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# Regarding the Mushaf: its author, scribe, content and size

## The matters that lead to Misunderstanding

We said that the matter of *Mushaf Fatimah* sometimes lead to the misunderstanding that it was a Quran unique to Lady Fatimah(a.s) in existence. In the same way that *Mushaf 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud*, *Mushaf 'Aa'isha*, or *Mushaf Ubayy bin K'ab* may strike you (as being editions or versions of the Qur'an), we determined in the first chapter, after we examined these books and the 'Arabic lexicons (for the meaning of "*Mushaf*"), (that this was not the case). We came to understand that "*Mushaf*" does not denote the Quran.

Furthermore, we said that this book does not contain a single verse from the Quran, and in this respect, it contains nothing of the exegesis of the Quran or any Quranic matters whatsoever. Meanwhile, the prior discussions alluded to the fact that this *Mushaf* was scribed or written *via* Lady Fatimah(a.s) and because of that it was called *Mushaf Fatimah*. It was a divine gift to her. Thus, who was the author or narrator of these words? If the content of this *Mushaf* is not the Quran, what can be found in it? What are the dimensions of the book? And...

## The author of the Mushaf

There are numerous accounts that present Imam 'Ali (a.s) as the author of the *Mushaf*. In response to a question posed by Hammad bin 'Uthmaan, Imam al-Sadiq(a.s) says regarding the author of the *Mushaf* that, "Amir al-Mu'mineen (i.e. Imam 'Ali(a.s)) wrote whatever he heard until it became of book."2

However, ibn Rustam al-Tabari in *Dalaa'il al-A'immah* relates a hadith saying that *Mushaf Fatimah* descended (from Heaven) bound, that no one dictated it; Imam 'Ali(a.s) became the one to scribe it.3

There are two points worth mentioning:

The meaning of "descended (from heaven)" doesn't mean that it literally came (down to earth) as a (bound) book, rather it's the content and message that descended (by the instrument of angels). There's nothing to say that Imam 'Ali(a.s) was not ready to write down the subject matter when the angels descended. However, this explanation is doubtful.

Perhaps the only way to resolve this matter is to not accept al-Tabari's narration. The chain of authorities is weak. Ja'far bin Mohammad bin Maalik Fazaari is included in the chain and Najashi (the great expert on chains of authority) considers him to be weak in reporting hadith and corrupt in his religious beliefs and narrations.4 Others have also rejected him.5

# The Speaker and Scribe of the Content

Allah: Some have said that it is Allah who dictated the contents of the *Mushaf*. Imam al-Sadiq says, "Whatever is in it, was told to her by Allah and He inspired her with it." The mother of Moses(a.s) also received this type of inspiration. In the chapter of the Quran, Al-Qasas, verse 7 it reads, "And We inspired it to Moses' mother..."9

Angels: Others believe that it was the speech of an angel. There is a hadith by Imam al-Sadiq(a.s) which supports this possibility,

"Indeed Allah sent her an angel to console her in her grief and speak with her." 10

Gabriel: 11 Imam al-Sadiq is quoted in *Sahih Abu 'Ubaidah* that it came from the arch-angel Gabriel: "Gabriel went to her to lighten her sorrow regarding her father and lift her spirits and inform here of her father and his position (in heaven) and inform her of what will become of her descendants." 12

Allah's Messenger: Imam Husein(a.s) says, "Mushaf Fatimah is with us but—and I swear by Allah—that there is nothing of the Quran in it. Allah's messenger ( وسول ) dictated it and 'Ali wrote it." 13 So according to this hadith, the one who dictated it was sent by Allah. 'Allaamah Majlisi (the compiler of Bihar al-Anwaar) writes in commentary that the mean of "Allah's messenger" is Gabriel. There are many verses (of the Quran) which refer to the angels as being Allah's messengers. 14

Whether we say that the utterance of this *Mushaf* is from Allah or Gabriel makes no difference because these sayings are from Allah *through* the agency of Gabriel. 15 But, we can't be certain as to whether what is meant by "Allah's messenger" is the (human) Messenger of Islam (or Islam's messenger, i.e the one who brought Islam from the heavenly abode—Gabriel), because there are numerous narrations declaring that the utterances in the *Mushaf* were said *after* the demise of the Messenger of Allah (i.e. the Prophet Mohammad[s.a.w]) and in consolation of his eminence's (death) that it was said to and for Lady Fatimah (A).

It can be said that Lady Fatimah (A) had 2 *Mushafs*. One was a collection of her father's sayings, the other from Gabriel. Or, it is possible to say that *Mushaf Fatimah* was but one book but had two

sections—words of the Messenger of Allah(s.a.w) and the inspirations of Gabriel (to and for Fatimah[a.s]). In his most valuable book *A'ayan al–Shi'ah*, Seyyed Muhsin Amin is of the first opinion. 16

What is more correct is that Lady Fatimah(a.s) had in her possession two other books, one on ethics and morals, the other legislative. So, we could say that *Mushaf Fatimah* was uttered the Allah's messenger (i.e. Gabriel) based on the narrations saying that Gabriel dictated it (to Fatimah, or, 'Ali) and that [Gabriel] didn't mention legislative commands. 17 Thus, if Lady Fatimah (A) were to have in her possession a book on legislative matters, it is clear that the Messenger of Allah (i.e. Prophet Mohammad [S]) would have taught it to her (in which case she would have been preserving the legislative commands received by her father from Gabriel).

So, now that we know that Allah—by way of Gabriel—spoke these words to Lady Fatimah (A) and that Imam 'Ali (A) wrote them down, it comes to mind to ask why this *Mushaf* is associated with Lady Fatimah (A)? After all, she was neither its author nor its scribe!

In response, it must be said that it was intended *for* her as a consolation and because of her it was descended from heaven. It is in this sense that it bears her name as *Mushaf Fatimah*. This can be seen in the way that the Torah is attributed to Moses (A), the Gospel to Jesus (A) or the Psalms to David (A). In the same sense, in the Quran it says, "Most surely this (message) is in the earlier scriptures, the scriptures of Ibrahim and Musa 19–87:18)".(مَثُفُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى)

Even though these scriptures came from Allah because they were revealed for a particular prophet, it bears his name.

## **Contents of Mushaf Fatimah**

There are several narration regarding the content of *Mushaf Fatimah*, some negating others affirming what the contents are (or are not) such as the following:

# **Negation of Content**

The narrations from the Ahl al-Bayt say that *Mushaf Fatimah* is not compromised of two things: Qur'aan, and legislative matters. This is concluded from the following narrations:

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"It is not the Quran." 18
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"I do not posit that it is the Quran." 19

"Nothing of the Quran is in it."20

"Nothing of the book of Allah is in it."21

"It does not contain a single verse from the book of Allah."22

"It doesn't contain a single word from the Quran."23

"There is not a single word from your Quran in it."24

In *Bihaar al–Anwaar*, 'Allamah Majlisi relates a narration in Khati's *Jawaame' al–Fawaa'id* from Abu Basir: "Imam al–Sadiq (A) read this ayah as so:

has been omitted from the hadith) "The questioner asks about the punishment which will befall the unbelievers (the Imam(a.s) adds as commentary, this means) the guardianship of 'Ali(a.s)—it shall not be averted." (70:1–2).25 Then the Imam(a.s) said, 'Such a thing is in *Mushaf Fatimah*.'" However, it must be said that this hadith is not authentic. Mohammad bin Sulayman Daylami feels that the chain (of narrators) is weak.26

This would contradict all the other hadith that say that *Mushaf Fatimah* not only does not contain verses of the Quran, but not even a single word (of the noble verses). The reason that this narration is not accepted is not because it implies a distortion (*tahrif*) of the Quran—because it does not imply that. It is not for the fact that the Imam adds "the guardianship of Imam 'Ali(a.s)" (as commentary) because this is the circumstance of its revelation. Some of the narrations in the Sunni corpus of hadith also mention the same events. In one of the [Sunni] books of reference, Mohammad Abu Zahra says in his book that *Mushaf Fatimah* does not contain anything from the Quran.27

All this confirmation and repeated denial of the existence of any Quranic material in *Mushaf Fatimah* leads us to conclude that in the time of Imams Baqir(a.s) and Sadiq(a.s)28 "*Mushaf*" was widely used to mean "the Quran". One wonders why the Imams still used "*Mushaf*" and not "book (ڪتاب) of Fatimah"? If they had only called it "book" there wouldn't have been the need for all this clarification and reminder (of it's uniqueness separate from the Quran). In response it must be said that due to the fact that the *Mushaf* of that noble lady originated with Allah and was called "*Mushaf* Fatimah" and at that time "*Mushaf*" did not carry the connotation of "Quran", it was still referred to by that name even in later times.

Imam Ali(a.s) referred to Fatimah's book as "Mushaf": "A Mushaf was given to my wife laden with unprecedented knowledge granted to no one else."29

Even if we were to accept that the name "*Mushaf*" was chosen later—and at a time when the term was used for the Quran—it would have been to show the similarity in origin between the two books: they were both brought down by the Archangel Gabriel(a.s), although in content they differ.

# The Mushaf does not contain Legal Rulings

Regarding legal rulings, Imam al–Sadiq(a.s) says "there's nothing in it regarding the permissible and impermissible" 30 even though others like Seyyed Haashim Ma'ruf al–Husayni said that *Mushaf Fatimah* contained rulings of the permissible and impermissible. However it must be said that this particular point is in reference to the *jafr abyadh*, the "white *jafr*". 31 Imam al–Sadiq(a.s) says "Truly, the white *jafr* is in my possession." The narrator then asked, "What does it contain?" "The Psalms of David, the Torah of Moses, the Gospel of Jesus, the Scrolls of Ibrahim what is permitted and what is forbidden and *Mushaf Fatimah*. I don't claim that anything of the Quran in it. In it is what people need from us and that (is because) we do not have any need of anyone. In it is even the whole lash, 32 half lash and the quarter lash, even the indemnity for scratching (someone).33

Thus, with respect to clarifying the content of the white jafr, the Imam, at his command, says, "In the white jafr is there is this and that.

This hadith, along with the one from Imam al–Ridha(a.s), confirms that in enumerating the contents of the white jafr—in the manner that al–Sadiq(a.s) has—they (the Imams) considered *Mushaf Fatimah* to be something else altogether. Imam Ridha(a.s), enumerating the proofs (*hajaat*) of an Imam's Imamate, says, "And with him is the greater jafr (*al–jafr al–akbar*) and the lesser jafr (*al–jafr al–asghar*)...and he also possesses *Mushaf Fatimah*.34

## **Its Contents Proven**

The narration were made and transmitted under various circumstances and do not describe the entire content of *Mushaf Fatimah* (in one single narration) only some of it. The numerous narration, from variable sources, state that *Mushaf Fatimah* contains the following: "It tells of her father and his (exalted) position,"35 "It speaks of what will occur after her amongst her offspring,"10 "But also in it is the knowledge of what will happen, and events that will occur. For example, Atheist will appear in the year 123 AH (as an intellectual movement),"36 "The names of every prophet and is successors is in the book I possess,"37 "The names of those who rule and the duration of their rule...and their fathers' names—and its inscription is with us,"38 "The last will and testament of Fatimah is in it."39

This is the entire content of *Mushaf Fatimah* from the reliable hadith transmitted to us that we have laid our hands upon. However, there is one more hadith from Tabari in is *Dalaa'il al-Imamah* which details another matter contained in *Mushaf Fatimah* to which he refers. Unfortunately, the chain of this hadith is weak. In this sense we can't count it to be amongst the miscellaneous matters of the *Mushaf*. Abu Basir says,

I asked [Imam al-Baqir(a.s), the fourth Imam] about *Mushaf Fatimah* and he said, 'It was brought to her after the death of her father.' I said, 'Is there anything from the Quran in it?' 'There is nothing in the Quran in it,' he replied. 'Clarify the matter for me.' 'Its front and back covers are made of ruby (*zabarjad sorkh*).'

'May I be your sacrifice! What are its pages made of?' 'The pages are of white pearl.' 'May I be your ransom, what is in it?' 'News of what happened and what will happen until the Day of Judgment. News of celestial occurrences, the number of angels in the heavenly abode, the number of all Allah's creatures—messengers and non-messengers—their names and the names of all the people of their respective nations to whom they were sent, the names of those who gave lie to their message and those who answered to the call (to righteousness), the names of all Allah's creatures—believers and non-believers—the names of all towns and the particulars of each town in the East and West, the number of believers and non-believers in each town, the particulars of those who belied religion, and of the particulars of men and their tales from the first centuries, the debaucherous rulers and the duration of their rule, the names and details of each Imam and the period of their Imamate...

In the *Mushaf* is the name of everyone Allah created and the time of their death, the number and details of those bound for heaven, the number of people going to hellfire; also in the *Mushaf* is knowledge of the Quran—whatever was brought down in it, and of the Torah—whatever was brought down in it, and knowledge of the gospel of Jesus(a.s)40—whatever was brought down in it, and knowledge of the Psalms, the number of trees and their movements in every town...It was the second 1/3 of the nit, on a Friday evening when Allah sent Gabriel(a.s), Mika'il(a.s), and Israfil(a.s) to [Lady Fatima(a.s)] to revealed *Mushaf* to her. She was in the middle of (superogatory) prayer. The angels stood (watching and waiting for her prayer to end) until se sat down. Once she ad completed her prayer and had left that state (of deep concentration), they gave her salutations.

They said, 'Salaam. Allah also sends His salaams.' Then they set the book down in her room. She said, 'Salaam to Allah, peace is from Him and is due unto Him. And peace be unto you, oh angels of Allah!' Subsequently the angels alighted to the heavens, and lady Zahra (i.e. Fatima) read the *Mushaf* after morning prayer until she reached the end of it. It was obligatory for Lady Zahra to have knowledge of all the creature of Allah, of the *jinn* and men, of bird and beast, of prophets and angels.' 'May I be your ransom! After Lady Zahra, to whose ands did the *Mushaf* pass?' 'She gave it to the Command of the Faithful (i.e. Imam Ali(a.s)). After him, (it was given) to Hasan(a.s) then Husein(a.s), and after that to those worthy of it (i.e. the other Imams, offspring of Imam Husein(a.s) and Bibi Shahr Banu) so that they may give it to the Master of the affair (Imam Mahdi(a.s), the 12th and final Imam and savior of humanity).' 'There is so much knowledge in the *Mushaf*!' 'Oh Abu Mohammad, what I have told you is contained in the first 2 pages. I have not told you anything of the rest!'

Of what we have reproduced here is of the hadith with a weak chain of narration and is not well documented.

## The Number and Bulk of the Pages of the Mushaf

Imam al-Sadiq(a.s) says, The Mushaf, of what is in it, is like the Quran, only 3 times larger.41

It's possible that the Imam wasn't comparing the physical size of the book in the same way that

sometimes numbers are used to refer to magnitude and multiplicity, as in the verse,

# Even if you seek forgiveness 70 times Allah will not forgive them; this is because they disbelieve in Allah and His apostle, and Allah does not guide the transgressing people. (9:80)

Obviously, the point of this verse is that the hypocrites would never be forgiven; the point is not that if the prophet were to seek forgiveness for them more than 70 times (that they would be forgiven). No matter how many times they were to seek forgiveness (while in a state of hypocrisy) they would not be forgiven (In other words, the number seventy is allusion to an innumerable repetition and not a literal numeric.)

- 1. For example, the famous du'a named "Kumayl" recited every Thursday was not authored by Kumayl ibn Ziyad, but taught to him, by Imam 'Ali (a.s). It is called the du'a of Kumayl because it was gifted to him due to his devotion to the Ahl al-Bayt. In truth, its authorship is attributed to hadhrat Khidr (a.s), and was taught to Imam 'Ali(a.s) by the prophet Mohammad (s.a.w). So, it's not a leap of understanding to say that what is called "Mushaf Fatimah" was named after Lady Fatimah (a.s) as the person to whom it was gifted, and not as an attribution of authorship.
- 2. Kulayni, M. Usul al-Kaafi, v.1, p.240, hadith #2; also in Majlisi, M. Bihaar al-Anwaar, v.26, p.44, hadith #77.
- <u>3.</u> Al-Tabari, Dalaa'il al-A'immah, p. 30, Aa'lami publications, Beirut, 1403 AH/1983 AD, and, Sheikholislami SH, Musnad Fatimat al-Zahra, p. 199, Daar al-Qur'aan al-Karim publications, Qom, 1412 AH/1992.
- 4. Najashi, Rijaal Najashi, v. 1, p. 302.
- 5. Khu'i, Ma'jam rijaal al-hadith, v.4, p.117.
- 6. When it is says that Allah says something, it is not by agency of tongue, or by words or even tones. Allah does not have or need physicality to communicate. The words used to describe Allah's communication with humans are a metaphor due to our limitations of understanding. Imam Musa al–Kadhim(a.s) says, "[Allah] has neither body nor any sort of limitation. Each and every thing, except Allah, is a thing created by Allah. He creates things as He wills and desires, without any word or planning in the mind or without any utterance by the tongue (because he has not tongue)." Al–Kafi, v. 1, p. 106, hadith #289.
- 7. Majlis MB, Bihar al-Anwaar, v.36, p.39, hadith #70.
- <u>8.</u> The author goes into a discussion of 'Arabic grammar which is omitted by the translator as it is not germane to the discussion for English readers.
- 9. The reader should not be surprised to read that Lady Fatimah(a.s) received inspiration. Inspiration means being spoken to by angels. Al-Ahwal narrates, "I asked [Imam al-Kadhim] about messengers, prophets, and those who are spoken to (muhaddath). He said, 'A messenger (rasul) is one before whom the angel Gabriel comes; [the messenger] sees him and [Gabriel] speaks with him; such is a messenger. A prophet (nabi) is one who sees in his dreams as with the dreams of prophet Abraham (A)...One who is muhaddath is one who is spoken to and who hears but he does not see [the angel Gabriel] with the eyes or in his dreams." Al-Kafi, v.2, hadith #441. Besides the mother of prophet Moses(a.s), prophet Abaraham's(a.s) wife also heard the angels speaking when the came to her husband 11:69–73 as was Maryam(a.s), mother of Jesus(a.s) (19:17–19). The Imams(a.s) were also muhaddath, as were others, such as Salman al-Farsi. Some traditions relate that 'Umar ibn al-Khattab was also muhaddath. Refer to chapter 5, Angelic discourse with those who are not prophets, for a full discussion.
- 10. Kulayni, M. Usul al-Kaafi, v.1, p.245, hadith #2.
- 11. Gabriel is an angel, but, as the arch–angel, sometimes he is referred to separately even when speaking of other angels. For example, if you say, "The president and the elected officials of the state. . ." you don't mean to imply that the president is not elected but other are. They are all elected officials, but the president's singular role deserves separate mention. Some people feel that the "ruh" or "ruh al–Quddus" (holy spirit) mentioned in the Quran is really the angel Gabriel as in "The angels and the spirit descend in [this night] by the permission of their Lord for every affair" (97:4).
- 12. Safaar, Basa'ir al-Darajaat, p. 153, hadith #6, and Kulayni, M. Usul al-Kaafi, v. 1, p. 241, hadith #5.
- 13. Majlis MB, Bihar al-Anwaar, v.26, p.46, hadith #96.

- 14. The angels are described in general as messengers: 22:75, 35:1, and as messengers of death: 6:61, 7:37, and messengers of revelation and inspiration: 11:69, 19:17–19, and in many other verses.
- 15. Every divine communication with man is by Allah, sometimes directly as with the case of the prophet Moses(a.s) and the prophet Mohammad(s.a.w) on is night journey, or indirectly through the angel Gabriel as with all the other prophets and the Imams.
- 16. Amin M, A'ayan al-Shi'ah, v.1, p.314, Al-Insaaf publication, Beirut.
- <u>17.</u> Only Messengers receive legislative commands; neither prophets, nor Imams nor muhadatheen can receive legislative commands from Allah, only revelation (prophets) or inspirations (Imams, muhadatheen).
- 18. Majlisi M, Bihaar al-Anwaar, v.26, pp.41-42, hadith #73.
- 19. Ibid, v.26, p.45, hadith #3.
- 20. Ibid, v.26, p. 45, hadith #79.
- 21. Ibid, v.26, p. 43, hadith #39.
- 22. Ibid, v.47, p.271, hadith #3.
- 23. Ibid, v.47, p.46, hadith #5.
- 24. Ibid, v.26, p.39, hadith #10.
- 25. This refers to the wilayah of Imam Ali(a.s) that was announced by the Prophet of Allah(s.a.w) at al–Ghadir al–Khum in front of thousands upon thousands of Muslims returning from pilgrimage. A man named Harith ibn Numan al–Fahri accused the Prophet(s.a.w) of nepotism. The Prophet(s.a.w) strenuously denied this, stating that Allah had chosen 'Ali(a.s) as the leaders of the Muslims after him. Harith rebuked the prophet and, walking away, swore that if this were true that Allah should punish him a painful punishment with a stone. Before he had reached his camel, he was hit in the head by a stone and died instantly.
- 26. Daylami M, Mu'ajjam rijaal al-hadith, v. 16, p. 127; Rijaal Najashi, v. 2, p. 269.
- 27. Abu Zahra M. Al-Imam al-Sadiq, hayaatahu wa 'asrehu, p.324, Matbu'ah Ahmad 'Ali Mukheimarah, Egypt.
- 28. The period of their combined Imamates was 51 years, from 95 AH/714 AD- 146 AH/765AD according to Sheikh al-Mufid in Kitaab al-'Irshaad.
- 29. Basaa'ir al-Darajaat, v.2, p. 200.
- 30. Kulayni, M. Usul al-Kaafi, v.1, p.390, hadith #1.
- 31. Jafr is a container made of hide. It is referred to as a type of knowledge as the above hadith suggest. However, the knowledge is not written on the hide of the jafr. Rather, the jafr contains a series of books, passed on by the Prophet of Allah(s.a.w) to the Imam 'Ali(a.s) and from him to each Imam as a mark of their Imamate. Imam al–Sadiq(a.s) says, "By Allah, it is not as they say that there are two jafrs with something written on them. No, by Allah, they are two hides with the hair still on them, crammed full: in one of them books (the white jafr), and in the other the armory of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w) (the red jafr)." (Bihar al–Anwar, v.26, p.38).
- 32. "Whole", "half" and "quarter" lash refer to the forcefulness with which a person is flogged. Various public sins in Islam, such as fornication, inebriation, public indecency, etc. have various punishments associated with them such as flogging. The forcefulness and number of lashes depends on the offence and the circumstances. What the Imam(a.s) is implying is that Mushaf Fatimah is so comprehensive that even the most mundane legislative matters are addressed.
- 33. Kulayni, M. Usul al-Kaafi, v. 1, p.24, Chapter 40, hadith #3, and, Majlisi, MB. Bihar al-Anwaar, v. 26, p.37, hadith #43.
- 34. Sadduq, Ma'aani al-Akhbaar, p. 102. Daarul Ma'aarif, Beirut, 1979.
- 35. Majlisi M, Bihaar al-Anwaar, v.26, pp.41, hadith #72.
- 36. Kulayni, M. Usul al-Kaafi, v.1, p.24, hadith #2, and, Majlisi, MB. Bihar al-Anwaar, v.26, p.13, hadith #1.
- 37. Majlisi, MB. Bihar al-Anwaar, v.47, p.32.
- 38. Kulayni, M. Usul al-Kaafi, v.1, p.242, hadith #3, and, Majlisi, MB. Bihar al-Anwaar, v.46, p.13, hadith #1.
- 39. Kulayni, M. Usul al-Kaafi, v. 1, p. 24, hadith #4.
- <u>40.</u> The Injil, or, gospel of Jesus(a.s), is different from the canonical books assembled in the New Testament. The gospel of Jesus was the divine message tat the prophet Jesus(a.s) delivered to is people, and was not recorded by the Jewish followers of Jesus (i.e. the early Christians), nor do Muslims possess it in whole. Regardless, what is in the New Testament, by admission of its compilers in the 4th century AD is the gospel of Jesus according to... and not the gospel itself.

41. Kulayni, M. Usul al-Kaafi, v.1, p.239, hadith #3 and, Majlisi, MB. Bihar al-Anwaar, v.26, p.39, hadith #10.

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