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Syed Ali Abbass Abdullah Shirazi

To begin understanding the personality of Fatima Al-Zahra in Shi'ite thought is to first understand the structure wherein her personality resides. The Shi'ite theology is grounded in the divine significance of the Prophet and his Ahl al-Bayt, which include Fatima, Ali, Hassan, and Hussain, all of whom are infallible, have divine knowledge, eternal, and divinely appointed. Fatima is the daughter of the Prophet Muhammad and the wife of his cousin, Ali, and the mother of Hassan and Hussain. Her holiness in Shi'ite theology, however, is not constricted just by her relation to the important personalities, rather is at the centerpoint of the Ahl al-Bayt, connecting the significant categories of Prophethood and Imamat. Therefore, the structure wherein Fatima's personality is positioned is already at a holy base, based on sacred genealogy as well as the nature of the Ahl al-Bayt, which ascribes to her holiness even in the absence of any other qualities she may have as an individual holy figure. Her position in this structure, however, appears to limit scholarly understandings of her significance, wherein her role as a feminine figure in the family structure becomes the sole focus of research and analysis, thereby glossing over her role and significance otherwise. Sered (1991) bases her understanding of the cult of Fatima primarily as an idealized model of women in the domestic sphere.

The category of Saint, as per Frederick (1988), is not fully compatible with Islamic holy figures. To deal with Fatima as an individual holy figure, I will use the Shi'ite category '*Masoomeen*', which translates to the 'Infallible Ones', for better encapsulating her position in Shi'ite theology. Like the Prophet and the Imams, Fatima serves as a Wali of God, or specifically *Hujjat-Allah Fi Arze*, which translates to 'God's Proof on Earth'. 'She herself is an Imam, a guide' (Shariati 1978 pp. 128). Therefore, Fatima's position is, on one hand, not just as an ordinary human, rather a divinely imbued human figure, serving as a mechanism of holiness. More appropriately though, her existence in Shi'ite theology, is that of an Eternal, but created, 'Nur'. *'The light (Nur) of Fatima (S.A) was created before the creation of the earth and the heaven'* (Maani al-Akhbar pp. 396).

Fatima's existence itself is holy in Shi'ite perspective, not merely due to her feminine role in the family structure of the Prophet, although that does serve to emphasize her holiness. In the popular hadith

tradition of the Shi'ites, Hadith e Kisa, which is usually narrated before every religious gathering, as well as in weddings, emphasizes the core nature present at the heart of the Shi'ite theology; Love. This hadith showcases also the divine significance of Fatima, who is used to describe by God, the Ahl al-Bayt's divine significance.

'*...Then the Lord, Almighty Allah said: "O My angles! O Residents of My Heavens, verily, I have not created the structured, indeclinable Sky, nor the stretched earth, nor an illuminated moon, nor a bright sun, nor the rotating planets, nor the flowing seas, nor the sailing ships, but for the love of these Five lying underneath the cloak" Gabriel, the trusted angel, asked: "Who are under the cloak?" The Almighty answered: "They are the Household of the Prophet and the substance and core of the Message. They are: Fatimah, her father, her husband and her two sons...*'" (Hadith al-Kisa)

Other than her liminal position between the Divine and the material world, her personality and role is much more multifaceted than merely an intermediary figure for the intercession of humans. Uncovering the narratives and personality of Fatima in Shi'ite Islam, impossible as it may be to do so fully, reveals the multi-faceted role she played and continues to play, but more significantly, showcases relatively new forms of agency, resistance, and *ishq*.

Fatima's life and biography is one buried under many layers of history, politics, and religious debates. Her life nor her position is one canonically agreed upon all by every Shi'ite perspectives. For academic scholars, this archaeology of history is not an easy task, due to the discrepancies in beliefs as well as in the complex structure of the oral tradition. In regards to the latter, Hadith traditions are extremely differing in regards to the history of nearly every personality in the 7th century, with sectarian polemics fueling further the difficulty of achieving textual and historical clarity. Politics, by definition, also color both the establishment of hadith traditions as well as their usage. For instance, Shi'ite scholars argue often the polemical nature of the Sunni canonical hadith traditions of Bukhari and Muslim, specifically the narrators of the hadiths, being sheer opponents of Ali, in the backdrop of the Caliphate as well as the Umayyad caliphate who launched a campaign of hadith fabrication against the Ahl al-Bayt to distance them from the Prophet and Islam. (Al-Milani 2019; Al-Samawi 2001)

Such context, while extremely difficult to address in an intensely sectarian climate, makes analysis of holy Islamic personalities quite susceptible to inaccuracy. For instance, Fatima's marital discord with Ali is one such example, which many authors, such as Sered (1991) and Kashani (2005), accord as Shi'ite narratives, and narratives where it is non-existent as polemical portrayals of harmony to better fit the Shi'ite narrative. However, such academic analysis opens several problems, and questions for those wanting to do academic analysis, on the implementation of hadith/oral tradition. Would such analysis therefore not be limited to the author's own choice of hadiths to pick from among the immense spectrum of hadiths available to them? In regards to my paper, I will implement usage of hadiths for Shi'ite theology within the Shi'ite narratives specifically, in order that my analysis of Shi'ite perspectives of Fatima is not muddled by non-Shi'ite narratives, to limit the impact of sectarian politics from divulging the

analysis of Fatima in Shi'ite perspective.

The birth of Fatima is synonymous with the narratives of the birth of the Prophet and the Imams in regards to the holy nature of it. As per Shi'ite narrative, the Prophet was instructed to meditate for 40 days and brought heavenly fruit from the angel Jibra'il to eat, before being instructed to go to his wife. Near the time of birth, Fatima was brought to the material world with the help of holy personalities such as Mary, Asiya, etc. (Shirazi 2015 section. The Splendorous Birth of Fatimah). The contextual aspect behind this narrative lies in the patriarchal definition of descendants in 7th century Arabia, wherein only a male would count as a descendant. The verse of Al-Kauthar in the Quran, designating the existence of Fatima, as a 'Barakah', abundance of goodness, showcases the emphasis on the maternal line in qualifying descendants. 'Fatima's unique position, then, as the surviving heir of the prophet is revolutionary in and of itself' (Kashani 2005 pp. 16). This narrative is synonymous also with the Quranic narrative of Mary and the Virgin Birth. Such narratives showcase Fatima's purity, similar to the purity of Christ in Christian theology. The purity notion is further solidified by the Verse of Purification revealed in regards to the Prophet, Ali, Fatima, Hassan, and Hussain.

***"Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O People of the House! And to purify you a* (*thorough*) *purifying."* (*Surah Al-Ahzaab, 33:33*).**

It is important while analyzing the notion of purity, to first define what the parameters of purity, *Tahara*, are. On an exoteric level, purity can be defined as the unclean, prohibited substances, such as alcohol. On an esoteric level, it is sin itself. This interpretation is championed by the Shi'ite school of thought, and the verse is used as an establishment of the infallibility of the Ahl al-Bayt. (Leghaei 2020)

What is interesting, however, is that this notion of purity, though accorded to all the holy Shi'ite personalities, is primarily studied by scholars through focusing on the personality of Fatima. On one hand, one may argue that the establishment of the narrative of the pure holy Imams from her progeny would demand that the mother would also be accorded the same purity. On the other hand, we can argue that understanding the Purity notion in Islam should not be done so by trying to map this structure onto the Christian structure of purity, wherein Jesus' purity requires by theological logic the purity of his mother. 'After Augustine, it seemed impossible to maintain that the Redeemer had been conceived and carried in a woman's womb that, like all others, was stained by sin' (Warner 1976 pp. 244). The Purity notion is one often analyzed as the foundation for creating models for the Shi'ites, and by extension imposing gendered notions of purity onto Shi'ites, such as the veil, chastity, etc. However, I will argue that though the Ahl al-Bayt serve as models for Shi'ites, the Purity notion is one that provides evidence of the inability and impossibility of perfectly emulating the Ahl al-Bayt. This structure, therefore, does provide support to the Ahl al-Bayt functioning as models of purity for the Shi'ites, but more accurately, unreachable models of purity.

Fatima's construction as primarily a symbol of purity, however, becomes limiting in regards to the role she plays. While important in regards to gendered notions of the veil and chastity, Fatima as a symbol of

resistance and agency in academic analysis becomes side swept, with the lens of focus being primarily on her functioning as a traditional feminine figure. Such an orientalist perspective of Fatima serves only to limit her role, showcasing an attempt to box in a complex feminine personality into a role easily conceptualized as a traditional symbol of purity in Islam.

Fatima's life during the life of the Prophet, as per Shi'ite narratives, had been one with security, protection, and satisfaction. After the Prophet's passing, which Shi'ites profess to be martyrdom by poisoning (Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal pp. 408), led to a period of suffering and anguish upon Fatima and the Ahl al-Bayt. To provide context for that period, it is necessary to note the Shi'ite belief of the concept of leadership of Islam to be solely in the hands of God, who appointed the first Imam, Ali, to be the successor of the Prophet. The events of Ghadir, wherein the prophet publicly appointed him, and the preceding and following revelation of the Quranic verses underscores the importance of it in Shi'ite theology.

'O the Messenger! Convey what had been revealed to you from your Lord; if you do not do so, then [***it would be as if***] ***you have not conveyed His message*** [***at all***]***. Allah will protect you from the people'*** (***The Qur'an 5:67***)

'This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed my favor on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion' (***Qur'an, 5:3***)

With the Ahl al-Bayt busy with the passing of the Prophet, Abu Bakr with the help of his loyal supporter Umar bin Khattab, seized power for himself, and subsequently demanded fealty from the Islamic community (Rah-e-Haq, 1998, section. A Brief History of Saqifah). Ali and Fatima, ignored this ignoble seizure of power, secluded themselves in their homes in a peaceful protest. With the chief figures of Islam unresponsive, many whispers of dissent arose. Abu Bakr and Umar, aware and foreseeing such dissent, strove to nip the impending threat in the bud. Khalid bin Walid was sent to the outskirting communities, and with violent displays of savagery forced the communities to pledge fealty.

Such is the Shi'ite narrative of the 'Rida Wars' of Abu Bakr. 'The so-called "wars of apostasy" fought in the caliphate of Abu Bakr, were actually a civil war' (Razwi 2008 section. The First Civil War in Islam). As for the Ahl al-Bayt, the land of Fadak, which was gifted to Fatima by the Prophet in the aftermath of the Battle of Khaybar, as per the Quranic verse: ***"And give to the near of kin his due …"*** (***Qur'an, 17:26***) as interpreted by scholar Sayyid Akhar Rizvi (Rizvi 1999), was usurped by Abu Bakr. This move was done so to economically disempower the Ahl al-Bayt from claiming their right to rule.

Secondly, Umar went to the house of Fatima, to force Ali to give his due allegiance, in order to pacify the unrest. Fatima refused to let Umar in, despite his threat to burn the house. As per Shi'ite accounts, Umar broke in violently, causing Fatima to miscarry her pre-born son, Mohsin. Ali was dragged to the caliph, refusing to give allegiance (Pinault 1998 pp. 70). Fatima proceeds later, to go to the court of Abu Bakr, to deliver a sermon that resonates with the same intensity and power as the sermon of Zainab, daughter of

Fatima, in the court of Yazid. (Al-Ihtijaj 132-141; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 29 p.216). Soon, Fatima died due to the injuries sustained by her from Umar, and in a final act of protest, told Ali to bury her at night in secrecy to prohibit the coming of the accused to her funeral. (Al-Jibouri 2015 section. Fatima's Death).

This final protest was not ignored by Abu Bakr, who proceeded the next day alongside his followers to exhume the grave of Fatima and offer the funeral prayers again. Ali, who had up till now, kept his peace, could not stand this desecration. The forty decoy graves dug at the cemetery served to be a problem in identification for Abu Bakr. Ali, who had donned his warrior attire, advanced to the cemetery, warning those seeking exhumation of the grave of Fatima the taste of death. Umar responded "What is the matter, Abu Al-Hasan? By Allah, we shall dig her grave out and perform prayers on her" to which Ali responds by throwing Umar down, saying "*Son of the Sawada! I have abandoned my right to prevent people from forsaking their faith, but as regards Fatima's grave, by Him in whose hand is my soul, if you and your followers attempt to do anything to it, I will irrigate the ground with your blood*! (Ordoni 2019 section. The House of Grief). After this, Abu Bakr alongside his follower, Umar, stood down, afraid to taste further any violent counteraction from Ali.

A dark moon, a hidden entity with the power to illuminate all but itself, the grave of Fatima stands today as a living testament of Fatima's resistance against the caliphs. And thus buried beneath layers of history, these narratives of Fatima's resistance, like the grave of Fatima, speak their voice in symbols, especially the symbol of the hidden but luminous. The question of Fatima in academic analysis therefore shouldn't focus only on what is to be seen on the surface, such as the notions of purity and holiness, but to focus also on the notions which appear to be missing from conventional discussions of Fatima, and what those notions inform us about Fatima.

One question that prevails from these narratives is the sheer secrecy at which it has been kept, and why that has been the case. The possible answers that arise are that of the political and systematic oppression imposed over the Ahl al-Bayt, from the first Imam's age to the last. The political climate historically has been one very antagonistic to the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt. The cursing of Ali after every Friday prayer, instituted by Muawiyah, which prevailed for over 60 years, serves as a prime example of the systematic hatred propagated by the Umayyad Caliphate. The cursing of Ali has been recorded by many Sunni scholars, such as Imam Ahmad B. Hanbal (volume 1 pp. 185), Ibne Tammiyah (volume 5, pp. 42), and Al-Tabari (volume 18 pp. 149). Hassan was poisoned by Muawaiyah, and Hussain, the son of Fatima, was massacred on the plains of Karbala by Yazid's forces. Ali, son of Hussain, the 4th Shi'ite Imam till the 11th Imam were poisoned by the respective Umayyad and Abbasid political rulers. Moreover, the 7th, 9th, 10th, and 11th Imams spent most of their lives imprisoned by the Caliphs of the time (Vannar, 2020). The instituting of anti-Shi'ite persecution has been present historically in Islamic communities, with Shi'ites immigrating to different regions following the Ummayad and Abbassid persecution. (Buehler & Schulhofer-Wohl 2023).

To discuss Fatima's resistance in the ages where even a mere mention of the Ahl al-Bayt labels you as

a Shi'ite and lead to a subsequent death sentence at the hands of the political state in power would be thus difficult. Even in the present age, the Blasphemy law in Pakistan serves to systematically prevent the discussion of Fatima's resistance, wherein the case of the 'righteous caliphs' would lead to the charge of 'blasphemy of holy personalities'. This is due to ambiguous terminology utilized in the Blasphemy Law, which as per the new addition includes 'Companions of the Prophet'. This addition exacerbates further the exploitation of the Bill to persecute the Shi'ite minority, amongst the others, wherein charges of FIRs are extended for organizing mourning rituals, distribution of food in remembrance of Karbala, and denouncing Yazid, the killer of Hussain (Gokal & Mirza, 2023). As per the report by the US department of State, Shi'ites comprised nearly 70% of the blasphemy cases in 2020. Blasphemy charges include with it also the significant risk of extra-judicial violence, such as mob lynchings, wherein the perpetrators receive no consequence due to lack of state interference. (Pakistan – United States Department of State, 2021). Therefore, discussions of Fatima's resistance, in the context of Pakistan, finds no safe space, other than closed off private spaces and a 'safe' audience.

To uncover the resistance of Fatima, it is first necessary to contextualize the concepts of resistance and revolutionary, which are modern categories. Such a fact leads often to problems associated with analyzing resistance of historical figures that do not necessarily fit into the modern framework. Therefore, in order to analyze Fatima's resistance, I will engage first in uncovering what resistance is and what it entails, using Frantz Fanon's book 'Wretched of the Earth' which examines colonization and decolonization.

'*Decolonization is always a violent phenomenon*' (Fanon 1961 pp. 33)

Fanon establishes a precise binary between the two opposing forces of the settler and the native, with the former seating himself at the head and the native bound by force on his feet. The resistance and struggle for freedom from the yoke of the oppressor, as per Fanon, lies in the structural and systematic disordering. It lies in obliteration, in the uprooting of order, and by extension, the creation of the new, the new order, the new man. Decolonization is set in the foundational structure of two opposing forces, meeting in antagonistic action.

'The settler makes history; his life is an epoch, an Odyssey. He is the absolute beginning' (Fanon 1961 pp. 50)

The nature of colonization is one of dominion, built on the bones and blood of the natives. The oppressor, draining the blood of the conquered and dominated, seating himself on the throne, gives a call to the self-preserving hearts of those that lay exploited and bent to his will: "I am your freedom". The message is clear and the native knows it. For the oppressor becomes meaning itself, and to revolt is suicide, of not just the individual, but of the whole community. 'Silence falls when the oppressor approaches' (Fanon 1961 pp. 70).

So, what is that the native has left? Yet it is precisely the violence and oppression imposed on him which

serves to provide him the fervor of resistance, for always does he seek to supplant the settler. Yet, the settler adorns his rule with fatalism, to quell the unrest. 'A belief in fatality removes all blame from the oppressor; the cause of misfortunes and of poverty is attributed to God: He is Fate' (Fanon 1961 pp. 53).

'*The exploited man sees that his liberation implies the use of all means, and that of force first and foremost*' (Fanon 1961 pp. 60)

But still the oppressive tension lingers on the body of the native, not on the burnt flesh, nor the wounds of steel, but in the heart of the oppressed, in the mind that sees his oppressors' violence, and stares at the realization for what it begets. 'Mass slaughter in the colonies at a certain stage of the embryonic development of consciousness increases that consciousness, for the hecatombs are an indication that between oppressors and oppressed everything can be solved by force' (Fanon 1961 pp. 71). In this context, the oppressed sees therefore his salvation from violence through violence, which serves as the catalyst for change.

'*Illuminated by violence, the consciousness of the people rebels against any pacification*' (Fanon 1961 pp. 93)

Armed resistance and violence against the settler therefore, provides the conditions necessary for resistance and decolonization. As per Fanon, non-violent resistance serves as a futile attempt which yields no victory for the oppressed, rather an idea which is built within colonial frameworks. 'There are some individuals who are convinced of the ineffectiveness of violent methods; for them, there is no doubt about it, every attempt to break colonial oppression by force is a hopeless effort, an attempt at suicide, because in the innermost recesses of their brains the settler's tanks and airplanes occupy a huge place' (Fanon 1961 pp. 62). Fanon perceives non-violent resistance as a fallacious dream, rooted in colonial consciousness, and unrealistic within the realities of colonial oppression.

Fanon champions violence as the primary effective model of resistance. 'For the native, life can only spring up again out of the rotting corpse of the settler' (Fanon 1961 pp. 92). In light of such understanding, how can we understand Fatima and her resistance? Let us, therefore, shift our focus onto Fatima again. In the aftermath of the death of the prophet, with the violent seizure of the caliphate by Abu Bakr at Saqifa, several communities refused to comply with what they perceived as the illegitimate capture of power. Khalid bin Walid was sent to achieve allegiance from the outer communities. Khalid's confrontation with Malik bin Nuwayra is a chief point in the Rida Wars, wherein Malik's refusal to comply with the Caliph's demand for fealty led to Khalid beheading him, marrying and raping Malak's wife. (Razwi 2008 section The First Civil War in Islam).

With the Rida Wars, imperialism found a definitive footing in the politics of the Islamic Caliphate. Interestingly, Umar is noted to object to Khalid's actions, complaining to Abu Bakr to dispose of him (Tareekh Al-Tabari 2:504). Abu Bakr however, rejects Umar's proposal; stating that he would not sheath the sword of their ardent supporter, as recorded in Sunni sources (Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, al Isabah 6 p.

37). Abu Bakr's imperialistic and despotic politics continued its life in the hands of Umar, who is known for the expansion of the Islamic Caliphate. 'no one colonizes innocently, that no one colonizes with impunity either; that a nation which colonizes, that a civilization which justifies colonization – and therefore force – is already a sick civilization, a civilization that is morally diseased, that irresistibly, progressing from one consequence to another, one repudiation to another, calls for its Hitler, I mean its punishment.' (Aime Cesaire 1950 pp. 4). And thus, the roots of Karbala were borne in the earth of the imperialistic policies utilized to solidify the despotic rules of the caliphs. It culminated when Yazid assumed power, resulting in the massacre of Karbala and subsequently the rampant murder of the inhabitants of Medina, against those that did not ally with the rule of the oppressor. (Ridhwani 2010 section. Yazid and his household)

Fanon writes that violence is the tool for the oppressor to solidify his settlement over the oppressed. Violence's tongue speaks to the deepest crevice of man's hearts, a power that showcases its effect immediately. With the community in disarray and confusion, Ali's lack of fealty presented a strong threat to Abu Bakr's position. Umar is sent to the house of Fatima to get Ali's allegiance. But Fatima stands in-between with a staunch 'No'. As per David Pinault (Pinault 1998 pp. 70), Umar, in dispute with Ali, forces open the door to Fatima's house, hits Fatima, and fractures her ribs. This narrative is further compounded by Sunni scholars, such as Ibn Abi'l-Hadid Mu'tazali, who expands further detailing the conversation between Umar and Ali after the former had dragged him to Abu Bakr. Ali refused to give in to their demands, saying to Umar: "You have conspired well together. Today you support him, so that tomorrow he may return the caliphate to you".

With the unsuccessful attempt to achieve solidification of his rule, Abu Bakr proceeds to confiscate the land of Fadak, claiming that he heard from the Prophet that "We prophets do not inherit" (Bukhari Volume 8 book 8 718). With the income from Fadak gone, the Ahl al-Bayt are left economically deprived, leaving them with even less support. 'But Fatima does not sit down. Under a mountain, full of sorrow, bearing her bereaving spirit, she continues her resistance and her struggle against the oppressive Caliphate. She believes the Caliphate to be unworthy' (Shariati 1978 pp. 117). Fatima proceeds to enter the court of Abu Bakr, in the gait of her father, whereupon she delivers her sermon (Al-Ihtijaj 132-141; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 29 p.216), chastising the oppressors from seizing her property, appropriating for themselves the caliphate, as well as chastising the people silently abiding the whims of the oppressor.

She begins first by challenging the seizure of the caliphate by Abu Bakr on the argument that it was necessary to prevent sedition and chaos. "*The age* (*of the Prophet*) *was still recent, the wound was still wide and not yet healed, and the Prophet was not yet buried. Did you so quickly claim the fear of sedition? Surely into sedition have they already tumbled down*". Fatima vocalizes her resistance and actively charges the oppressor. Her tone accusatory, she proceeds to charge him further for his imperialistic policies; "*You have not waited until its rush would calm down, and it became obedient. You then began arousing its flames, instigating its brand, responding to the call of the misguiding Satan,*

putting out the lights of the manifest religion, and annulling the Sunnah of the sincere Prophet. You conceal sips on foam and march towards his (*the Prophet*) *family and children in thickets and forests, but we are patient with you as if we are being nicked with daggers and stung by spearheads in our abdomens, and now you claim that there is no inheritance for us*!"

Fatima proceeds then to intellectually disestablish Abu Bakr's argument: '*O son of Abu Quhafa, is it in the Book of Allah that you inherit your father and I do not inherit my father? Surely you have done a strange thing! Did you intendedly desert the Book of Allah and turned your back on it? Allah said:*

"And Sulaiman was Dawood's heir." **(*27:16*).**

And said about Yahya bin Zachariah:

"Grant me from Thyself an heir" **(*19:5*).**

"Who should inherit me and inherit from the children of Yaqoub" **(*19:6*)*'.***

Fanon designates resistance as the meeting of two opposing forces, of the oppressor and the oppressed, armed and foretelling of blood. But here is a different thing happening, we see here as well a battle between despotism and revolution, but done on the intellectual and vocal plains. Fatima turns now to the Ansar, the people of Medina, saying: "*O you people of magnanimity, the supporters of the nation, and the defenders of Islam, what is this short-coming in defending my right? And what is this slumber before the wrong done to me? Did not the Messenger of Allah, my father, say: 'A man is observed through his children'? How quick have you violated* (*his orders*)*, and how soon have you let down? Though you still are able to help me in my attempt, and powerful to assist what I request". "Is the inheritance of my father usurped while you hear and see me?! And you are in your meetings and gatherings around me? You hear my call, and the affair includes you though you are numerous and well equipped with power and good shield?! The call reaches you but you do not respond and the cry comes to you but you do not help?*"

Fatima, in her sermon, gives out a call, a call for revolution against the oppressor. It is a call that synchronizes 60 years later, on the plains of Karbala, when the son of Fatima, drenched in the blood of his slain family and holding his infant son, calls out "*Hal min nasir yansurna*?" ("*Is there anyone to help me?"*) (Ali, 2007, section. The prophesied desert of Karbala).

Analyzing the resistance of Fatima provides us with an illumination of the unique yet also complimentary resistance of the Ahl al-Bayt in relation to modern frameworks of resistance. Fatima's active stances are compatible with modern understandings of agency and resistance, which makes her and other figures from the Ahl al-Bayt so attractive to modern models of resistance. 'Fatima represents resistance and the fight for justice and community love' (Blomfield 2015, 31). At the same point, it is necessary to contextualize resistance and agency within the 7th century background, which ultimately does showcase incompatibilities with western frameworks.

The resistance of the personalities of the Ahl al-Bayt, including Fatima, seems to fit into Fanon's framework, showcased by their active stances against imperialism and the established order. However, what doesn't fit is the methods employed by the personalities of the Ahl al-Bayt to do so. If you were to think of the term 'Revolutionary', it probably brings up images of a battle-clad man burning down a government building. Fatima showcases a type of resistance in contrast to Fanon's insistence of armed resistance. 'To the theory of the "absolute evil of the native" the theory of the "absolute evil of the settler" replies' (Fanon 1961 pp. 92). The Ahl al-Bayt upend this whole framework via their non-violent stance, wherein their resistance is one that ultimately exposes the evil of the oppressor, sacrificing themselves to uphold truth.

This is showcased in the narrative of Karbala as well, wherein Hussain with his family, sought not the violent deposition of Yazid, rather an active stance against the oppressor, one done on the plains of his own flesh and blood. Hussain's words in Medina '*Death has been destined for the children of Adam the way a necklace is destined* [*to hang from*] *a girl's neck. My yearning for my forefathers is like Jacob's yearning for Joseph. A* [*form of*] *death has been chosen for me and I will meet it. It is as if I am watching my joints being cut up by desert foxes between Al-Nawawis and Karbala'* (Al-Luhuf pg. 53; Nafas al-Mahmum pg. 163), before setting out, showcases his choice of an active stance against resistance with the deliberate absence of any immediate political gain. As compared to instituting immediate change, through armed resistance, this form of resistance serves to awaken the conscience of the people to the violence and oppression of the ruler in question, wherein the agents act as a sacrificial tool through which truth may be illuminated, and for light to be shed on the oppressor, stripping him of legitimacy.

Fatima's stance maps onto this structure of active, but non-violent movement of resistance. Fatima, Hussain, and other members of the Ahl al-Bayt served therefore to showcase the victory of the oppressed over the oppressor. From the blood of their own flesh did the face of the oppressor become known and the hearts of the oppressed found solace and strength. 'If the truth cannot be implemented, it can be proven and designed so that time will come to know it. It can be kept alive, so that people come to know that the ruling forces do not represent the truth. They are oppressive. It is truth, justice and freedom which have been defeated and imprisoned' (Shariati 1978 pp. 117).

The foundational narratives of the Ahl al-Bayt, therefore, seem to be quite receptive to these modern frameworks of resistance. Fatima's resistance, however, is less receptive to the modern understanding of a revolutionary. For most of history, female activism has been ignored and systematic structures built to enforce feminine submission. Fatima's resistance, however, seems to shatter such structures through her active participation and role. Yet at the same time, it is not compatible with the modern image of female empowerment, which brings to mind images of a woman breaking norms and showcasing her empowerment by going in antagonism to the established feminine norms. Yet, Fatima does not discard her religion, nor her identity, rather works within the religious framework to exert her agency.

Fatima's female identity is often restricted upon her in regards to her analysis. Her sufferings and

stances are often taken as evidence of a victimized and powerless figure. Yet the same is not accorded to other male members of the Ahl al-Bayt. Fatima's sorrows and oppression are focused on as the primary definitive features of her life. Narratives of her resistance are further analyzed as a modern attempt to revive a more liberal and compatible figure. Yet, is this not at the same point, evidence for our own bias in regards to her female identity? Why is it that the construction of Fatima as a revolutionary is much harder to digest than that of Hussain? Why is it that Fatima's status as that of an 'Eternal Weeper' is imposed on her and showcases her 'female identity' yet Ali Ibne Hussain's 40 years of weeping after Ashura is ignored and not accorded any analysis of 'weakness'? My attempt here is to showcase how Fatima's feminine identity complicates our ideas of revolutionaries and causes us to unjustifiably ignore her resistance, given its lack of compatibility with our understanding of female holy personalities as inherently submissive to the religious norms.

A major aspect behind the non-violent resistance of the Ahl al-Bayt lies also in the notions of *Ishq* and sacrifice. Love, or more accurately, *Ishq*, is the structure around which the Shi'ite mythology is built upon, and one that manifests itself through 'tears' in Shi'ite thought, which serves the purpose of softening the heart, and creating space for holiness. Karbala and the martyrdom and sacrifice of Hussain in Shi'ite narratives is especially grounded in *Ishq*, in different dimensions and levels. The centerpoint of the structure of *Ishq*, however, revolves around Fatima, from her and towards her. Like Mary, she occupies a space of the highest love, but unlike Mary, Fatima expands the category of *Ishq* from a passive structure, into an active one that takes in account material and social structures, such as resistance. This bottom-up structure, wherein tears serve as a manifestation of *Ishq*, which leads to spiritual revival, which leads further to a bodily, communal, and global change, showcases, at the level of an individual, the structure of the Shi'ite resistance. Harmless and 'religious' tears somehow become very much revolutionary and socially meaningful within such a structure.

In the present-day context, Fatimmiyah and Ashura processions and mourning rituals serve, therefore, not merely as a manifestation of the *Ishq* of Shi'ites to their Beloveds, but as an active remembrance of the principals. Ishq, in this structure, is the principal agent in ingraining principles of resistance and agency among the Shi'ite. It is this revolutionary spirit of *Ishq* that serves to provide support to the Shi'ites upholding the *Alam* (flag) of Fatima amidst terrorist attacks. It is this active *Ishq* of the Shi'ites that serve to uphold the Fatimmiyah and Ashura mourning rituals despite subsequent FIRs and detainment (News Desk 2020). The famous Shi'ite slogan 'Every day is Ashura and every land is Karbala', a slogan utilized by Khamenai in the Iranian Revolution (PressTV 2023), showcases the active revolutionary spirit of *Ishq* that is associated with the Ahl al-Bayt in Shi'ite practices, wherein the principles of truth, justice, and movement against oppression is highlighted and embedded.

'Fatima is the source of the inspiration for freedom, the desire of that which is a right, the seekers of justice, the resistors of oppression, cruelty, crime and discrimination' (Shariati 1978 pp. 127). At the end, Fatima, as detailed in her narratives of resistance, is a timeless figure, a beacon of hope to those whipped and crushed under the foot of the oppressor. Fatima is the Nur that brings sustenance to the

broken hearts and bodies of the oppressed. Fatima is a principal, a principal of 'No' to the oppressor, to cruelty, to injustice. Amongst the layers of history, political narratives, and religious polemics, the Nur of Fatima stands hidden, yet luminous. For Fatima appears greatly to embody her name: Zahra, the Luminous.

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