

The Second Infallible, The Daughter Of The Holy Prophet Fatimah Az-Zahra' (Peace be on her)

Name: Fatimah.

Title: az-Zahra'.

Agnomen: Ummu'l-A'immah.

Father's name: Muhammad ibn `Abdillah.

Mother's name: Khadijah bint Khuwaylid.

Birth: Born in Mecca on Friday, 20th Jumada'th-thaniyah in the fifth year after the declaration of the Prophethood (615 AD).

Death: Died at the age of 18 in Medina on 14th Jumadi'l-ula 11 AH (632 AD); buried in the graveyard called Jannatu'l-Baqi' in Medina.

Hadrat Fatimah was the only daughter of the Holy Prophet and Hadrat Khadijah. The circumstances of her birth are described by Hadrat Khadijah as follows: At the time of the birth of Hadrat Fatimah, I sent for my neighbouring Qurayshite women to assist me. They flatly refused, saying that I had betrayed them by supporting Muhammad. I was perturbed for a while, when, to my great surprise, I sighted four strange tall women with halos around them, approaching me.

Finding me dismayed, one of them addressed me thus, "O Khadijah! I am Sarah, the mother of Ishaq, and the other three are, Mary the mother of Christ, Asiyah the daughter of Muzahim, and Umm Kulthum, the sister of Moses. We have all been commanded by God to put our nursing knowledge at your disposal."

Saying this, all of them sat around me and rendered the services of midwifery till my daughter Fatimah was born. The motherly blessings and affection received by Hadrat Fatimah were only for five years, after which Hadrat Khadijah left for her heavenly home. Hereafter the Holy Prophet brought her up.

Marriage

When Fatimah came of age, there came forward a number of aspirants to ask for her hand in marriage. The Holy Prophet was awaiting the Divine order in this respect, till Imam `Ali approached him and asked for her hand in marriage.

The Holy Prophet came to Hadrat Fatimah and asked, "My daughter! Do you consent to be wedded to `Ali, as I am so commanded by Allah? "

Hadrat Fatimah thereupon bowed her head in modesty. Umm Salamah narrates: "The face of Fatimah bloomed with joy and her silence was so suggestive and conspicuous that the Holy Prophet stood up reciting Allahu Akbar' (Allah is most great). Fatimah's silence is her acceptance."

On Friday, 1st Dhi'l-hajjah 2 AH, the marriage ceremony took place. All the Muhajirun (Emigrants) and Ansar (Helpers) of Medina assembled in the mosque while Imam `Ali was seated before the Holy Prophet with all the ceremonious modesty of a bridegroom. The Holy Prophet first recited an eloquent sermon and then announced:

I have been commanded by Allah to get Fatimah wedded to `Ali, and so I do hereby solemnize the matrimony between `Ali and Fatimah on a dower of four hundred mithqal of silver. Then he asked Imam Ali, "Do you consent to it, O Ali? " "Yes, I do, O Holy Prophet of Allah! " replied Imam Ali. Then the Holy Prophet raised his hands to pray thus: O my God! bless both of them, sanctify their progeny and grant them the keys of Thy beneficence, Thy treasures of wisdom and Thy genius; and let them be a source of blessing and peace to my ummah. Her children; Imam Hasan, Imam Husayn, Zaynab and

Umm Kulthum, are well-known for their piety, goodness and generosity. Their strength of character and action changed the course of history and fortified Islam which otherwise would have been lost to mankind.

Her Ethical Attributes:

Hadrat Fatimah inherited the genius and wisdom, the determination and will-power, the piety and sanctity, the generosity and benevolence, the devotion and worship of Allah, the self-sacrifice and hospitality, the forbearance and patience, and the knowledge and nobility of disposition of her illustrious father, both in words and deeds. "I often witnessed my mother," says Imam Husayn, "absorbed in prayer from dusk to dawn." Her generosity and compassion for the poor was such that no destitute or beggar ever returned from her door unattended.

The Property of Fadak:

The Holy Prophet during his lifetime gave Hadrat Fatimah a gift of very extensive farm land, known as

Fadak, which was documented in her name as her absolute property.

The death of the Holy Prophet affected her very much and she was very sad and grief-stricken and wept her heart out crying all the time. She was confronted, after the demise of her father, with the deprivation of the rightful claim of leadership of her husband Imam Ali, and the usurpation of her inheritance, the Fadak. Throughout her life, she never spoke to those who had oppressed her and deprived her of her rightful claims. She requested that her oppressors should be kept away even from attending her funeral.

Her ill-wishers even resorted to physical violence. Once the door of her house was pushed on her, and the child she was carrying was hurt and the baby-boy was still born. Her house was set on fire.

Having been molested and stricken with grief, which crossed all limits of forbearance and endurance, she expressed her sorrows in an elegy composed by herself to mourn her father the Holy Prophet. A couplet of the elegy, with particular reference to her woeful plight, she expressed thus: O my father! after your death I was subjected to such tortures and tyranny that if they had been inflicted on the `Day`, it would have turned into `Night`.

Death

Hadrat Fatimah did not survive more than seventy-five days after the demise of her father. She breathed her last on the 14th Jumdi'1-ula 11 AH. Before her demise she bequeathed the following as her will to Imam `Ali:

1. O Ali, you will personally perform my funeral rites.
2. Those who have displeased me should not be allowed to attend my funeral.
3. My corpse should be carried to the graveyard at night.

Thus Imam `Ali, in compliance with her will, performed all the funeral rites and accompanied exclusively by her relatives and sons carried her at night to Jannatu'l-Baqi`, where she was laid to rest and her wishes fulfilled.

The Holy Prophet said:

Whoever injures (bodily or sentimentally) Fatimah, injures me; and whoever injures me injures Allah; and whoever injures Allah practises unbelief. O Fatimah! If your wrath is incurred, it incurs the wrath of Allah; and if you are happy, it makes Allah happy too.

M. H. Shakir writes:

Fatimah, the only daughter of the Holy Prophet of Islam, was born in Mecca on 20th Jumada'th-thaniyah 18 BH. The good and noble lady Khadijah and the Apostle of Allah bestowed all their natural love, care

and devotion on their lovable and only child Fatimah, who in her turn was extremely fond of her parents. The Princess of the House of the Prophet, was very intelligent, accomplished and cheerful. Her sermons, poems and sayings serve, as an index to her strength of character and nobility of mind.

Her virtues gained her the title "Our Lady of Light". She was tall, slender and endowed with great beauty, which caused her to be called "az-Zahra' " (the Lady of Light). She was called az-Zahra' because her light used to shine among those in Heaven.

After arriving in Medina, she was married to `Ali, in the first year Hijrah, and she gave birth to three sons and two daughters. Her children, Hasan, Husayn, Zaynab and Umm Kulthum are well-known for their piety, goodness and generosity. Their strength of character and actions changed the course of history.

The Holy Prophet said, "Fatimah is a piece of my heart". He would go out to receive his daughter whenever she came from her husband's house. Every morning on his way to the Mosque, he would pass by Fatimah's house and say, "Asalamu `alaykum ya ahla Bayti 'nnubuwwah wa ma`dani 'r-risalah " (Peace be on you O the Household of Prophethood and the Source of Messengership).

Fatimah is famous and acknowledged as the "Sayyidatu nisa'1`alamin" (Leader of all the women of the world for all times) because the Prophethood of Muhammad would not have been everlasting without her. The Prophet is the perfect example for men, but could not be so for women. For all the verses revealed in the Holy Qur'an for women, Fatimah is the perfect model, who translated every verse into action. In her lifetime, she was a complete woman, being Daughter, Wife and Mother at the same time.

Muhammad during his lifetime, gave Fatimah a gift of very extensive farm lands, famous as Fadak, which were documented in her name, as her absolute personal property.

An heiress to the remainder of her mother's wealth, a princess who was the only daughter of the Holy Prophet who was also a ruler, a lady whose husband was the conqueror of Arab tribes and second only to her father in rank and position, Fatimah could have led a luxurious life. But in spite of her wealth and possessions, she worked, dressed, ate and lived very simply. She was very generous; and none who came to her door, went away empty handed. Many times she gave away her all and went without food.

As a daughter, she loved her parents so much, that she won their love and regard to such an extent that the Holy Prophet used to rise, whenever she came near him.

As a wife, she was very devoted. She never asked `Ali for anything in her whole life.

As a mother, she cared for and brought up wonderful children; they have left their marks on the face of the world, which time will not be able to erase.

The death of the Apostle, affected her very much and she was very sad and grief-stricken and wept her heart out crying all the time.

Unfortunately, after the death of the Prophet, the Government confiscated her famous land of Fadak and gave it to the State. Fatimah was pushed behind her home door (when they attacked the house of `Ali and took him to force him accept the caliphate of Abu Bakr), so that the child, she was carrying was hurt and the baby boy Muhsin was still born. Her house was set on fire by the Government.

The tragedy of her father's death and the unkindness of her father's followers, were too much for the good, gentle and sensitive lady and she breathed her last on 4th Jumadi'l-ula 11 AH, exactly seventy-five days after the death of her father, the Holy Prophet of Islam.

Fatimah died in the prime of her life at the age of eighteen, and was buried in Jannatu'l-Baqi', Medina.

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Allah has made faith (Iman) [the means] to purify one from polytheism (shirk); and [made] prayer (salat) to guard one from arrogance; and [prescribed] alms (zakat) to chasten one's self and increase one's sustenance; and [prescribed] the fast (sawm) to strengthen sincere devotion [to Allah] ; and [prescribed] the pilgrimage (hajj) to elevate the religion (din); and [enjoined] justice (adl) to harmonize the hearts; and [enjoined] obedience to us (Ahlu'l-bayt) to organize the Islamic community (millah); and our Leadership (imamah) as a trust to avoid disunity; and [prescribed] holy war (jihad) to honour Islam and denounce the unbelievers and hypocrites; and the bidding of good (amr bi'l ma'ruf) and forbidding of evil (nahy ani'l-munkar) for the benefit of the people in general; and kindness to parents as a shield against the anger [of Allah] ; and strengthening one's ties with near kin to prolong [one's] life: . . . and the forbiddance of alcoholic drink to guard one from filth; and Allah has prohibited polytheism for the sincere devotion to His Divinity; so [O you who believe!] fear Allah as you should, and [see that] you die not but as Muslims [3: 102]. (An excerpt from a lengthy speech delivered at the Mosque of the Prophet [at Medina] in defence of her right of inheritance).

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