

Umma Abiha, Fatima Zahra

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Abstract: *In this essay the writer tries to state a brief biography of Fatima (peace be upon her), the daughter of the holy Prophet. The article starts with introducing the titles which Fatima (p.b.u.h) is called upon by them. Then, the writer describes some of the significant events of her life such as the demise of her parents, her marriage to Imam Ali, her wedding celebration, and offspring of her marriage. The injustice and oppression which Fatima experienced after the demise of the holy Prophet is explained by the writer by referring to the usurpation of the Fadak village (Prophet's inheritance for Fatima) and the story of the burning of the door of Fatima's house and also miscarrying her child. Her death, its time and the secret of her burial is also discussed. Looking into some Hadiths, the meanings of some of Fatima's names are referred to as well. In this essay, some of the merits of Fatima like her devotion to Allah, her contentment and forbearance are described. The Fatima's book (Mus'haf) and her speeches and sermons are the final issues to this article.*

Key words: *Umma Abiha, Fatima Zahra, Hazrat Fatima, Fatima's biography, Fatima's marriage, Fatima's names, Fadak, Fatima's book (Mus'haf)*

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Fatima (peace be upon her) is daughter of the holy Messenger of Allah, Muhammad Ibn Abdullah (peace be upon him and his progeny) and Khadijah bint al-Khuwayld (peace be upon her). She was born on the 20th of Jumadial-akhar, 5 AH (the fifth year of the hijra)¹.

Imam Sadiq (p.b.u.h) said: "In the presence of Allah, she is known by nine names, which are Fatima, Siddiqah, Mubaraka, Tahera, Zakiya, Radiya, Mohaddatha and Zahra."²

Abu Ja'far Qomi³ has stated other names for her: "Batool, Hisna, Harah, Sayyidah, Azra, Haura, Maryam, Kubra, Sadiqah, Nuriya, Samiwiya wal Haniya". Her epithets are as: "Umma al-Hasan (Hasan's mother), Umma ul-A'emma (mother of Imams) and Umm Abiha (father's mother)."⁴

It would take books to fully describe the life of the holy Fatima. Here, we will note some of the significant characteristics of her life. When she was five years old, her mother passed away. Fatima bint Asad (the wife of the Prophet's uncle and mother of Imam Ali undertook to care for her. They migrated with Imam Ali and other Muslims from Mecca to Medina. After the death of Fatima bint Asad, the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) entrusted Umma Salamah (his second wife) with her care.

Many men, Abu Bakr and Umar among them, asked the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) for Fatima's hand in marriage. However, the Prophet always declined, saying: "I am waiting for the order of God." Abu Bakr and Umar encouraged Ali ibn Abi Talib

¹ *Al-Kafi*, I, p. 461, section on the birth of Zahra.

² *Bihar ul-Anwar*, vol.43, p. 10; Elal ash-Sharaee, p. 178; *Dala'il al-Imamat*, p.

³ Muhammad bin Husain, known as Abu Ja'far, writer and poet residing in Nishabor.

⁴ *Bihar ul-Anwar*, Vol. 43, p. 16.

22. Safinah

(p.b.u.h.) to ask for her hand, but he felt inadequate to ask the Prophet about marriage, for he was a poor man. At last, an angel descended and told the Prophet: "O' Messenger of Allah, my God has ordered the marriage of light with light.

The Prophet asked: "Who are they?"

The angel answered: "Fatima and Ali"¹

Thus, after the battle of Badr, in 2 A.H. the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) gave Fatima to Ali in marriage. The simple and modest dowry was provided through the sale of Ali's shield.²

Regarding the wedding celebration, the Prophet told Ali: "Prepare a good party for this wedding celebration." He then added: "We have meat and bread, you provide the dates and oil." The meal was prepared: Ali invited everyone to take part his wedding party (p.b.u.h.). The guests were many and the food seemed not sufficient. Ali was embarrassed and worried, but the Prophet told him: "Oh Ali, do not worry, Allah will increase it!"

"This very thing occurred; everyone ate and the food was sufficient for all."³

Hasan, Husain, Umma Kulthum and Zaynab (p.b.u.t.) were the offspring of that blessed marriage. Thus, the descendents of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) came only from the line of Fatima (p.b.u.h.).

In the 2nd month of the year 11 A.H., the blessed soul of the Messenger of Allah ascended into heaven, and a world of sorrow engulfed Fatima (p.b.u.h.). Shi'i scholars and most knowledgeable Sunni authors have written about the injustice

¹ Al-Kafi, Vol. I, p. 461, section regarding the birth of Zahra; Dala'il al-Imamat, p. 19.

² Al-Kafi, Vol. 5, p. 377, chapter of marriage, section regarding the marriage of the Commander of the faithful with Fatima (p.b.u.h.).

³ Amali of Shaykh al-Toosi, Vol. 2, p. 26; Rayaheen al-Sharia, Vol. I, p. 95; al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, vol. 8, p. 20, accounts of the dowry of Zahra (p.b.u.h.).

and oppression which Fatima (p.b.u.h.) experienced after the death of Prophet (p.b.u.h.). In these accounts, it is told that the Prophet, during his lifetime, gave Fadak¹ to Fatima. Property remained in her hands for three years before his death. At the beginning of the reign of the first caliph, Abu Bakr, Fadak was taken from her. When Fatima asked for return of Fadak, Abu Bakr formulated a Hadith from the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) saying:

"We, the Prophets, do not leave inheritance; all that we leave behind is for charity!"

No one of the Prophet's companions had heard of, or transmitted this Hadith previously; only Abu Bakr claimed it to be a Hadith from the holy Prophet. Thus, the authenticity of that Hadith has been refuted from several aspects.²

Tabari³ has documented that Urwah narrated from Aisha⁴ as below:

"Fatima and Abbas (the Prophet's uncle) went to Abu Bakr and asked about their inheritance from the Prophet (p.b.u.h.). They asked for Fadak and the Prophet's portion from Khaybar. Abu Bakr told them: "But I heard from the Prophet (p.b.u.h.), "We, the Prophets, do not leave inheritance; all that we leave is for charity." Then he said: Muhammad's family is using this property, and I do not do what the Prophet did not do."

Urwah said: "Then Fatima went into isolation and did not speak to Abu Bakr again, until she died."¹

¹ Fadak is a village near Medina which has many grands. Since the peace treaty of Khaybar, half of the village belonged to the Prophet (p.b.u.h.).

² Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 43, p. 182; Riyaaheen al-Sharia, Vol. 2, pp. 2-16.

³ Muhammad ibn Jarir ibn Yazid at-Tabari (Abi Ja'far), an interpreter and reciter of the holy Qur'an, and jurisprudent, was born in Tabarestan in 224 or 225 AH. He died in 839 AH. He has written several books on Qur'an Commentary and history.

⁴ The Prophet's third wife, and daughter of Abu Bakr.

24. Safinah

Shia scholars and some eminent Sunnis have recorded the story of the burning of the door of Fatima's house. Ibn Abd Rabbah², of the Maliki School³, revealed in his book that Abu Bakr sent Umar ibn Khattab (later the second caliph) to receive an oath of allegiance (to the caliphate of Abu Bakr) from Ali and others in Fatima's house. He was to come out of the house and, thus, Umar set fire to Fatima's house.⁴

Tabari, in his Tarikh, wrote: "Umar came to Ali's house. Talha, Zubayr and a group of Muhajireen (early Immigrants to Medina) were there. Umar said: "I swear God that I will burn down the house if you do not come out."⁵ He also wrote: "Ali, Zobair, and those who were with them in Fatima's house refused to swear allegiance."⁶

Ibn Qotaibah Dinvari⁷ has written: "Some of the resisters [to swearing allegiance to Abu Bakr] were gathered around Ali at Fatima's house. Abu Bakr sent Umar to bring them. Umar went to door of Fatima's house and shouted: "Come out and swear allegiance to the caliph of the Messenger of Allah. If you do not heed this, I swear God, in whose hand is my life, that I will burn this house and whoever is in it."

They said to Umar:

¹ Al-Tabari, al-Tarikh, Vol. 2, p. 104, part 3.

² Ahamad ibn Abd ar-Rabbah ibn Habb ibn Had_r ibn Sal_m al-Qurtab_(Ab_Amr) was a scholar, man of letters and poet. He was born in 246 AH in Qurtabah and died there in 328 AH. He has written books such as al-Iqd al-Far_d and Diw_n Sh'ir among others.

³ One of the Sunni schools of thought.

⁴ Al-Iqd al-Farid, Vol. 3, p. 63 and Vol. 2, p. 443.

⁵ Tarikh, Tabari, Vol. 2, p. 101.

⁶ Tarikh, Tabari, Vol. 2, p. 103.

⁷ Abu Muahmmad Abdullah ibn Moslem ibn Qutaybah was born in 213 AH in Kufa. Abu Muhammd was a writer on the science of language, syntax and style of the Quran, a Qur'an commentator, poet and jurisprudent.

"Fatima, the daughter of the holy Prophet is in the house." He said, "I will do that, even if the daughter of the Prophet is in the house."¹

Ibn Abil-Hadid² has also reported: "Umar, and some men from the Ansar and Muhajireen went to Fatima's house and said: 'I swear the One in whose hand is my life, if you don't come out and swear allegiance, I will burn the house and all who are in it.' Fatima died while she was very angry with Umar".³

Shahrestani⁴, in his book, quoted the speeches of Nazzam⁵, a high-rank Mu'tazilite,⁶ who said:

"Umar ibn Khattab injured Fatima so hard that she miscarried her child. Umar shouted: "Burn the house with everyone in it!"⁷

Umar Ria Kahhalah⁸ has also mentioned the usurpation of Fadak and the burning of Fatima's house in his book.⁹

Allama Amini¹ quotes this narration from the book "*Imam Ali*" by Abdul-Fatah Abd ul-Maqsood² and has included, at the end, the words of Fatima:

¹ Al-Imamat was-Siyasat, p. 13.

² Abdul-Hmid ibn Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Husain ibn Abdul-Hadad Mad'yini was a scholar and historian. He was born in 586 AH and died in 655 AH. His most important work is Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah.

³ Sharh Nahj ul-Balaghah, Vol. 2, p. 120.

⁴ Abdul-Fath Muhammad ibn Abul-Qasim Abd al-Karim was a Jurisprodent, expert in religion and Ash'ari scholar who was born in 479 AH and died in 548 AH. His books are usually anti-Shia. He is the author of al-Milal wan-Nihal.

⁵ Ibrahim ibn Sayar Balkhi Basri, well-known as Nazzym, was one of the greatest scholastic scholars, an orator, scientist and theologian; the author of more than one hundred books. He died in 221 AH. He was anti-Shi'a.

⁶ A school of thought emphasizing free will and denying the predetermination man's life.

⁷ Al-Milal wal-Nihal, p. 57.

⁸ Author of A'lqm an-Nisa wa Mu'jam al-Mu'alifin; contemporary.

⁹ A'lām an-Nisa, Vol. 4, pp. 114-118.

26. Safinah

"O' father, Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.), what difficulties have we received from the son of Khattab³ and the son of Abi Quhafah?"⁴

Her Merits

Many scholars have written books about the attributes and virtues of Hadrat Fatima (p.b.u.h.). The truth is that her attributes are so numerous that it is not possible to describe them all. Let it be said that Fatima (p.b.u.h.) is the mother of eleven Imams who have been chosen by Allah. The following touches a few areas that show a small portion of reality of the life of this jewel of existence.

The Messenger of Allah and Fatima (p.b.u.t.)

Ibn Athir⁵ and Tabarani have quoted from Imam Ali that the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said to Fatima:

"Allah becomes angry when you become angry, and Allah is satisfied when you are satisfied."⁶

Shaikh Saduq and Majlisi have recorded several versions of this Hadith.⁷

Ibn Athir has written that Ali asked the Prophet (p.b.u.h.): "Do you love me more or Fatima?" He said:

¹ Abd al-Husain al-Amini resided in Najaf and was a contemporary Shi'a scholar. He was born in 1320 AH in Tabriz, Iran, died in 1390 AH in Tehran, and was buried in Najaf, Iraq. He wrote al-Ghadir.

² Al-Ghadir, Vol. 3, p. 102.

³ Umar

⁴ Abu Bakr

⁵ The epithet of several scholars who resided in Iraq and Syria. The most prominent was Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Sa_d, who died in 359 AH. One of his books is Tanb_h al-Alb_bf_Fadl al-Ir_b.

⁶ Usd ul-Ghabah, Vol. 5, p. 522; al-Mujam ul-Kabeer, Vol. 22, p. 402.

⁷ Uyun Akhbar ar-Rida, Vol. 2, p. 29, Bihar ul-Anwar, Vol. 19, p. 43.

"Fatima is more beloved than you and you are dearer than her."¹

Zayd ibn Arqam said: "the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said to Ali, Fatima, Hasan, and Husain:

"Whoever is your enemy, I am his enemy! And whoever is your friend, I am also his friend."²

Ibn Abbas said: "Whenever the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) was leaving for a trip, the last one he goes to for saying goodbye was Fatima (p.b.u.h.) and whenever he returned, she was the first person who received his greetings. If Fatima's position before Allah had not been so high, he would not have acted like that."³

Ibn Abbas and others have related that the holy Prophet drew four lines on the ground and said: "Do you know what these lines are?" The people said: "Allah and his Prophet (p.b.u.h.) know better." He then said: "the best women in Heaven are Khadijah bint Khuwayld, Fatima bint Muhammad, Maryam bint Imran, and Asiyah bint Muzahim."

The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) has also praised Fatima and her dear mother, Khadija (p.b.u.t.), in other speeches, such as the ones in which he said:

"The best women in the Heaven are four: Fatima, Khadijah, Maryam, and Asiya."⁴

Imam Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) has quoted from his forefathers that the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "On the Judgment Day, a caller from inside the throne will announce: "O' people, Close your eyes,

¹ Usd ul-Ghabah, Vol. 5, p. 522.

² Usd ul-Ghabah, Vol. 5, p. 522.

³ Bihar ul-Anwar, Vol. 43, p. 40; al-Isti'ab, Vol. 4, p.1895; Usd al-Ghabah, Vol. 5, p. 52.

⁴ al-Isti'ab, Vol. 4, p. 1895; al-Mu'jam al-Kabeer, Vol. 22, p. 402; Bihar ul-Anwar, Vol. 43, p. 51; Rayaheen ash-Sharia, Vol. 1, p. 218.

28. Safinah

for the daughter of the dearest to Allah (i.e., the Prophet) is going to her castle..."¹

The holy Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) many times said, in similar ways: "Fatima (p.b.u.h.) is part of me, the light of my eyes, and the fruit of my heart. Whoever harms her, harms me, and whoever makes her happy, makes me happy. She will be the first of my family to join me."

Regarding Fatima (p.b.u.h.), her husband and children, he said: "O' Lord, you know that these are my household, and the dearest people to me. Thus, love whoever loves them; and be enemy to whoever is their enemy..."²

Umar ibn Khattab quotes the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) as saying:

"Fatima, 'Ali, Hasan, Husain will be in the highest Heaven, in a white dome with the Throne of the Beneficent as its ceiling."³

Zahra's Divine Position

Imam Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) said: "If Amir ul-Momenin had not married Zahra (p.b.u.h.), there would have been no one, on earth, equal to her until the Day of Judgment."⁴

He also said: Fatima has been called Zahra because the Glorified Allah created her from His Glorious Light. When it shone, all the heavens and the earth were bright with that light and the angels' eyes were closed, and they bowed down before Allah. Then they said, "O' Our Lord and Master, what is this light?"

¹ Bihar ul-Anwar, Vol. 43, p. 62; Usd ul-Ghabah, Vol.5, p. 523, from Imam Ali (p.b.u.h.); al-Mu'jam al-Kabeer, Vol. 22, p. 400, from Imam Ali (p.b.u.h.).

² Bihar ul-Anwar, Vol. 43, pp. 23, 24, 39; A'lam an-Nisa, Vol. 4, p. 125.

³ Bihar ul-Anwar, Vol. 43, p. 76.

⁴ Al-Kafi, Vol. 1, p. 461; Kitab al-Hujjat, section regarding Zahra's birth; 'Ilal ash-Sharaee', p. 178.

Allah revealed to them, "It is a light from My Light, which is in Heaven. I took it from My Glory, and put it in the lines of one of my messengers, who is the best from this light, Imams will come, and who will be steadfast in obedience to My Commands."¹

Someone asked Imam Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) that why Fatima was named Zahra. He replied: "Because, when she was standing in prayer, her light shone for those in Heaven, the way the stars shine for those on earth."²

Yunes ibn Zabiyan³ has quoted from Imam Sadiq (p.b.u.h.), "Do you know what the exegesis of Fatima is?"

I said: "O' my Master. Please tell me why she was named Fatima!"

The Imam said: "She is preserved idol worship."⁴

Imam Sadiq has also stated:

"Fatima was called Muhaddathah because angels descended from Heaven and addressed her (as they addressed Mary): 'O' Fatima, God chose you and purified you; and chose you from among all women."⁵

Hazrat Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) said: "O' Fatima, do you know why you have been named Fatima?" Then he himself added;

"Because your followers and you will be saved from the fire."⁶

Ibn Abil-Hadid said, "Ali's marriage to Zahra occurred after Allah, with the angels as witnesses, married them (in Heaven)."¹

¹ Bihar ul-Anwar, Vol. 43, pp. 12, 14, 15.

² Elal ash-Sharaee', p. 181.

³ Muhammad Baqir ibn Muhammad Taqi Majlisi. [Nahla needs to translate the rest of this.]

⁴ Dala'il al-Imamat, p. 10.

⁵ Dala'il al-Imamat, p. 11.

⁶ Ilal ash-Sharaee', p. 179.

Zahra's Devotion to Allah

Imam Hasan (p.b.u.h.) said:

"There is no one more devoted to Allah than Fatima (p.b.u.h.). She stood [in prayer] until her feet swelled."

He also said:

"My mother worshipped [Allah] at her prayer niche (*Mihrab*) a great deal and I heard her praying for all the Believers, except herself..."²

Her Contentment and Forbearance

Whenever a needy person went to the door of Fatima's house, she gave him (her) something, even if it was the last bit of bread for her family's nourishment, while they remained hungry. Mijlisi quotes a tradition from Jabar ibn 'Abdullah,³ saying: "One day, the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) asked: "Why is your face pale?" she replied: "O' Messenger of Allah, it is from hunger." The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "O' my God, please remove her hunger and take away her difficulties." Jabar said: "By Allah, as soon as his prayer was finished, Fatima's (p.b.u.h.) face fills with color and, after that day, she never suffered from hunger."⁴

Once, the holy Prophet and the people were waiting for Bilal, the mu'adhdhin. When he arrived, the holy Prophet asked: "Why are you late?" Bilal said: "I went to Fatima to pay her what I owed her. She was grinding flour and her son,

¹ Sharh Nahj ul-Balaghah, Vol. 9, p. 193.

² Bihar ul-Anwar, Vol. 43, pp. 76, 82; *Rayaheen ash-Sharia'*, Vol. 1, p. 179.

³ Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Num_n Baghdadi, known as ibn Muallim, was born in 336 AH and died in 413 AH. He was a teacher of sheikh Toosi and Seyed Murteza. Muf_d is a well-known Shi'a Jurisprudent who has written about 200 books.

⁴ Bihar ul-Anwar, Vol. 43, p. 62.

Hasan, was near the mill crying. I asked her what I should do, to pick up the child, or grind the flour?" she replied: "I'll take care of the child." So I took over the grinding and that is why I am late." The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "You were merciful to her and Allah be merciful to you."¹

The heavy house work, such as grinding flour and making bread injured Zahra's hand. Ali (p.b.u.h.) told her to go to the holy Prophet and ask for a servant. Fatima went to the Prophet. She felt ashamed and did not say anything for a while, but finally made her request. The holy Prophet said: "So that your virtues may not diminish, I will teach you an invocation that will both help you and bring you reward (Thawab)." He then taught her the Fatima's Invocation.²

Salman said: "Fatima was grinding oats and Husain was crying because he was hungry. I said: "O' Daughter of the Prophet! Why do you not ask Fizzah³ to help you?"

She replied: "The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said that housework should be divided such that Fizzah works one day, and I work the next day. Fizzah worked yesterday."⁴

From what has been said, it is clear that the Prophet (p.b.u.h.), despite his love for his daughter, and the fact that he was ruler of the Muslims, with all their wealth and means under his control, gave nothing to Zahra (p.b.u.h.). Instead, he encouraged her piety and taught her to praise Allah, and she accepted that. She obeyed the commands of Allah, and was satisfied with

¹ Bihar ul-Anwar, vol. 43, p. 76.

² Man la-Yahdarat al-Faqih, Vol. 1, p. 320.

³ The virtuous woman who helped Hadrat Fatima (p.b.u.h.). Her story is told in a later Chapter.

⁴ Bihar ul-Anwar, Vol. 43, p. 28.

32. *Safinah*

pleasing Allah and His Messenger, showing her faith and submission to Allah.

Many times it happened that there was nothing in the house to eat, but Fatima (p.b.u.h.) never complained, because she did not want Ali (p.b.u.h.) to be ashamed and unhappy. Allah, because of this respect, sent Divine food, fruit, and clothing to them.¹

Accounts of Zahra's generosity and sacrifices are many and so well known that it is not necessary to mention them all.²

Fatima's excellence and virtues were so great that even Aisha could not neglect them. She said: "I have never seen anyone more similar to the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) than Fatima."

Whenever she entered the room, the Prophet stood up. He was kind to her and kept her close to him." Aisha also said, "I never saw anyone more truthful than Fatima, except for her children."³

When someone asked Aisha about her rebelling against Ali, she said: "Leave me alone! By Allah, among men, there was none more beloved to the Prophet than Ali, and, among women, there was none more beloved than Fatima."

Ibn Abdul-Bar and Ibn Athir have related a tradition from Jumayi ibn Umayr in which he asked Aisha, "Who is the most beloved to the Prophet (p.b.u.h.)?"

She said: "Fatima."

I asked: "And among the men?"

She said, "Ali."⁴

¹ Bihar ul-Anwar Vol. 43, pp. 59, 68, 73, 77.

² See, for example: Rayaheen ash-Sharis, Vol. 1, pp. 180-185; Bihar ul-Anwar, Vol. 43, p. 81.

³ Al-Isti'ab, Vol. 4, p. 1896; Bihar ul-Anwar, vol. 43, pp. 25, 68.

⁴ Bihar ul-Anwar, Vol. 43, p. 38; al- Isti'ab, Vol. 4, p. 1897; Usd ul- Ghabah, Vol. 5, p. 522.