

Chapter 4: Peace be on you, O son of Fatima – the leader of the women of the worlds

أَلْسَلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا بِنَ فَاطِمَةَ

سَيِّدَةِ نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِينَ

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Commentary

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Peace be unto you, O son of Fatima

This verse is one of the most radiant verses of *Ziyarat 'Ashura'*, for it reveals the pleasant origin of Imam al-Husayn (AS) and his utter purity. Not only is the Imam (AS) a physical offspring of the sublimest example of purity and goodness, he is her spiritual artifact (*bina'*) as well. One of the appellations of Hadhrat Fatima (AS) is *al-Tayyiba* (the pleasant one). In a well-known *Ziyarat* of the Holy Prophet (S) we supplicate as follows:

...اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى فَاطِمَةَ الطَّيِّبَةِ الطَّاهِرَةِ الْمُطَهَّرَةِ، الَّتِي أَنْتَجَبْتَهَا وَطَهَّرْتَهَا وَ

فَضَّلَتْهَا عَلَى نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِينَ...

...O Allah, bless Fatima, *the pleasant one (al-Tayyiba)*, the pure, the purified, whom You chose, purified and preferred over all the women of the worlds...1

Imam al-Husayn (AS) being the offspring of a pure mother the like of *al-Tayyiba*, also inherits utter purity. Small wonder it is that one of his appellations is *al-Tayyib*: Abu Shibl narrates:

قُلْتُ لِأَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ أَزُورُ قَبْرَ الْحُسَيْنِ قَالَ نَعَمْ زِرِ الطَّيِّبَ وَأَتِمِّ الصَّلَاةَ فِيهِ...

I said to Imam al-Sadiq (AS): I visit the grave of *al-Husayn* (AS) He (AS) said: Yes, *visit al-Tayyib*² (*the pleasant one*), and pray the complete prayer (and not *qasr*) near him...3

In another tradition, Abu Sa'id al-Mada'ini says: I entered in the presence of Abu 'Abdillah [al-Sadiq (AS)], and I said: May I be made your ransom. Should I visit the grave of al-Husayn (AS)? He ('a) said:

نَعَمْ يَا أَبَا سَعِيدٍ أَنْتَ قَبْرُ الْحُسَيْنِ ابْنِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أَطْيَبِ الْأَطْيَبِينَ وَأَطْهَرَ الطَّاهِرِينَ وَأَبْرَّ الْأَبْرَارِ فَإِنَّكَ إِذَا زُرْتَهُ كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكَ بِهِ خَمْسًا وَعِشْرِينَ حَجَّةً.

Yes O Aba Sa'id, visit the grave of al-Husayn (AS), the offspring of the Messenger of Allah (S), **the most pleasant of the most pleasant ones and the most pure of the pure ones**, and the most righteous of the righteous ones; for surely if you visit him, Allah will write for you the reward of twenty five pilgrimages (*hajjs*).⁴

In the well-known *Ziyarat al-Jami'a al-Kabira* there is a statement that alludes to the *process of the transfer* of purity. We are taught to address the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) in the following way:

...وَأَنَّ أَرْوَاحَكُمْ وَنُورَكُمْ وَطِينَتَكُمْ وَاحِدَةٌ طَابَتْ وَطُهِرَتْ بَعْضُهَا مِنْ بَعْضٍ...

...and that your spirits, your light, and your nature are one; they became pleasant and purified some from others...5

In another tradition where the *basis of transfer* is clearly depicted, the Holy Prophet (S) presents a Divine law:

...فَأَبَى أَنْ يُخْرِجَ مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ إِلَّا الطَّيِّبَ

...And He [Allah] did not allow to produce from a pleasant entity save a pleasant entity.6

In a beautiful conversation with Kumayl bin Ziyad al-Nakha'i Amir al-mu'minin 'Ali (AS) narrates the Prophet (S) as saying:

عَلِيٌّ مِنِّي وَابْنَايَ مِنْهُ وَالطَّيِّبُونَ مِنِّي وَأَنَا مِنْهُمْ وَهُمْ الطَّيِّبُونَ بَعْدَ أُمَّهِمْ وَهُمْ سَفِينَةٌ
مَنْ رَكِبَهَا نَجَا وَمَنْ تَخَلَّفَ عَنْهَا هَوَى...

'Ali is from me, and my two sons are from him, and the *tayyibun* [a reference to the A'imma (AS)] are from me, and I am from them, and they are the *tayyibun* (pleasant ones) after their mother, and they are the Ark upon which whoever boards is emancipated, and whosoever lags behind, falls...7

Readers are requested to reflect on the phrase “*wa hum al-tayyibun ba'da ummihim*” (and they are the pleasant ones after their mother) which subtly alludes to the root and transfer of their purity.

In order to understand better the transfer of purity, let us consider the following verses and narrations:

1- The Holy Qur'an presents a parable of universal significance:

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَفَرْعُهَا فِي
السَّمَاءِ. تُؤْتِي أُكْلَهَا كُلَّ حِينٍ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهَا وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَتَذَكَّرُونَ

Don't you see how Allah sets forth a parable? A pleasant word⁸ (kalima tayyiba) is like a goodly tree, whose root is firmly fixed, and its branches (reach) to the heavens, It brings forth its fruit at all times, by the leave of its Lord. So Allah sets forth parables for men, in order that they may receive admonition. (14:24)

This verse must be understood in light of the fact that Allah's word is different from the word of the human being. According to a radiant expression of Amir al-mu'minin 'Ali (AS) in *Nahj al-Balagha*, Allah's words are His very creations. He A says: 'And surely His speech is the action that He originates...'⁹

Therefore when we speak of *kalima tayyiba* we refer to a pleasant and good being. And among the fundamental requisites of such an entity, as depicted in the above verse, is a firm and powerful origin.

One who is born to parents of firm knowledge and action, would always inhabit the skies of spiritual elevation, and benefit others every moment by the permission of their Lord. In a tradition Imam al-Baqir (AS) says the following about the aforementioned verse:

...نَحْنُ الشَّجَرَةُ الَّتِي قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ، نَحْنُ نُعْطِي
شِيَعَتَنَا مَا نَشَاءُ مِنْ عِلْمِنَا

We are the tree about which Almighty Allah said “...**whose root is firmly fixed, and its branches (reach) to the heavens**” (14:24). We are the ones who give our Shi’as what we want from our knowledge... 10

2. Imam Amir al-mu’minin ‘Ali (AS) alluding to the reality that the fruit depends on the water of the plant says:

...وَأَعْلَمُ أَنَّ كُلَّ عَمَلٍ نَبَاتٌ، وَكُلُّ نَبَاتٍ لَا غِنَى بِهِ عَنِ الْمَاءِ، وَالْمِيَاهُ مُخْتَلِفَةٌ، فَمَا
طَابَ سَقِيهِ طَابَ غَرْسُهُ، وَحَلَّتْ ثَمَرَتُهُ، وَمَا خَبَثَ سَقِيهِ خَبَثَ غَرْسُهُ، وَأَمَرَتْ
ثَمَرَتُهُ.

...and know that every action is a plant, and every plant is not needless of water, and waters are of different kinds. And if the water of a plant is pure and pleasant, its growth would be pleasant and its fruit sweet. And if the water of a plant is dirty and unpleasant, its growth would be unpleasant and its fruit bitter. 11

3. Alluding to the fundamental importance of the land where the plant grows, the Holy Qur`an says:

وَالْبَلَدُ الطَّيِّبُ يَخْرُجُ نَبَاتُهُ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِ وَالَّذِي خَبَثَ لَا يَخْرُجُ إِلَّا نَكِدًا

The good land its vegetation comes out by the permission of its Lord, and as for that which is bad, it does not come out except sparsely. (7:58)

4. In a well-known *Ziyarat* when addressing the Imams of the Baqi’ cemetery in Madina we say:

...طَبَّتُمْ وَطَابَ مِنْبُتُكُمْ...

You are pleasant and the place of your growth too is pleasant and pure... 12

5. Alluding to the pleasant growth of Hadhrat Maryam (AS) Almighty Allah says:

فَتَقَبَّلَهَا رَبُّهَا بِقَبُولٍ حَسَنٍ وَأَنْبَتَهَا نَبَاتًا حَسَنًا...

Thereupon her Lord accepted her with a beautiful acceptance, and caused her to grow as a lovely plant... (3:37)

6. Imam al-Husayn (AS) says in his well-known supplication of 'Arafa:

خَلَقْتَنِي مِنَ التُّرَابِ، ثُمَّ أَسْكَنْتَنِي الْأَصْلَابَ آمِنًا لِرَيْبِ الْمُنُونِ وَإِخْتِلَافِ الدُّهُورِ،
فَلَمْ أَزَلْ ظَاعِنًا مِنْ صُلْبٍ إِلَى رَحِمٍ فِي تَقَادِمِ الْأَيَّامِ الْمَاضِيَةِ وَالْقُرُونِ الْخَالِيَةِ

...You created me from clay, then established me in loins safe from the unpredictable turn of destiny and the difference of times; **then I have been shifting from the loin to the womb along the course of the bygone days and the past centuries.**'¹³

Here Imam al-Husayn (AS) is trying to teach us of a profound reality: the question of transfer of purity or impurity is not necessarily from the immediate parents. Generations are responsible.

7. In the well-known *Ziyarat al-Warith* we address Imam al-Husayn (AS) in the following way:

أَشْهَدُ أَنَّكَ نُورٌ فِي الْأَصْلَابِ الشَّامِخَةِ وَالْأَرْحَامِ الْمُطَهَّرَةِ لَمْ تُنَجِّسْكَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةُ
بِأَنْجَاسِهَا ...

Surely I bear witness that you were **a light in the great loins and the pure wombs**, the [age of] ignorance did not taint you with its dirt... 14

Here again notice the words *al-aslab* (loins) and *al-arham* (wombs) are in the plural form, which means that Imam al-Husayn (AS) is the edifice of a whole generation, and not mere one *sulb* (loin) and *rahim* (womb).

8. In his address to the disobedient Kufans on the plains of Karbala he alluded to his pure origin saying:

أَلَا إِنَّ الدَّعِيَّ بْنَ الدَّعِيِّ قَدْ رَكَزَ بَيْنَ اثْنَتَيْنِ، بَيْنَ الْقَلَّةِ وَالذَّلَّةِ، وَهَيْهَاتَ مَا آخُذُ
الدُّنْيَا، أَبِي اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ وَرَسُولُهُ، وَجُدُودٌ طَابَتْ وَحُجُورٌ طَهَّرَتْ، وَأُنُوفٌ حَمِيَّةٌ
وَنَفُوسٌ أَبِيَّةٌ...

Beware the illegal offspring, product of the illegal offspring, has made me to choose between the two: fighting with my few men and accepting the degradation [of paying oath of allegiance to Yazid]; this [i.e. accepting the latter] is farfetched; I will never accept degradation; Allah and His Messenger and **pleasant grandparents and pure bossoms and leaders of valor and protective souls** do not allow that... 15

The aforementioned quotations teach us that in order for one to be bestowed with an offspring the like of Imam al-Husayn (AS), one is required to travel through a similar spiritual chain. Obviously a completely identical chain is impossible to attain, but one can establish the foundation of a chain that nurtures the values of the lineage of Imam al-Husayn (AS). There is always time for rectification and change. The Holy Qur`an says:

يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَيُحْيِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَكَذَلِكَ تُخْرَجُونَ

He brings forth the living from the dead and brings forth the dead from the living, and gives life to the earth after its death, and thus shall you be brought forth. (30: 19)

Imam al-Sadiq (AS) explaining the phrase ‘He brings forth the living from the dead and brings forth the dead’ in a tradition says:

فَالْحَيُّ الْمُؤْمِنُ الَّذِي تَخْرُجُ طِينَتُهُ مِنْ طِينَةِ الْكَافِرِ. وَالْمَيِّتُ الَّذِي يَخْرُجُ مِنَ الْحَيِّ
هُوَ الْكَافِرُ الَّذِي يَخْرُجُ مِنْ طِينَةِ الْمُؤْمِنِ.

The living is the believer whose clay comes out from the clay of a disbeliever, and the dead that comes out from the living is a disbeliever, who comes out from the clay of a believer. 16

Therefore if we firmly resolve to purify our beliefs and actions and unite with the spirit of *tawhid*, we can serve as the foundation of a powerful generation to come¹⁷. This is where determining issues such as ‘the formation of the worldview of the youth’, ‘spouse selection and its correct criteria’, ‘etiquette of spousal interaction’, ‘prenatal care in both the physical as well as spiritual dimensions’, ‘child upbringing’,

'the importance of the temperament of the wetnurse during breastfeeding' etc. come into focus. Modern science has partially contributed in showing how some of these factors determine the felicity and happiness of the child.

The Canadian Psychiatrist, Dr. Thomas Verny, well-known as the world's leading expert on the effects of the prenatal and the early post-natal environment on personality development in his '*The Secret Life of the Unborn Child*' has interesting information to reveal. He says:

... a woman is her baby's conduit to the world. Everything that affects her, affects him. And nothing affects her as deeply or hits with such lacerating impact as worries about her husband (or partner). Because of that, few things are more dangerous to a child, emotionally and physically, than a father who abuses or neglects his pregnant wife...

An equally vital factor in the child's emotional well-being is his father's commitment to the marriage. Any number of things can influence a man's ability to relate to his partner, from the way he feels about his wife or his own father to his job pressures or his own insecurities. (Ideally, of course, the time to work out these problems is before conceiving, not during a pregnancy.)¹⁸

(The mother's) thoughts and feelings are the material out of which the unborn child fashions himself. When they are positive and nurturing, the child can ... withstand shocks from almost any quarter. But the fetus cannot be misled either. If he is good at sensing what is on his mother's mind generally, he is even better at sensing her attitude towards him...¹⁹

Certainly exemplifying the method of how to prepare the foundation of a powerful generation would require a separate work in itself. One of the very important secrets for the success of the future child is the perfection of the preparatory causes.

If both the spouses enjoy a sound temperament and spiritual purity, and both consume the right foods before and after copulation, and both maintain an environment of serenity and Divine love, they would always serve as foundations of powerful generations to come.

The Holy Qur'an cites a beautiful parable showing that Divine Grace is abundantly showered to all. The limitations of the receptacles, however, determine the nature of their bodies and spirits. The more deficient the receptacle, the more deficient the result. This also pertains to physical beauty. Hence you may find some children with excellent physical features, but poor moral traits, and vice versa. The Holy Qur'an says:

أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَسَالَتْ أَوْدِيَةٌ بِقَدَرِهَا...

He sends down water from the skies, and the channels flow, each according to its

measure... (13: 17)

Philosophically explaining the differences in quality of the off-springs born, the late Imam al-Khumayni in his book '*al-Talab wa al-Irada* says:

فاعلم أن واجب الوجود بالذات لَمَّا كان واجب الوجود من جميع الجهات
والحيثيات يمتنع عليه قبض الفيض عن الموضوع القابل فإن قبضه بعد تمامية
الاستعداد وعدم نقص في جانب القابل مستلزم لنقص في الفاعل أو جهة
امكان فيه تعالى عنه. وهذا اللزوم والوجوب كلزوم عدم صدور القبيح وامتناع
صدور الظلم عنه اختياري ارادي لا يضرب بكونه مريداً مختاراً قادراً فإذا تمت
الإستعدادات في القوابل أفيضت الفيوضات والوجودات من المبادي العالية.
وأما إفاضة الفيض الوجودي بمقدار الاستعداد وقابلية المواد للتاسب بين
المادة والصورة للتركيب الطبيعي الإتحادي بينهما لا يمكن قبولها صورة الطف
من مقتضى استعدادها كما لا يمكن منعها عما استعدت له...

Then be it known to you that because the Essentially Necessary Being is necessary in every dimension, it is impossible to withhold grace from the receptacle of grace. This is because withholding it while the latter enjoys complete receptivity or does not have any deficiency, necessitates the imperfection of the Provider of grace or His contingent nature, exalted is He from such attributions. And such kind of necessity [when we say that it is impossible to withhold Divine Grace] is similar to the essential impossibility of evil and oppression issuing from God, which is something volitional and does not contradict

His possession of free will and power. Hence when there exists complete receptivity in the receptacles, grace is bestowed from higher causes. And as for bestowing existential grace in proportion to the receptivity of potency of the receptacle (*al-madda*), it is because there is a specific coherence between the potency of a receptacle (*al-madda*) and the actuality of its form (*al-sura*), due to a united natural composition between them, and thus the receptacle cannot accept a subtler and more perfect form than the requisite of its aptitude. Similarly it is impossible to deprive it from that which it can potentially accept.

Therefore there is no stinginess or favoritism from the All-Gracious. He bestows abundance of grace to every human being from the onset. The receptacles, however, are deficient, and thus limit or hamper the grace. The doors, however, are never closed. The temporal life of this world is an opportunity to change. The human being, from which ever land it starts developing, is in possession of an unsullied innate nature. It is the parents that blemish their attitudes and direct them to the path of spiritual destruction.

Imam al-Sadiq (AS) is reported to have said:

مَا مِنْ مَوْلُودٍ يُوَلَّدُ إِلَّا عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ فَأَبَوَاهُ اللَّذَانِ يَهُودَانِهِ وَيُنَصِّرَانِهِ وَيُمَجِّسَانِهِ

No baby is born save with the sound nature (*fitra*). Thereafter it is his parents that change him into a Jew, a Christian, or a Magian.²⁰

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا بِنَ فَاطِمَةَ

Peace be unto you, O son of **Fatima**

Ibnu Fatima is a matronym worthy of contemplation. In order to understand it well it is imperative for us to look at the origins of the name *Fatima*. According to traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS), the name 'Fatima' has various derivatives. Some of them are as follows:

1. Her weaning (*fitam*) was concurrent with Divine inspiration and she was detached from impurity (*futimat 'an al-tamth*):

Imam Abu Ja'far [al-Baqir (AS)] is reported to have said:

لَمَّا وُلِدَتْ فَاطِمَةُ أَوْحَى اللَّهُ إِلَى مَلَكٍ فَأَنْطَقَ بِهِ لِسَانَ مُحَمَّدٍ فَسَمَّاهَا فَاطِمَةَ ثُمَّ قَالَ إِنِّي فَطَمْتُكَ بِالْعِلْمِ وَفَطَمْتُكَ مِنَ الطَّمْثِ ثُمَّ قَالَ أَبُو جَعْفَرٍ وَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ فَطَمَهَا اللَّهُ بِالْعِلْمِ وَعَنِ الطَّمْثِ فِي الْمِيثَاقِ

When Fatima (AS) was born, Allah sent down a revelation to an angel, who thereupon made the tongue of Muhammad (S) speak whereupon he named her Fatima (AS). Then Allah (SwT) said: Indeed I detached you [from ignorance] through knowledge (*fatamtuki bi al-'ilm*) and detached you from menstruation (*fatamtuki min al-tamth*). Thereafter Abu Ja'far (AS) said: I swear by Allah, indeed Allah detached her [from ignorance] through knowledge and detached her from menstruation during the Divine covenant (*fi al-mithaq*).²¹

Commenting on this, 'Allama Majlisi in his *Bihar al-Anwar* says:

بيان: فطمتك بالعلم أي أرضعتك بالعلم حتى استغنيت وفطمت، أو قطعتك عن

الجهل بسبب العلم أو جعلت فطامك من اللبن مقرونا بالعلم كناية عن كونها في
بدو فطرتها عالمة بالعلوم الربانية. وعلى التقادير كان الفاعل بمعنى المفعول
كالدافق بمعنى المدفوق

Exposition: *Fatamtuki bi al-'ilm* (I detached you through knowledge) means *ardha'tuki bi al-'ilm* (I fed you with knowledge) until you were satisfied and weaned. Or it means "I detached you from ignorance by means of knowledge", or "I made your weaning from milk accompany knowledge", which alludes that from the very beginning of her inner makeup she was endowed with the Divine knowledge (*'ulum Rabbaniyya*). In the aforesaid possibilities, the active participle (*fa'il*) is in the meaning of the passive participle (*maf'ul*) such as *al-dafiq* in the meaning of *al-madfuq* (86:6)²²

Considering Imam al-Husayn (AS) as *ibnu Fatima*, we conclude that he is an offspring of one who was free from physical impurities and endowed with Divine knowledge even before her descent to this worldly life. Consequently he (Imam (AS)) also possesses similar qualities: his birth did not accompany any kind of impurity and he was endowed with Divine knowledge from the very onset. Following are traditions worthy of contemplation:

- In a tradition narrated in al-Kafi, Imam al-Baqir (AS) enumerating some of the characteristics of an infallible Imam says:

...يُولَدُ مُطَهَّرًا مَخْتُونًا وَإِذَا وَقَعَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ وَقَعَ عَلَى رَاحَتِهِ رَافِعًا صَوْتَهُ
بِالشَّهَادَتَيْنِ...

...He [the infallible Imam (AS)] is born pure and circumcised, and when he descends on the ground he falls on his arms, while he loudly declares the *shahadatayn*...²³

- In another tradition narrated from Hadhrat Safiyya Bint 'Abd al-Muttalib, where the specific details of the pure birth of Imam al-Husayn (AS) is mentioned we read:

لَمَّا سَقَطَ الْحُسَيْنُ بْنُ فَاطِمَةَ كُنْتُ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهَا فَقَالَ لِي النَّبِيُّ هَلْمِي إِلَيَّ يَا بِنْتِي فَقُلْتُ
يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنَّا لَمْ نُنْظِفْهُ بَعْدُ فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ أَنْتَ تَنْظِفِينَهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ نَظَّفَهُ وَطَهَّرَهُ...

When al-Husayn (AS), the son of Fatima (AS) descended to the ground, I was near Fatima (AS).

Thereupon the Prophet (S) said to me: Bring to me my son. I said: O Messenger of Allah, we have not yet cleaned him. So the Prophet (S) said: Do you think you would clean him? Indeed Allah has cleaned

and purified him...24

● With regard to Imam al-Husayn (AS)'s knowledge even prior to his descent in this material world, we have ample traditions that reveal that the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) possessed knowledge even prior to their birth. One of these that speak of this reality is as follows:

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ أَنَا وَعَلِيٌّ وَفَاطِمَةٌ وَالْحَسَنُ وَالْحُسَيْنُ كُنَّا فِي سُرَادِقِ الْعَرْشِ
نُسَبِّحُ اللَّهَ وَتُسَبِّحُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ بِتَسْبِيحِنَا قَبْلَ أَنْ يَخْلُقَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ آدَمَ بِالْفِي عَامٍ...

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said: I, 'Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husayn, were in the pavilion of the Divine Throne glorifying Allah, and the angels would glorify through our glorification. This was two thousand years before Allah created Adam...

This tradition speaks of their light which was prior to their earthly descent. The fact that they resided in the pavilion of Divine Throne reveals their vast knowledge already. This is because in other traditions the 'Arsh is translated as Divine Knowledge:

Imam al-Sadiq (AS) is reported to have said:

...وَالْعَرْشُ هُوَ الْعِلْمُ الَّذِي لَا يَقْدِرُ أَحَدٌ قَدْرَهُ

...And the throne is knowledge which none can measure...25

2. She and her followers are detached from the Hell Fire

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said to Hadhrat Fatima (AS) in the presence of Imam 'Ali (AS):

يَا فَاطِمَةُ أَتَدْرِينَ لِمَ سُمِّيتِ فَاطِمَةَ؟ فَقَالَ عَلِيٌّ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لِمَ سُمِّيتِ؟ قَالَ:
لَأَنَّهَا فَطِمَتْ هِيَ وَشِيعَتُهَا مِنَ النَّارِ.

O Fatima, do you know why you were named Fatima? Imam 'Ali (AS) said: O Messenger of Allah, why was she named Fatima (AS)? He (S) said: Because she and her Shi'as are detached from the Hell Fire.26

Imam al-Husayn (AS), who is the offspring and fruit of Fatima (AS) likewise enjoys the same characteristic: in sacrificing whatever he had for the emancipation of the entire humanity, he serves as a

radiant signpost of detaching those who follow his noble footsteps from Hellfire.

In fact, in visiting his grave and expressing our salutation to his noble self there is emancipation from Hellfire. Ibn Qulawayh narrates in his masterpiece collection *Kamil al-Ziyarat*:

قال أبو عبد الله: مَنْ أَتَى قَبْرَ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ وَصَلَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَوَصَلْنَا
وَحَرَمَتْ غَيْبَتُهُ وَحَرَّمَ لَحْمُهُ عَلَى النَّارِ...

Imam al-Sadiq (AS) said: Whosoever comes to the grave of Abu ‘Abdillah [al-Husayn (AS)], has indeed established contact with the Messenger of Allah (S) as well as us, and backbiting him is forbidden and his flesh *is forbidden on the Hell-Fire*...27

On the day of ‘Ashura` while addressing Imam al-Husayn (AS) as our host, we request him to ask Allah to emancipate us from Hell Fire:

يَا أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ أَنَا ضَيْفُ اللَّهِ وَضَيْفُكَ وَجَارُ اللَّهِ وَجَارُكَ وَلِكُلِّ ضَيْفٍ وَجَارٍ قَرِيٌّ
وَقَرَايَ فِي هَذَا الْوَقْتِ أَنْ تَسْأَلَ اللَّهَ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى أَنْ يَرْزُقَنِي فَكَأَنَّ رَقَبَتِي مِنَ
النَّارِ إِنَّهُ سَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ قَرِيبٌ مُجِيبٌ.

O Aba ‘Abdillah, I am the guest of Allah and your guest, and the refugee of Allah and your refugee; and for every guest there is a hospitable reception; and the hospitable reception I need from you at this moment is that you ask Allah, to provide me with emancipation from Hell Fire. Surely He listens to prayers and is near to us.28

We must try to understand this tradition carefully. What we seek from Imam al-Husayn (AS) is not prayer for future safety but current emancipation. And emancipation presumes that we are already burning in Hell Fire. Scholars of gnosis tell us that due to our inner blindness, we cannot perceive our inner pathetic state. Otherwise, if the curtains of darkness were unveiled from our hearts we would comprehend the fire that is in us.

3. She was severed and detached from evil

Yunus bin abyan is reported to have said: Abu ‘Abdillah [al-Sadiq] (AS) said:

أَتَدْرِي أَيُّ شَيْءٍ تَفْسِيرُ فَاطِمَةَ؟ قُلْتُ: أَخْبَرَنِي يَا سَيِّدِي، قَالَ: فَطَمَتْ مِنَ الشَّرِّ.

Do you know what is the meaning of the name Fatima? I said: Inform me, O master. He (AS) said: [It means that] she was detached from evil (*sharr*)....29

And *sharr* (lit. evil) is interpreted by some scholars as sin. The Holy Qur`an sometimes also employs it for the same meaning:

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ. وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ

So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it. (99:7-8)

Observe that the word “*sharr*” here is employed to denote an evil action, which is “sin” itself.

Hence Fatima (AS) was *ma'suma* (infallible). Her offspring and the fruit of her noble being, who is Imam al-Husayn (AS) likewise was free from sin. This is because he is among the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) whom Allah (SwT) Himself purified from sin and indecency.

The Holy Qur`an says in Surat al-Ahzab:

...إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا

...Indeed Allah desires to repel all impurity from you, O People of the Household, and purify you with a thorough purification. (33:33)

4. Her lovers are detached from Hellfire

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said:

إِنِّي سَمَّيْتُ ابْنَتِي فَاطِمَةَ لِأَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فَطَمَهَا وَفَطَمَ مَنْ أَحَبَّهَا مِنَ النَّارِ

Indeed I named by daughter as Fatima because Allah, the Invincible and Exalted, **detached her and those who love her from the Hell-Fire.**³⁰

According to a universal principle conveyed by the Holy Qur`an, a true lover is a sincere follower:

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ

رَحِيمٌ

Say, "If you love Allah, then follow me; Allah will love you and forgive you your sins, and Allah is all-forgiving, all-merciful." (3:31)

Therefore those who sincerely follow the footsteps of Hadhrat Zahra' (AS) and hence enjoy true love for her, would obviously be detached from Hell Fire. In a very beautiful tradition Imam al-Baqir (AS) says:

وَهَلِ الدِّينُ إِلَّا الْحُبُّ

And is religion other than love?³¹

Imam al-Husayn (AS) in this sense being *ibnu Fatima* (AS) likewise is one whose love emancipates one from Hell Fire. In fact there is a narration that pertains to the true love of all the Ahl al-Bayt (AS). The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said:

مَنْ أَحَبَّنَا أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ حَشَرَهُ اللَّهُ آمِنًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

Whosoever loves us the Ahl al-Bayt, Allah would raise him in the state of protection on the Day of Judgment.³²

5. She is an intermediary of Divine Grace

In different traditions we are told that Allah derived the name Fatima from His Name *Fatir al-samawati wa al-ardh* (6:79) (The Cleaver of the heavens and the earth). The name *al-Fatiru* comes from the word *fatr* which means to "cleave". Here it means one who cleaves and breaks non-existence and brings about existence. In conclusion, as some scholars have written in their works, it means 'The Originator'. Observe the following traditions:

● In a lengthy tradition, where the Ahl al-Kisa' (AS) were present, the Holy Prophet (S) at one point addresses Hadhrat Fatima (AS) saying:

...وَشَقَّ لَكَ يَا فَاطِمَةُ اسْمًا مِنْ أَسْمَائِهِ فَهُوَ الْفَاطِرُ وَأَنْتِ فَاطِمَةُ

...And He derived for you O Fatima a name from His Names, for He is *al-Fatiru* (the Originator), and you

are *Fatima*.33

- Almighty Allah in a conversation with prophet Adam (As) introduces the light of Fatima (AS) as follows:

...وَهَذِهِ فَاطِمَةٌ وَأَنَا فَاطِرُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ فَاطِمٌ أَعْدَائِي عَنْ رَحْمَتِي يَوْمَ
فَصَلِّ قَضَائِي وَفَاطِمٌ أَوْلِيَائِي عَمَّا يَعْتَرِبُهُمْ وَيَشِينُهُمْ فَشَقَقْتُ لَهَا اسْمًا مِنْ اسْمِي

...and this is *Fatima* while I am the *Fatir al-samawati wa al-ardh* (Originator of the heavens and the earth), *Fatimu a'da'i min Rahmati yawma fasli qadha'i* (the Severer of My enemies from My mercy on the day of My judgment), and *Fatimu awliya'i 'amma ya'tarihim wa yashinuhum* (the Relinquisher of affliction and disgrace from those near to me). So I derived for her a name from My Name.

- In a supplication taught by Angel Jibra'il (AS) to Prophet Adam (AS) we read as follows:

يَا حَمِيدٌ بِحَقِّ مُحَمَّدٍ يَا عَالِيٌ بِحَقِّ عَلِيٍّ يَا فَاطِرُ بِحَقِّ فَاطِمَةَ...

O praised one, I swear by the station of Muhammad, O Exalted One, I swear by the station of 'Ali, O Originator, I swear by the station of Fatima (AS)...34

Readers must understand that this tradition does not speak simply of the method of derivation that we commonly know. Fatima (AS) plays a fundamental role in the creation and origination of the heavens and the earth. She unites with the Muhammadan Light which is the first Divine Creation, from which proceeds every good.

Imam al-Husayn (AS), being *ibnu Fatima (AS)*, also manifests the attribute of *al-Fatiru*. This is also because he is united with the Muhammadan Reality (*al-Nur al-Muhammadi*), which is the intermediary of Divine grace.

Other traditions also indicate that they – the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) – are the intermediaries (*wasait*) between Allah and the creation. For example, in one of his brilliant messages, our 12th Holy Imam (AS) is reported to have said:

نَحْنُ صَنَائِعُ رَبِّنَا وَالْخَلْقُ بَعْدُ صَنَائِعُنَا

We are the actions of our Lord, and the creation thereafter are our actions.35

And in a lengthy tradition, the Holy Prophet (S) tells Imam 'Ali (AS):

...يَا عَلِيُّ وَلَوْلَا نَحْنُ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ آدَمَ وَلَا حَوَاءَ وَلَا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا النَّارَ وَلَا السَّمَاءَ وَلَا
الأَرْضَ...

...O 'Ali, and was it not for us (the Ahl al-Bayt (AS)), Allah would not have created Adam, nor Hawa', nor Paradise, nor Hell Fire, nor the sky, nor the earth...36

Commenting on this tradition, Imam Khumayni in his book of gnosis, *Misbah al-Hidaya* says:

قوله: ((لَوْلَا نَحْنُ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ آدَمَ)) إِلَى آخِرِهِ. لَأَنَّهُمْ وَسَائِطُ بَيْنِ الْحَقِّ وَالْخَلْقِ
وَرَوَابِطُ بَيْنِ الْحَضْرَةِ الْوَحْدَةِ الْمُحَضَّةِ وَالكَثْرَةِ التَّفْصِيلِيَّةِ؛ وَفِي هَذِهِ الْفَقْرَةِ بَيَانُ
وَسَائِطِهِمْ بِحَسَبِ أَصْلِ الْوُجُودِ، وَكُونِهِمْ مَظْهَرِ الرَّحْمَةِ الرَّحْمَانِيَّةِ الَّتِي هِيَ
مَفِيزُ أَصْلِ الْوُجُودِ...

The Holy Prophet (S) said: 'Was it not for us Allah would not create Adam...' This is because they (the Ahl al-Bayt (AS)) are intermediaries (*wasa'it*) between God and the creation, and links between the Presence of Sheer Unity (*al-hadhra al-wahda al-mahdha*) and separative plurality (*al-kathra al-tafsiliyya*); and this part of the tradition explains their intermediary role in terms of existence, and that they are manifestations of the All-comprehensive Mercy of Allah, which confers existence itself...37

6. The creation cannot comprehend her reality

In the well-known Qur`anic commentary of *Furat al-Kufi* we read the following tradition narrated from Imam al-Sadiq (AS) about the chapter al-Qadr:

عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ أَنَّهُ قَالَ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ اللَّيْلَةَ فَاطِمَةَ وَالْقَدْرُ اللَّهُ فَمَنْ
عَرَفَ فَاطِمَةَ حَقَّ مَعْرِفَتِهَا فَقَدْ أَدْرَكَ لَيْلَةَ الْقَدْرِ وَإِنَّمَا سُمِّيَتْ فَاطِمَةَ لِأَنَّ الْخَلْقَ
فُطِمُوا عَنْ مَعْرِفَتِهَا

Imam Abu 'Abdillah al-Sadiq (AS) is reported to have said that in the verse 'Indeed we sent it on the *laylat al-qadr*' the word *al-layla* refers to Fatima (AS) and the word *al-qadr* refers to Allah. Therefore whosoever knows Fatima (AS) the way she must be known, then indeed he has comprehended the

laylat al-qadr. And surely she was named *Fatima* because the creation was detached from comprehending her reality (*li anna al-khalqa futimu 'an ma'rifatih*).

Readers should understand that the Imam (AS) is referring to the esoteric and inner meaning of this verse.³⁸

Expounding on this tradition³⁹, the saintly scholar, Ayatullah 'Ali Sa'adat Parwar (may Allah elevate his noble spirit) in his brilliant treatise on the spiritual status of Hadhrat Fatima (AS) *Jelweye Nur* says that this tradition is understandable after we believe that the reality of the entire Holy Qur'an was received all at once by the heart of the Holy Prophet (S) on the night of grandeur. This is because Fatima (AS) similar to her father enjoys a receptacle that can contain the Divine message. Hence it is proper to call her *Laylat al-Qadr*.

Bearing the aforesaid in mind, the matronym *Ibnu Fatima* (AS) implies that the creation is likewise detached from knowing the exalted status and sanctity of Imam al-Husayn (AS).

In a lengthy conversation, Imam 'Ali (AS) says to Abu Dharr:

...فَأِنَّكُمْ لَا تَبْلُغُونَ كُنْهَ مَا فِيْنَا وَلَا نِهَائِيْتَهُ

...for surely you will not attain the zenith or of our station, nor its ultimate state...⁴⁰

And in a brilliant tradition, Imam al-Ridha (AS), defining the station of an infallible Imam (AS) says:

الإِمَامُ وَاحِدٌ دَهْرِهِ لَا يُدَانِيهِ أَحَدٌ وَلَا يُعَادِلُهُ عَالِمٌ وَلَا يُوجَدُ مِنْهُ بَدَلٌ وَلَا لَهُ مِثْلٌ وَلَا نَظِيرٌ...فَمَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَبْلُغُ مَعْرِفَةَ الإِمَامِ أَوْ يُمَكِّنُهُ اخْتِيَارُهُ هَيْهَاتَ هَيْهَاتَ...

The Imam is unique in his time. None can come closer to him in rank, and no scholar equals him, and he has no substitute, nor does he have an example or peer...Who then can attain the knowledge of Imam or is able to venture into knowing him? It is indeed farfetched! It is indeed farfetched!...⁴¹

يَا بِنَ فَاطِمَةَ سَيِّدَةَ نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِيْنَ

O son of Fatimah, the Mistress of the Women of the Universe

If we ponder over the appellation that follows the name Fatima (AS) we come to understand another

very important implication of this verse. Hadhrat Fatima (AS) is known as *Sayyidatu nisa' al-'alamin* (*Mistress of the women of the worlds*), which reveals her presiding status (*siyada*) over all other women, past, present, and future. The word *sayyida* is the feminine form of the noun *sayyid*, which confers the connotation of presidence and mastership.

In order to understand the *root meaning* of mastership (*siyada*), some authoritative scholars like Ayatullah Jawadi Amuli refer to the following tradition of Amir al-mu'minin (AS):

بِاحْتِمَالِ الْمُؤْنِ يَجِبُ السُّوُدُ

By shouldering responsibilities mastership becomes essential.

In this sense, all the fourteen infallibles are *sadat*, for they are the fundamental beings who have shouldered the heaviest responsibility any being can ever shoulder. In the ontological and existential sense they represent the middle link between Allah and His creation. Therefore every good is sourced through their light. Hence they have mastership over the entire caravan of the creation.

Shaykh Saduq narrates in his masterpiece collection '*Ilal al-Sharayi*' from Imam al-Sadiq (AS):

عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ: إِنَّمَا سُمِّيَتْ فَاطِمَةُ مُحَدَّثَةً لِأَنَّ الْمَلَائِكَةَ كَانَتْ تَهْبِطُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَتُنَادِيهَا كَمَا تُنَادِي مَرْيَمَ بِنْتَ عِمْرَانَ فَتَقُولُ يَا فَاطِمَةُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاكِ وَطَهَّرَكَ وَاصْطَفَاكِ عَلَى نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِينَ يَا فَاطِمَةُ اقْنُتِي لِرَبِّكِ وَاسْجُدِي وَارْكَعِي مَعَ الرَّاَكِعِينَ فَتُحَدِّثُهُمْ وَيُحَدِّثُونَهَا فَقَالَتْ لَهُمْ ذَاتَ لَيْلَةٍ أَلَيْسَتْ الْمُفَضَّلَةُ عَلَى نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِينَ مَرْيَمَ بِنْتَ عِمْرَانَ فَقَالُوا إِنَّ مَرْيَمَ كَانَتْ سَيِّدَةَ نِسَاءِ عَالَمِهَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ جَعَلَكَ سَيِّدَةَ نِسَاءِ عَالَمِكِ وَعَالَمِهَا وَسَيِّدَةَ نِسَاءِ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَالْآخِرِينَ

Fatima (AS) was known as *Muhaddatha* (one spoken to by the angels) because the Angels would descend from the heaven and call her the way they would call Maryam, daughter of 'Imran. They would say: Indeed Allah has chosen you and purified you and chosen you over the women of the worlds. O Fatima be obedient to your Lord and prostrate and bow down with those who bow down. So she would speak to them and they would speak to her. One night she said to them: isn't the one who has more merit over all the women of the world Maryam, the daughter of 'Imran? They said: Indeed Maryam was the Mistress of her world, and indeed Allah, the Invincible and Magnificent made you the Mistress of the women of your and her world as well as the Mistress of the preceding and succeeding women.⁴²

The word *al-'alamin* confers the meaning that her mistressship envelops all the worlds, and she presides

every woman whatsoever. This is because when the article 'al' precedes a plural noun, it refers to *all the extensions* of the noun.

Imam al-Husayn (AS) being *ibnu Fatimati Sayyidati nisa' al-'alamin*, and hence a product and fruit of the mistress of the women of the world, also enjoys qualities of mastership.

Imam Zayn al-'Abidin (AS) reports from Imam al-Husayn (AS):

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ يَقُولُ فِيمَا بَشَّرَنِي بِهِ: يَا حُسَيْنُ أَنْتَ السَّيِّدُ ابْنُ السَّيِّدِ أَبُو السَّادَةِ

...

Among the glad tidings that the Messenger of Allah (S) would give me, is: O Husayn, you are the master (sayyid), son of the master (sayyid), father of masters (sayyids)...43

And in the well-known *Ziyarat al-Arba'in* Imam al-Sadiq (AS) teaches us to address Imam al-Husayn (AS) as follows:

وَجَعَلْتَهُ سَيِّدًا مِّنَ السَّادَةِ وَقَائِدًا مِّنَ الْقَادَةِ...

...and He (Allah) made you a *sayyid* from the sayyids, and a leader from the leaders...44

The Path Towards Mastership

When we try to to address Imam al-Husayn (AS) with mastership, we must struggle to embark on a spiritual journey to attain a color of the same. The Ahl al-Bayt (AS) whose light presides over the creation have also taught us the path towards *siyada* (mastership).

One of the fundamental criteria of mastership is generosity and open-handedness (*jud*). Consider the following narrations:

1. Imam al-Husayn (AS) is reported to have said:

مَنْ جَادَ سَادَ وَمَنْ بَخِلَ رَذَلَ

Whosoever bestows generously reigns supreme, and one who is stingy becomes ignoble.45

2. The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said:

سَيِّدُ الْقَوْمِ خَادِمُهُمْ

The sayyid of a nation is their servant.46

3. Imam 'Ali (AS) is reported to have said:

بِالْجُودِ تَكُونُ السِّيَادَةُ

Mastership comes about through open-handedness.47

4. Imam 'Ali (AS) is reported to have said:

سَبَبُ السِّيَادَةِ السَّخَاءُ

Generosity is the cause of mastership.48

5. Imam 'Ali (AS) is reported to have said:

تَجَاوَزْ مَعَ الْقُدْرَةِ وَأَحْسِنْ مَعَ الدَّوْلَةِ تَكْمُلُ لَكَ السِّيَادَةُ

Forgive in power and do good in fortune, your mastership will turn perfect.49

Considering the aforesaid narrations which speak of generosity and open-handedness as the criteria of mastership, let us consider the following narration that speaks of the best kind of open-handedness:

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said:

وَأَجْوَدَ النَّاسِ مَنْ جَادَ بِنَفْسِهِ وَمَالِهِ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ

...And the most openhanded of all people, is one who generously bestows his self and his wealth in the way of Allah.50

And Imam al-Husayn (AS) was that sayyid who sacrificed everything that he had for the sake of Allah. Therefore he has *al-siyada al-'uzhma* (The greatest mastership).

Hilal bin Nafi' reports:

وروى هلال بن نافع قال: إني لواقف مع أصحاب عمر بن سعد إذ صرخ صارخ: أبشر أيها الأمير فهذا شمر قد قتل الحسين، قال: فخرجت بين الصفيين فوقفت عليه وإنه ليجود بنفسه فوالله ما رأيت قط قتيلا مضمخا بدمه أحسن منه ولأنور وجهها، ولقد شغلني نور وجهه وجمال هيئته عن الفكرة في قتله ...

Hilal bin Nafi' reports: I stood with the companions of 'Umar bin Sa'd, when a caller shouted: Glad tidings to you, O Amir, for this is Shimr, who has already killed al-Husayn (AS). Hilal says: I left between the two ranks and stood besides him (al-Husayn (AS)) while surely *he was giving away his life*; I swear by Allah I never saw a killed man smeared in his blood more beautiful and more sparkling in face than him. And indeed the light of his face and the beauty of his awe-inspiring appearance occupied me from thinking about his martyrdom...51

يَا بِنَ فَاطِمَةَ سَيِّدَةَ نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِينَ

O son of Fatimah, the Leader of the Women of the Worlds

Some commentators of Ziyarat 'Ashura`52 have defined *siyada* as *sharafa wa 'ulluw al-martaba*. In other words, when we say Hadhrat Fatima (AS) is *Sayyidatu nisa' al-'alamin*, we mean she is the most high-ranking of all women, past, present, and future:

Shaykh Saduq in his *al-Amali* narrates a lengthy tradition from the Holy Prophet (S), who at one point says:

فَأَمَّا ابْنَتِي فَاطِمَةَ فَهِيَ سَيِّدَةُ نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِينَ مِنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَالْآخِرِينَ، وَإِنَّهَا لَتَقُومُ فِي مِحْرَابِهَا فَيُسَلِّمُ عَلَيْهَا سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ مَلَكٍ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ، وَيُنَادُونَهَا بِمَا نَادَتْ بِهِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ مَرِيَمَ فَيَقُولُونَ: يَا فَاطِمَةُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاكِ وَطَهَّرَكِ وَاصْطَفَاكِ عَلَى نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِينَ

As for my daughter Fatima, *she is the Mistress of the women of the worlds from the foremost and latter ones*, and surely she stands in her place of prayer, whereupon seventy thousand angels close to Allah, send their salutations to her, and call her with what the angels called Maryam. So they say: “O Fatima, indeed Allah chose you and purified you, and chose you over the women of all the worlds.”⁵³

Therefore Imam al-Husayn (AS) who is the son and edifice of *Sayyidatu nisa'i al-'alamin* also is among the most elevated of people. We have already mentioned traditions that clearly distinguish Imam al-Husayn (AS) as *sayyid*. However, because we defined the word *sayyid* here to mean *sharif*, let us consider the following verse of the well-known salutational recital of *Ziyarat al-Jami'a al-Kabira*:

وَطَاطَأَ كُلُّ شَرِيفٍ لِشَرَفِكُمْ...

And every *sharif* (one who enjoys an elevated status) bows down before your elevated status (*li sharafikum*)...⁵⁴

This clearly informs us that the Infallible Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) enjoy the highest stations, and therefore all of them are *sayyids* in relation to the people.

يَا بِنَ فَاطِمَةَ سَيِّدَةَ نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِينَ

O son of Fatimah, the Mistress of the Women of the Universe

Another possible meaning of *Sayyidat al-Nisa*, as understood from a tradition, is that she is *mufrudhat al-ta'a* (one who must be obeyed) with regard to all the women. That is, whatever she commands must be obeyed, and her words and deeds are proof for them. Rather according to a tradition, she has this position with regard to all:

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (AS) is reported to have said:

وَلَقَدْ كَانَتْ مَفْرُوضَةَ الطَّاعَةِ عَلَى جَمِيعِ مَنْ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ وَالطَّيْرِ
وَالْوَحْشِ وَالْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ.

And indeed she (AS) was **one to be compulsorily obeyed by all the creation: the Jins, the human beings, the birds, the wild animals, the prophets and the angels.**⁵⁵

And *mufrudhat al-ta'a* (one who must be obeyed) in this tradition should not be merely taken as one

who must be obeyed by all through their volitions. Rather it also speaks of *wilaya takwiniyya* (ontological presidency), which means that she has Divinely bestowed power and can control or lay effect on their entities of existence. This definition of mistressship is an inspiration from the following tradition:

‘Allama Majlisi narrated the following tradition in *Bihar al-Anwar*:

وَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ: عَلِيٌّ سَيِّدُ الْعَرَبِ فَقَالَتْ عَائِشَةُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَلَسْتَ سَيِّدَ الْعَرَبِ؟
قَالَ أَنَا سَيِّدُ وُلْدِ آدَمَ وَعَلِيٌّ سَيِّدُ الْعَرَبِ. فَقَالَتْ عَائِشَةُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَا السَّيِّدُ؟
قَالَ: مَنْ افْتَرَضَتْ طَاعَتُهُ كَمَا افْتَرَضَتْ طَاعَتِي.

The Prophet (S) said: ‘Ali is the Sayyid of the Arabs. So ‘A`isha asked: O Messenger of Allah, aren't you the Sayyid of Arabs? He (S) said: I am the Sayyid of the children of Adam, and ‘Ali is the Sayyid of the Arabs. So ‘A`isha asked: O Messenger of Allah, and who is a sayyid? He (S) said: One whose obedience is made compulsory, the way my obedience is made compulsory.⁵⁶

And the traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) are clear that all the Imams are *muftaradh al-ta'a*. There are clear expressions about that in some interesting traditions. Observe the following traditions:

Al-'Amili in his *Wasa'il al-Shi'a* narrates:

قَالَ وَرُوِيَ أَنَّ الصَّادِقَ مَرِيضًا فَأَمَرَ مَنْ عِنْدَهُ أَنْ يَسْتَأْجِرُوا لَهُ أَجِيرًا يَدْعُو لَهُ
عِنْدَ قَبْرِ الْحُسَيْنِ فَوَجَدُوا رَجُلًا فَقَالُوا لَهُ ذَلِكَ فَقَالَ أَنَا أَمْضِي وَلَكِنَّ الْحُسَيْنَ
إِمَامٌ مُفْتَرَضُ الطَّاعَةِ وَهُوَ إِمَامٌ مُفْتَرَضُ الطَّاعَةِ فَرَجَعُوا إِلَى الصَّادِقِ وَأَخْبَرُوهُ
فَقَالَ هُوَ كَمَا قَالَ وَ لَكِنَّ أَمَا عَرَفَ أَنَّ لِلَّهِ تَعَالَى بِقَاعًا يُسْتَجَابُ فِيهَا الدُّعَاءُ فَتِلْكَ
الْبُقْعَةُ مِنْ تِلْكَ الْبِقَاعِ.

It is narrated that Imam al-Sadiq (AS) once got ill, and ordered someone who was near him to tell his people to hire someone, so that he may pray for him near the grave of al-Husayn (AS). So they found a person, and told him to do what is required. He said: I will go, **but al-Husayn (AS) is an Imam who must be compulsorily obeyed (muftaradh al-ta'a) and he (i.e. Imam al-Sadiq (AS)) [likewise] is an Imam who must be compulsorily obeyed.**[Aren't they equal in status?] So they went to Imam al-Sadiq (AS) and informed him what the person had said. The Imam (AS) said: What he said is correct. However, is he not aware that Allah has places, wherein supplications are accepted. And that spot [i.e. near the grave of al-Husayn (AS)] is among those places.⁵⁷

‘Allama Majlisi narrates the following tradition in his *Bihar al-Anwar*:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ الْفَضْلِ قَالَ كُنْتُ عِنْدَ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ فَدَخَلَ عَلَيْهِ رَجُلٌ مِنْ أَهْلِ
طُوسَ فَقَالَ لَهُ: يَا ابْنَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ مَا لِمَنْ زَارَ قَبْرَ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الْحُسَيْنِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ؟
فَقَالَ لَهُ: يَا طُوسِيُّ مَنْ زَارَ قَبْرَ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الْحُسَيْنِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ وَهُوَ يَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ إِمَامٌ
مِنَ اللَّهِ مُفْتَرَضُ الطَّاعَةِ عَلَى الْعِبَادِ غَفَرَ اللَّهُ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ وَقَبِلَ
شَفَاعَتَهُ فِي سَبْعِينَ مِائَةً وَلَمْ يَسْأَلِ اللَّهَ جَلَّ وَعَزَّ عِنْدَ قَبْرِهِ حَاجَةً إِلَّا قَضَاهَا لَهُ.

‘Abdullah bin al-Fadhli is reported to have said: I was with Abu ‘Abdillah [al-Sadiq (AS)], and a person from the inhabitants of Tus came in his presence. He said to the Imam (AS): O son of the Messenger of Allah, what reward is there for one who visits the grave of Abu ‘Abdillah al-Husayn bin ‘Ali (AS)? The Imam (AS) said to him: **O Tusi, whosoever visits the grave of Abu ‘Abdillah al-Husayn bin ‘Ali (AS) while he knows that the Imam (AS) is one who is compulsorily to be obeyed (muftaradh al-ta’a) by the servants of Allah**, Allah would forgive him his past and future sins, and would accept his intercession for seventy sinners, and he would not ask any need from Allah near the Imam’s grave save that Allah would fulfil his need.⁵⁸

‘Allama Majlisi narrates the following tradition in his *Bihar al-Anwar*:

عَنْ عَبْدِ الْحَمِيدِ بْنِ نَصْرِ قَالَ قَالَ أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ: يُنْكِرُونَ الْإِمَامَ الْمُفْتَرَضَ الطَّاعَةَ
وَيَجْحَدُونَ بِهِ وَاللَّهِ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَنْزِلَةٌ أَعْظَمَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ مُفْتَرَضِ الطَّاعَةِ ...

‘Abd al-Hamid bin Nasr reports: Abu ‘Abdillah [Imam al-Sadiq] (AS) said: They deny the Imam who must be compulsorily obeyed and reject him. **I swear by Allah there is no station in the earth greater near Allah than one who must be compulsorily obeyed...**⁵⁹

1. ‘Allama Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v.98, pp.262–263

2. The root meaning of al-tayyib is ‘that which is desirable, in which there is no kind of apparent or hidden dirt...’ [See Mustafawi’s al-Tahqiq, v.7, p. 151]. Al-Isfahani confers a similar definition in his Al-Mufradat. He says: ‘wa asl al-tayyib ma tastalidhuhu al-hawas, wa ma tastalidhuhu al-nafs’ (and the root meaning of al-tayyib is that by which the senses take pleasure, and that which the soul takes pleasure [See Al-Mufradat of Al-Isfahani, , p. 527.]

3. Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi, v.4, p. 587

4. ‘Allama Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v.98, pp. 41

5. Shaykh al-Tusi, Man La Yahduru al-Faqih, v.2, p. 613

6. ‘Allama Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v.65, p. 24

7. 'Allama Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v.74, p. 278
8. Unlike the word of man which is expressed by the tongue, kalima with regard to Almighty Allah refers to His creation. His creation is His speech. Therefore kalima tayyiba refers to a being of purity. Prophet 'Isa ﷺ in the Holy Qur'an is referred to as "...wa kalimatuhu alqaha ila Maryam..." (and His Word that He cast toward Mary) (4:171)
9. Imam 'Ali ﷺ, Nahj al-Balagha, sermon 228
10. Qutb al-Din al-Rawandi, Al-Khara'ij wa al-Jarayih, v.2, p. 596
11. 'Allama Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v.29, p. 600
12. Shaykh al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi, v.4, p. 559
13. Sayyid Radhi al-Din bin Tawus al-Hasani, Iqbal al-A'mal, v.2, p.74
14. Sayyid Radhi al-Din bin Tawus al-Hasani, al-Luhuf fi Qatla al-Tufuf, p.6
15. 'Allama Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v.45, p.9
16. Shaykh al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi, v.2, p. 5
17. One of the interpretations given for kalima tayyiba is kalimat La ilaha illa Allah. If the parents purify themselves and make their foundations of belief and action firm, they would serve as origins of those human beings who truly personify La ilaha illa Allah.
18. Dr. Thomas Verny, The Secret Life of the Unborn Child, p.25
19. Ibid., p. 43
20. Shaykh Saduq, Man la Yahdhuruahu al-Faqih, v.2, p. 49
21. Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi, v. 1, p. 460
22. 'Allama Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v. 43, p. 13. Allama is trying to simply say that the word Fatima which is in the pattern of an active participle signifies the meaning of a passive participle. This is because she is "cut off from ignorance" and "cut off from impurity". So in this case she is the passive participle.
23. Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi, v. 1, p. 388
24. 'Allama Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v. 43, p. 256
25. 'Allama Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v. 4, p. 89
26. Ibid., v. 43, p. 14
27. Ibnu Qulawayh, Kamil al-Ziyarat, p. 127
28. 'Allama Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v. 4, p. 89
29. Shaykh Saduq, Al-Khisal, p. 414
30. 'Allama Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v. 43, p. 12
31. Shaykh al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi, v.8, p. 79
32. 'Allama Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v. 27, p. 79
33. Ibid., v. 37, p. 47
34. Ibid., v.44, p.245
35. Ibid., v.53, p. 178
36. Ibid., v. 18, p. 345
37. Imam Khumayni, Misbah al-Hidaya, p. 78
38. Al-Kufi, Tafsir Furat, p. 581
39. In order to understand the core of this tradition which is beyond the scope of this work, readers are requested to refer to pp. 11-112 of the Persian treatise Jelweye Nur.
40. 'Allama Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v. 26, p. 1
41. Shaykh al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi, v. 1, p. 201
42. 'Allama Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v. 14, p. 206
43. Ibid., v. 36, p. 344
44. Ibid., v. 98, p. 331
45. Shaykh Baqir Sharif al-Qarashi, Hayat al-Imam al-Husayn ﷺ, v. 1, p. 157
46. Man La Yahdhuruahu al-Faqih, v.4, p. 378
47. Al-Amadi, Ghurar al-Hikam, p.378

48. Al-Wasiti, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'i³, p. 281
49. Al-Wasiti, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'i³, p. 200
50. 'Allama Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v. 73, p. 12
51. 'Allama Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v. 45, p. 57
52. Shaykh 'Ali Haydar Mu'ayyad, Adhwa' 'ala Ziyarat 'Ashura', p. 131
53. Shaykh Saduq, Al-Amali, p. 575
54. 'Allama Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v. 99, p. 132
55. Al-Shahrudi, Mustadrak Safinat al-Bihar, v.6, p. 208
56. 'Allama Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v.4, p.198
57. Al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'a, v. 14, p. 537
58. 'Allama Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v.4, p.198
59. Ibid., v.25, p.141

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