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Introduction

In the Name of God; the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

Lady Fatima, the lady of light has an elevated status in the eyes of Allah due to her childhood sacrifices and support towards the religion of Islam. She is ‘the mother of her father and is an axis to great qualities. The mutual affection between Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.W) and her is unique and holds a very prominent position in father–daughter relationship.

Abu–Faraj al–Isfahani in his *Isnad* narrated from Imam Sadiq (A.S) from his father: “Verily, Fatima (S.A) was surnamed ‘*Omme Abiha*’.”

[*Beharul–Anwaar, vol43 p. 19 from Maqatelu–Talebin*]

‘*Omme Abiha*’ or ‘The Mother of her Father’ is one of the best–known titles of Lady Fatima (peace be upon her). This title sounds quite peculiar for many people especially those who are less familiar with the Arabic language. This lecture is a humble interpretation of the abovementioned Hadith. I shall by the Will of Allah suggest 10 reasons because of which she enjoyed this unique title.

Fatima was the daughter of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.W), the wife of Imam Ali (A.S), the mother of the only two Masters of the Youth of Paradise– Imam Hasan and Imam Husain– and the mother of the 11 infallible Imams (peace be upon them all). She is the elite of the elite women of the past, present and future. She was an infallible martyr and a human huri. She was the crystallization of piety, chastity and real devotee of the Almighty Allah. Her virtues are so numerous that the Messenger of Allah said about her: “If beauty were a person it would be Fatima, Nay! She is greater. Indeed, Fatima is my daughter and the best of the people of the earth in her origin, dignity and honour.” [*Fara`edoh–Samtayn vol.2 p.68*]

Fatima had a short life in this world and as her husband Imam Ali (A.S) has described, “She joined her father very soon.” Yet, her life was so rich with abundant blessings so much so that she became *al–Kauthar* and the fountain of the Prophetic blessings.

Childhood

Fatima was born during the Prophetic mission and when the Prophet of Islam had reached his perfection. She was the only child of the house of Prophet Muhammad and Sayyeda Khadija (S.A). Her conception was heavenly blessed with the paradisiacal fruit gifted to her father at the time of his ascension. She was brought up in a house wherein revelation and the words of God were constant. She witnessed the descending and ascending of the angels. Her physical growth accomplished with her mental and spiritual growth and hence she became an infallible lady who enjoyed the sublime virtues of her father, the holy Prophet of Islam.

After the demise of her mother

Lady Khadija died 10 years after the Prophet of Islam declared his mission and left her five-year-old daughter an orphan. The richest lady of Quraysh at the time of her death could not even afford a simple shroud for her burial and hence she requested her daughter to ask her father to shroud her with his own cloak after her death. Fatima was since the only memory of Khadija for the Prophet of Islam. After the painful death of her mother the young Fatima dedicated herself to her father, the Messenger of God. During the hardship of Makka she was not only a supportive daughter but a comrade. After her marriage with Imam Ali in Medina, initially her house was quite a distance from the mosque which would make traveling to the Prophet quite difficult. Thus, the Prophet arranged that the young couple live in the house of Haritha bin No'man whose house was near the house of the Prophet. [*ibn Sa'ad, al Tabaqaat* vol 8 p14]

The Female Comrade of the Prophet

Fatima was not the type of girl who sat at home weaving or sewing with no social responsibility. Her exalted spirit had made her from the very early stages of her life, endeavor for the spread of Islam with her father.

Once, the Prophet of Islam was inviting people to Islam inside the Masjidul Haraam. Abu Jahl made some of his puppets pour rubbish onto the Prophet. Fatima; the female comrade of the Prophet immediately ran towards her father and with her small hands cleaned the head and the shoulders of the Prophet of Islam.

Many a time the infidels of Quraysh stoned the Messenger of God and the young Fatima was sometimes shielding her father with her own body. Her care and compassion towards the Messenger of God was so motherly and passionate. Every time the Messenger of God came home Fatima was dusting the hair and face of the Prophet. It was due to all this compassionate conduct of Fatima that the Messenger of God had such tremendous love for her.

The role of Fatima in her support and the spread of Islam was so vital that according to Imam Ali (A.S)

she was considered the second pillar of Islam. After the martyrdom of Fatima Zahra (S.A) Imam Ali stated, "The messenger of God was the first column of Islam and Fatima was the second and the Islamic Ommah today has lost its second column too.

Fatima During the Islamic Battles

Fatima was a woman and as such jihad was not obligatory on her. Nonetheless, she was an active participant and a supporter of the Muslim warriors along with her father and husband. During battles, Fatima had the responsibility of nursing the wounded soldiers and repairing their artillery. When the rumor about the martyrdom of the Messenger of God was spread in Medina during the battle of Uhud, Fatima mobilized some of the ladies of Medina to the battlefield.

When she saw her father's, teeth broken and bleeding she was in tears and hugged the Messenger of God. Shia and Sunni historians have narrated that during the severe time of the battle of Uhud whereat blood was flowing from the head and the face of the Prophet, the companions had tried to stop the bleeding of the wounds, to no avail. It was Fatima who then immediately burnt a straw mat and poured its ashes onto the wounds and stopped the blood from flowing. [*Safinatul Behar* vol.1 p140, *Sahihul Bukhari* vol.4 p.72]

Addressing Her Father

After the battle of Uhud, an Ayah was revealed to the Messenger of God to discipline his companions. It was customary for Arabs to call each other with their names without any title and as such they would only call the Prophet of Islam with his first name, Muhammad, the Messenger of God was also too humble to request them to address him otherwise. It was under these circumstances that the Almighty God revealed,

"Make not the calling of the Messenger among you as you are calling one of another." 24:63

Upon the revelation of the Ayah, Muslims were commanded to address the Prophet with the title of Messenger of God.

Lady Fatima narrated, "After the revelation of the Ayah, I wondered whether I could still address my father as 'father' and thus I called him 'O Messenger of God'. Upon hearing that my father immediately replied, "My dear Fatima, that rule was not for you, you call me O father for indeed this is more reviving for my heart and more pleasing your Lord." [*Ibn al-Maghazeli, al Manaqeb* p367]

Thus, Fatima was the only exception of the above Ayah of which she gained part of her everlasting title 'The Mother of Her Father'.

Fatima; the Mother of her Father

In the year 5 AH, after the Battle of al-Ahzab a new rule with regards to the wives of the Prophet was revealed.

“The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves and his wives are their mothers.”

[33:6]

This revelation taught Muslims to respect the wives of the Prophet like their own mothers and that they were forbidden to ever marry them. Thus, none of the wives of the Prophet were ever able to remarry after the demise of the Messenger of God. To this end, every wife of the Prophet was referred to as ‘the mother of the believers’ which means as the believers could not ever marry their mother they could not possibly ever marry any of the wives of the Prophet. After the revelation of the above law, the Messenger of God said to his beloved daughter, “O Fatima. If my wives are the (spiritual) mother of the believers, then you are my (spiritual) mother.”

Etymology of the term ‘al-Omm’

The term mother is referred to in Arabic as ‘Omm’ whether a direct biological mother or indirect and hence, Eve is also referred to as our ‘mother’. Linguistically, the term ‘mother’ is quite similar in all different languages. Omm in Arabic, mum or mother in English, mahdar in Farsi, ma in Urdu and mama in Italian.

The term al-Omm in Arabic is defined by the renowned Arabic linguist al-Raghib “Everything and everyone who is the source of the existence of something or its rearing or reforming.” Therefore, anything that is the origin of the source of something or has a fundamental role in its existence is called al-Omm in Arabic. For instance, in Surah 43 Ayah 4 the Holy Quran is introduced to be in the Mother of the Book,

“And verily, it (this Quran) is in the Mother of the Book with Us, indeed exalted, full of wisdom.”

(43:4)

The term ‘the mother of the book’ in the above Ayah is meant for al-Lauh al-Mahfuz which is the source of all the divine knowledge and its producer.

The first Surah of the Quran is also called ‘Ommul Kitab’ the mother of the book for its seven Ayaat contain the summary of the entire teachings of the holy Quran and hence is the root and the origin of the rest of the Quran.

Ommah in Arabic is a community which has a common religious and spiritual goal.

In short, Omm is either a biological mother which is not gained but physically or a spiritual mother which

is a title given due to some spiritual privileges and characteristics and carries similar parental rights. It is to this meaning that the Messenger of God introduced himself along with Imam Ali as the two fathers of the Muslim Ommah (community).

Fatima; the Axis

In the following I shall share with you ten reasons because of which Lady Fatima enjoyed the divine medal of 'The Mother of Her Father' by the Messenger of God.

We will learn that she is the symmetrical axis between Prophet-hood and Imamat.

1. The Axis of Creation

Numerous prophetic traditions state that the Messenger of God is the final cause of the creation. The Almighty God in a holy hadith says, "Had it not been because of you I would have not created the creation." This is a well-established principle in Islamic philosophy and mysticism since the Messenger of God is the most perfect creation of God and the creation is aimed at the peak of its perfection. It is due to this fact that Fatima is the axis of creation for without her the generation of the most perfect human i.e. the Messenger of God would cease to continue. Similarly, spiritually the existence of Fatima was the cause of the continuation of Islam until the day of Judgment as I shall explain.

2. The Axis of Imamat

Fatima was the symmetrical axis joining Prophet-hood to Imamat. It was through Fatima that the blessed light of Prophet-hood was transmitted to eleven infallible Imams. I'm in awe! She is the mother of 11 infallible Imams! If the holy Mary begot one Jesus, and hence she became a truthful female, the holy Fatima begot 11 pure Imams, behind the last of whom Prophet Jesus shall pray.

3. The Axis of Ahlul-Bayt

The story of the Hadith of the Cloak is narrated by numerous Shia and Sunni narrators. Jabbir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari narrated that the Messenger of God went to the house of Fatima while he was not feeling well. Fatima received him and covered him with his Yemenese cloak for warmth and comfort. Then the Prophet of Islam brings Hasan, Husain and then Imam Ali and Fatima under his cloak with him. It was then that the angel Gibreel brought Ayah 33 of Surah 33,

"Verily, Allah willed but to purify you Ahlul-bayt...."33:33

Lady Fatima is the symmetrical axis in this story so much so that when the archangel Gibreel aims at introducing those who are under the cloak to the heavenly creatures, he states, "They are Fatima and her father and her husband and her children."

4. The Axis of Infallibility

Since Fatima is the axis of Ahlul-Bayt she is also the axis of infallibility as indicated in Ayah 33 of Surah 33. She was the mother and the spiritual coach of all the Imams of Ahlul-bait. The infallibility, bravery and guidance of all the Imams of Ahlul-bait were inherited from their mother, holy Lady Fatima. When Khadija (S.A) was pregnant with Fatima she used to speak with her. One day when the Prophet of Islam heard his wife talking to her baby he said to her, "Gibreel has given me the glad tiding that she is going to be a baby girl and her generation will be blessed and pure and indeed the Almighty God will continue my generation from her offspring and will make them the Imams and the vicegerents of God on earth after revelation has ceased to continue." [Rodhatul Wa'ezin vol. 1 p.143]

5. The Axis of Al Mubahilah

In the last year of the life of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.W) a deputation of 60 high ranked Christians of Najran headed by Abdul Masih their chief monk-priest came and discussed with the Holy Prophet about the personality of Prophet 'Isa (Jesus). When they refused to accept the logical reasoning of the Prophet of Islam, the Messenger of Allah by revelation invited them to a cursing challenge called 'al-Mubahila`.

"Then whoever disputes with you concerning him (Jesus) after all this knowledge that has come to you, say: Come, let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves, then we pray and invoke the Curse of Allah upon those who lie." [3:61]

The only people the Prophet of Islam (S.A.W.W) chose to take to this vital challenge were: Imam Ali, Fatima al-Zahra, (Imam) Hasan and (Imam) Husain peace be upon them. In this challenge Fatima was the example of the child of the Prophet in 'our sons', the woman in 'our women'. She was also the example of the soul of the Prophet in 'ourselves' for the Messenger of God had said about her: "She is part of me as she is my soul in my heart."

Of the significance of this selection the renowned Sunni scholar al-Qandoozi narrated from the holy Prophet (S.A.W.W): "Had the Almighty Allah knew more honourable people on earth than Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husain he would have commanded me to challenge the Christians with them. But He ordered me to enter the Mubahila with them (Ahlul-Bayt) for they are the best creatures." [Yanabi'ul-Mawaddah, p.131]

6. The Axis of Imams of Ahlul-Bayt (A.S)

The Almighty God gave the glad tidings to Fatima (S.A) that 11 infallible Imams will emerge from her offspring. Thus, she was called 'the Mother of the Imams' and 'the Mother of the Blossoms of Islam' and 'the Mother of the Light of the Imams'. It is therefore narrated from the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.W): "I am the tree and Fatima is its fruit-bearing and Ali is its pollen and Hasan and Husain are its fruits." [Ihqaqul-Haq, vol.9 p.157]

Similarly, when Lady Fatima (S.A) delivered her eloquent sermon in the Masjidul-Nabi, Imam Ali (A.S) addressed her with the title of: “O the remaining of the Prophet-hood.” [*Beharul-Anwar*, vol.43 p.148]

Most importantly, the holy Fatima was the bearer and the depository of the divine secret, i.e. Imam Mahdi (may God hasten his reappearance).

7. The Axis of Faith

The Lady Fatima (S.A) is the axis of faith. It is narrated from the Imams of Ahlul-bayt (A.S) that on the Day of Judgment “she will be the scale of measuring the deeds of our lovers and our enemies.” [*al-Kharazmi, Maqtalul-Husain*, p.107] Thus, she is the scale of measuring the lovers and the enemies of Ahlul-Bayt.

8. The Axis of the Sayyeds

The holy Fatima was ‘al-Kouthar’ meaning abundant blessings. The generation of the last Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.W) has spread world-wide through his daughter Fatima. She is the mother of Millions of offspring of the Prophet from the lineage of Imam Ali, Imam Hasan, Imam Husain, Imam Redha, and Imam Kadhem (peace be upon them). They are related to the Prophet of Islam (S.A.W.W) through Fatima.

9. The Axis of Intercession

The holy Fatima is the axis of intercession on the Day of Judgment to rescue the sinners from the Hell-fire. Indeed, she is called Fatima for Allah has safeguarded her and her followers from the Hell-fire. Numerous Prophetic saying indicated that she is called Fatima for Allah has prevented her and her lovers and followers from the Hell-fire. [See *Beharul-Anwar*, vol.43 pp.4 – 18]

Jabir; the distinguished companion of the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.W) who lived long enough to visit Imam Baqir (A.S) asked the Imam to inform him of the status of his grandmother; the lady Fatima (S.A). Part of the Hadith reads:

“On the Day of Judgment people will be ordered: Bend your heads down and lower your gaze for indeed this is Fatima proceeding to Paradise. She then will ask the Almighty: O my Lord! I would like my status to be known in this Day. Thus, the Almighty Allah addresses her: O daughter of My beloved! Look back and find whoever there is a love in their heart for you or for any of your offspring to take their hands and enter them into Paradise. It is on that Day the she will be as selective as a chicken selects the good seeds over the spoiled ones. Then the Almighty Allah will address those who loved the holy Fatima (S.A): Look back and find whoever loved you for the love of Fatima, whoever fed you for the love of Fatima, whoever clothed you for the love of Fatima, whoever offered you a drink for the love of Fatima... then take their hands and enter them into Paradise. Imam Baqir (A.S) then added: On that Day none will be left, save the one who has been doubtful (about the status of Fatima), or the one who has been Kafir

or hypocrite.” [Beharul-Anwar, vol.8 p.51]

10. The Axis of Granting Wishes

Although all the fourteen infallibles are the gates through whom the Almighty God grants our invocations, the Lady Fatima has a pivotal role in the granting of our wishes. Even the Imams of Ahlul-bayt when they invoked to the Almighty, they asked Allah in the virtuous name of their mother Fatima. Thus, the name of Fatima is again the central core in the recommended supplication for our needs.

“Allahuma inni asaloka be haqe fatimata wa abiha wa ba’leha wa baniha wa sirril musta’da’efi ha an to salle’a ala muhammadin wa ale muhammad. Wa an tafalla be ma anta ahlo wa an taqthia hawa`iji”

“O Allah verily I ask You by the right of Fatima and her father and her husband and her sons and the hidden secret entrusted in her (Imam Mahdi A.J) that You may Mohammad and his family and that You may do for me what You are anticipated to do and that You grant my requests.”

Mutual Affection

The affection between Fatima and her father was mutual. That means, as much as the holy Prophet of Islam loved his daughter Fatima, she also loved her father the Prophet. Thus, the demise of the Prophet of God did not have but an enormous effect on Fatima. During her short time after the demise of her father, she cried so much that according to the words of Imam Sadiq (A.S) she became one of the five most weeping people in history of mankind. Prophet Adam (A.S) after his fall wept so much that stains marks appeared on his cheeks.

Prophet Yaqoub (A.S) wept so much in the absence of his son Yusuf that he lost his eye sight. Prophet Yusuf in return also cried so much in missing his father that his fellow prisoners requested that he should cry either at night or day. Imam Sajjad (A.S) wept for the last thirty-five years of his life for the tragedy of Karbala and finally the holy Fatima wept her life away in the absence of her father the holy Messenger of God. She wept so much that Imam Ali (A.S) had to build an isolated hut for her worshipping and weeping called ‘the House of Grieves’.

The weeping of Fatima however, was not only for the physical departure of the Messenger of God from this world, she wept also for the catastrophic deviation that occurred after the Prophet passed. Her weeping was in fact a cry opposition to awaken the Islamic Ummah of the evil consequences of their wrongdoing. Fatima was fully aware that the deviation that occurred in Saqifeh would lead to the massacre of Karbala.

“As salamu alayk O you oppressed lady whose right has been usurped and her rib was broken, the one who was beaten, the lady who was truthful and martyred.”

The enemies of Islam and Ahlul-bait could not stand her opposition. According to al-Mas’oodi; the

renowned historian, she witnessed that the party of Abu Bakr forced Imam Ali to pay allegiance to Abu Bakr whilst Imam Ali was refusing. [*Ithbatul-Wasiya* p262]

Eventually, the enemies threatened to set the house of Fatima on fire should Ali continue to refuse allegiance. Omar ibn Kattab along with his men approached the house of Ahlul-bait. He threatened that should Ali still refuse he would burn the house down and the household. Omar was reminded that Fatima was also in that house, his only reply was, “Even so...”

I would like to end my speech by narrating the tragic event of the martyrdom of the holy Lady Fatima (s.a); the part of the heart of the Prophet and the beloved mother of her father with her own heartbreaking description of the scene,

“they placed firewood at the gate of my house and then they brought fire and torched it to burn us all. I was standing behind the front door. I pleaded with them by the name of Allah and my father the Messenger of Allah to leave us alone or help us. But Omar grabbed the whip of Qunfuz; the slave of Abu Bakr and whipped my arm so hard that it bruised and marked like a bracelet. He then kicked the door against me while I was pregnant, and I fell to the floor all the while the fire was blazing in front of me and its heat was burning my face. He then slapped me so hard on my face that my earring tore my ear then I felt the pain of labor and lost my innocent baby.

[*Baitul ahzan* p97, *al-Ehtejaj* vol1 from p203, *Sharh ibn Abil Haddid* vol2 p21, *The History of Tabari* vol2 p234, *Al Imamah & Al Siyasah* vol1 p12, *Moruj Thahab* vol2 p302, *Al Kafi* vol8 p343]

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