, vol. 22, p. 5–8; Fada'il al-Khamsah fil Sihah al-Sittah, vol. 1, p. 214.
- [4.](#) Sahih al-Bukhari, al-Karmani commentary, vol. 15, p. 4, Musnad Ahmad, vol. 3, p. 498 and vol.6, p. 542.
- [5.](#) Musnad Abu Dawood, p. 196, hadith 1373; al-Mustadrak, vol. 3, p. 156.
- [6.](#) Sahih Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1905; Fada'il al-Khamsah, vol. 3, p. 137–146.
- [7.](#) Hilyat al-Awliya', vol. 2, p. 42.
- [8.](#) Sahih al-Bukhari, al-Karmani commentary, vol. 15, p. 5.
- [9.](#) Sahih Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1903.
- [10.](#) Ma Rawat-hu al-'Ammah min Manaqib Ahlul Bayt, p. 23; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 43, chapter 8, p. 220.
- [11.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 44, p. 367.
- [12.](#) Musnad Ahmad, vol. 3, p. 642.
- [13.](#) Ma Rawat-hu al-'Ammah min Manaqib Ahlul Bayt, p. 229; A'yan al-Shi'ah, vol. 1, p. 307; 'Awalim al-Zahra, p. 48 et seq.; Fada'il al-Khamsa, vol. 3, p. 122 et seq.
- [14.](#) Al-Mustarshid, al-Tabari, p. 376; al-Imamah wal Siyasah, p. 13.
- [15.](#) Commentary to Nahj al-Balaghah, Ibn Abi al-Hadeed, vol. 16, p. 122.
- [16.](#) For the reader who wants to know his eminence's opinion (regarding this issue), refer to the book Fiqh al-Hayat, p. 267 which makes his opinion quite clear; the controversy which has arisen may perhaps be the result of not referring to his words and being misled by the term "ismah takweeniyyah", which has appeared in some of his works.

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