



THE PROMISED MAHDI
The Promised Mahdi Cultural Foundation

Imam al-Mahdi's declaration
of **Lady Fāṭimah al-Zahrā (as)**
as his excellent role model

السَّعْيُ عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْحَسَنَةُ

Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, in his revered work al-Ghaybah, relates an incident that occurred after the martyrdom of Imam al-‘Askarī (as). A dispute had arisen between Ibn Abī Ghānim al-Qazwīnī and a group of Shi‘a regarding the matter of the Imam’s succession. Ibn Abī Ghānim denied the Imamate of the promised son of al-‘Askarī (as), causing confusion and unrest among the believers.

In their distress, a group of faithful Shia wrote to the Imam of the Age (aj), seeking guidance concerning this turmoil.

The Imam, in his own blessed handwriting, responded to their letter—beginning with prayers for their protection from deviation and tribulation, invoking for them the light of certainty and a blessed end, and imparting divine counsel on several matters. In the midst of his luminous words, he wrote this timeless declaration:

«... وَفِي ابْنَةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ أَسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ»

“In the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (Prophet Muḥammad), there is for me an excellent example.”

(Al-Ghaybah, by Ṭūsī, p. 286, hadīth 245; Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 53, p. 180, hadith, 9)



In this narration, there lies a profound and subtle distinction. Imam al-Mahdi (aj) does not say, “In my mother, Fāṭimah...”; rather, he declares, “In the daughter of the Messenger of God...”. This phrase carries deep significance, for it reveals that the Imam’s emulation of Lady Fāṭimah (as) is not due to her being his mother, but because she is the daughter of the Prophet (pbuh), the embodiment of his essence, and the continuation of his noble line. Fāṭimah (as) is the very flesh of the Messenger of God, and to take her as a model is, in truth, to take the Prophet himself as a model. Her role as a paradigm is inseparable from that of the Prophet (pbuh), for she is his spiritual and literal counterpart. Thus, the imitation of Fāṭimah (as) is the imitation of the Messenger of God in all of his purity, wisdom, and virtue. The Prophet is the one whom God has chosen and exalted as the ultimate role model for the faithful. In truth, the words of Imam Mahdi i.e. In the daughter of the Messenger of God... reflect this divine truth, aligning perfectly with God's revelation, which highlights the Prophet as the epitome of exemplary conduct for believers:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْنَا وَإِنَّا لَنُحِبُّكَ وَالْحَمْدُ لَكَ

﴿لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ
وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا﴾

“Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah (Muhammad) you have a good example to follow for him who hopes in (the Meeting with) Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah much.” (The Quran, 33:21)

The Radiance of the Imam’s Declaration

These few words unveil an ocean of meaning. They reveal the deep spiritual kinship and divine resemblance between the final Proof of God and his foremother, Fāṭimah al-Zahrā (as).

The Imam identifies himself as the continuer of her sacred mission—the one who walks in her footsteps, defends the Wilāyah of Imam Ali (as) as she did, endures oppression as she endured, and upholds the truth as she upheld it. Fāṭimah (as) is not only his ancestor in blood, but his mirror in spirit. Just as she was the heart of the Prophetic household, the Imam of the Age (aj) is the living continuation of her light in this world of trial.



Dimensions of Imitation

The Imam's statement- "In the daughter of the Messenger of Allah there is for me an excellent example"- may be understood on several luminous levels. Among them are the following:

1. Her Refusal to Submit to the Tyrants

Lady Fāṭimah al-Zahrā (as), till the final breath of her blessed life, refused to give allegiance to any usurper of divine authority. She stood alone, but unbending, before the throne of falsehood—her silence louder than a thousand cries, her broken ribs a testimony that truth bows to none but God.

In the same spirit, Imam al-Mahdi (aj) does not and will not extend allegiance to any oppressive ruler. His covenant is only with Allah and with the line of His chosen ones. Just as Fāṭimah (as) guarded the sanctity of Wilāyah, he too remains hidden yet steadfast, preserving the trust of divine guardianship until the time of its full manifestation.

2. Her Refusal to Use Unlawful Means to Reclaim the Truth

The letter itself suggests that some among the Shi‘a doubted the Imam’s authority or questioned his silence. The Imam answers them with profound wisdom: his guide is Fāṭimah (as).

Though she witnessed the usurpation of her husband’s right and the crushing of divine order, she did not lift her hand in vengeance nor resort to forbidden means. She chose patience, prayer, and the purity of protest over worldly power.

Likewise, Imam al-Mahdi (aj) declares by his very being: “Were I permitted, I would make the truth manifest so that no shadow of doubt would remain.

Yet my example is Fāṭimah (as): she never used unlawful means to reclaim her right, and I too will await the divine command. My silence is not weakness—it is fidelity to the path of Fāṭimah (as).”



3. Her Compassion Amid Injustice

In another portion of the sacred letter, the Imam writes: “Were it not for our deep love for you, our longing for your guidance, and the injustices we have endured, we would have turned away from you.” Here the Imam’s heart speaks the same language as his mother’s.

Fāṭimah (as), despite being wronged by her people and abandoned by those who owed her loyalty, continued to pray for them, to care for their fate, and to intercede for their forgiveness.

The Imam of the Age follows this same luminous pattern. Though his followers falter, and though his absence is prolonged by the world’s heedlessness, his compassion does not wane. Like his mother, he endures pain in silence, yet his heart remains full of mercy for his people.

Conclusion

When the Imam of the Age (aj) proclaims that Lady Fāṭimah al-Zahrā (as) is his role model, he is not merely praising her virtues—he is declaring the essence of his own mission.

The path of Mahdaviyyah is the continuation of the path of Fāṭimiyyah. To await the Mahdi (aj) is to live by the light of Fāṭimah (as), to be pure in intention, steadfast in faith, discerning in loyalty, and patient in the face of injustice.

Her tears at the door of the Mosque of the Prophet, her broken door, her whispered prayers in the night—all are lessons for the community that awaits her son. Thus, one cannot truly know the hidden Imam without knowing the Lady of Light, for she is the mirror of his mission and the measure of his truth. Whoever walks in her footsteps walks toward him; and whoever loves her, loves the one who carries her light to the End of the Time.