

# THE NURTURING ROLE OF LADY FATIMAH

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ABSTRACT: A look at historical narrations and biographies show that Lady Fatimah is the representation of a perfect individual in the Islamic school of thought. An exemplar mother who with her actions and words raised the best of children acknowledged by both friends and enemies, Lady Fatimah was a role model for her children and all Muslim women and men during her short lifespan. However, because narrations regarding the Lady and her family's virtues and character have been subject to change due to events throughout history, with the use of reports and narrations from the Infallibles about Lady Fatimah, this article brings to light the role she played in the upbringing of her family.

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## Introduction

Every faith consists of two essential components: 1) Its belief system, which comprises the fundamental aspects that create the worldview of that faith in which the views, perceptions, and values of a faith are consistent upon, and 2) Practice, which shows how the theoretical views of that faith can be accomplished. This article, which addresses Lady Fatimah's conduct

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and method of upbringing, seeks to present the life of Lady Fatimah as the applied form of Islam. She was an illustration of a perfect woman, or rather, a perfect human being within the Islamic faith. A woman who throughout her short life –between 18 to 35 years,<sup>2</sup> – witnessed the stages of the Prophet’s mission and was raised in the house of revelation. Indeed, the Prophet once said to her, “Are you not pleased to be the best of all ladies of the worlds?”<sup>3</sup> and “It is to be known that you are the chief of all women in paradise.”<sup>4</sup> He has also said, “My daughter, Fatimah, is the master of all ladies of the worlds.”<sup>5</sup>

Lady Fatimah was a wise, faithful, and patient. She was also a freedom fighter who was under the grace of God and His messenger. The Prophet said, “Surely God is angered when Lady Fatimah is angered and is satisfied when she is satisfied.”<sup>6</sup>

Due to the fact that recording and narrating hadiths were banned by the Caliphs up to the time of ‘Umar ibn ‘Abdulaziz, we are left with incomplete reports of Lady Fatimah’s conduct with her father, husband, and children. Her morality, honour, and virtues have not been completely reported. For instance, in several volumes in *Bihar al-Anwar*,<sup>7</sup> the chapter relating to Lady Fatimah titled *Biographies and Good Character and Virtues and Circumstances*<sup>8</sup> contains no report on the Lady’s conduct with

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<sup>2</sup> Majlisi, volume 43, p. 213 and 214; Gharavi Naeeni, 12

<sup>3</sup> Bukhari, vol. 4, p. 247-248; Kutub al-Managhib, Usul al-Ghabah, vol. 7, p. 218

<sup>4</sup> Ibn Athir Juzi, vol. 7, p. 219

<sup>5</sup> Majlisi, vol. 43, p. 22

<sup>6</sup> Ibn Athir, vol. 7, p. 219; Majlisi, vol. 43, p. 22; Tabrani, 22, narration 402

<sup>7</sup> A compilation of the majority of narrations amongst all Shi’a collections

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 19-80

her children and her method of upbringing.<sup>9</sup> And only a few narrations are found on her housework.

Thus, there is little found in regards to her housework and child-rearing; Islamic traditions and historical reports mostly consist of the Prophet's sayings, and that which have been reported about the family of the Prophet thus far does not allow us to fully describe how they lived and what their characteristics were, much less about Lady Fatimah and her role in the house and in society. From the brief texts about Lady Fatimah's virtues and character, some conclusions can be made about her character and actions.

### **Childcare and Education**

A child is a complete mirror of his or her parents, especially of the mother. The most accessible role model for any child or individual is the closest person to him, the person with whom the child spends his days and nights with. The father and mother, whom with their children form the smallest family unit in society, have the strongest influence on one another, especially on the children who are just beginning to be shaped. The father and mother's sentiment, conduct, and behavior are influential in their temperament.

Lady Fatimah's conduct was the best example for her children. She grew and developed in the house of the Prophet of Islam, the best narrator and interpreter of God's words. The best teacher of mankind raised and familiarized her with divine education. She then became the most

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<sup>9</sup> Refer to Majlis, 43, p. 81-91

prominent woman of her time under the shade of this training and guidance.

Lady Fatimah, in her wisdom, considered upbringing to be constructive and liberating for people; she knew that the secret to an individual and society's rise and decline lies in proper upbringing.

With the spiritual and practical changes in her social circle due to her father's leadership, she knew that a society advances when it is trained properly and a group is considered corrupt when its upbringing is corrupt. Moreover, being a mother is the foundation for a child's prosperity and misfortune, for she was the child of a woman who was the first to believe in the Holy Prophet.

The Lady foresaw the idea that negligence in upbringing would greatly damage an individual and society, especially during early childhood where a seed, like a plant shoot, is flexible; any action, word, or movement will have an effect on it. Thus, she devoted her life to nurturing her children, and continuously accepted her father's valuable words with all her heart: "Respect your children (value them) and train them well."<sup>10</sup> He also said, "Train your kids, for you are responsible."<sup>11</sup>

Hence, during the beginning of her marriage, the Prophet divided work between her and her husband, and said Lady Fatimah was to do the housework; she undertook it as her main responsibility, because she considered the importance of her marriage and caring for her children.

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<sup>10</sup> أكرموا اولادكم و أحسنوا آدابهم

<sup>11</sup> أَدَّبُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ فَاتَكُم مَسْئُولُونَ Kulayni, 6, reference 50

Lady Fatimah learned from her father's words of wisdom. Prophet Muhammad said:

الاكلّم راع و كلكم مسؤل عن رعيتّه... فالمرأة راعية على اهل  
بيت بعلها و ولده و هي مسئولة عنهم<sup>12</sup>

Beware that you must all be obedient and you are all responsible towards those under your protection...and the woman is the protector of the family, her husband, and children and is responsible towards them.

Lady Fatimah nurtured and educated her children side by side with her husband, Imam Ali, who was also educated by the Prophet. Imam Ali said, "A bad child will ruin the reputation and dignity of the family and will bring disgrace and dishonor to his ancestors."<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, he said, "A bad child will contaminate those in the past and ruin those in the future."<sup>14</sup>

Lady Fatimah focused on developing her children's spirit and personality. In her very short life, God blessed her with four children. Indeed, child-rearing is no easy task. It is not limited to feeding, cleaning, and doing laundry. The basis of caring for a child is the nurturing of the child, raising and training an individual highly emphasized in Islam and considers the personality of the child partly dependent upon the teachings, upbringing, and care of the parents.

<sup>12</sup> *Majmu'ah Waram*, vol. 1, p. 6

<sup>13</sup> ولد السوء يهدم القرف و يشين السلف

<sup>14</sup> Amudi, p. 853. Arabic text is as follows:

ولد السوء يعز السلف و يفسد الخلف

A parents' words, attitude, and actions largely affect a child's sensitive and gentle soul which is why parents are to take into consideration their child's emotional and spiritual development for their future success. Prophet Muhammad said, "A fortunate person is fortunate in the mother's belly, and an unfortunate person is unfortunate in the mother's belly."<sup>15</sup> This hadith portrays the effects of the mother's moods, etiquettes, actions, and diet during pregnancy. When the smoking of a mother has a negative effect on the fetus, how can her attitude, mood, and worship not affect it? The mother's spiritual mood and her peacefulness also affects the fetus. This is a matter that medical science has touched upon today.

Since Lady Fatimah was raised by the Prophet and the great Lady of Islam, Khadija, she knew how her milk and her affectionate care would affect a child's sensitive spirit.<sup>16</sup> Lady Fatimah knew that parents are responsible for delivering children who are faithful, brave, and defenders of the truth. Since she had heard the reports of the future from the Prophet, she knew she was to raise a child like Hasan, who in a critical situation, in order to protect the interests of Islam and to prevent the destruction of the Prophet and Imam Ali's efforts, would remain patient and silent to reveal Muawiyah's plots, and to train Husayn who would defend Islam and fight against oppression and corruption, save Muslims from deviation and misguidance, and sacrifice his own life and the lives of his loved ones. She knew she was to nurture daughters like Zaynab and Umm Kulthum, who with patience, steadfastness, and deliverance of

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<sup>15</sup> See e.g. *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 5, pp. 9 & 157. Arabic text is as follows:

السعيد سعيد في بطن امه و الشقى شقى في بطن امه

<sup>16</sup> Refer to Majlisi, 43/282

speech, would expose the oppressive system and awaken the people from negligence.

Lady Fatimah learned from her great father who used to let Hasan and Husayn ride on his back even during his prayer<sup>17</sup> that you must love children. Strengthening a philanthropic soul, that is, establishing love in a child's heart to help him or her develop noble qualities arises from the gentle touches, kindness, true love, and respect parents give. Lady Fatimah not only was involved in her children's playtime, but she was also fully engaged in her children's education, and this included teaching them to worship One God and courageously protect the truth. She once told Hasan:

Hasan, my dear, be like your father and free the truth by removing the rope from truth's throat and worship God who has graced us all – who is beneficent - and do not follow God's vengeful enemy.<sup>18</sup>

Lady Fatimah is aware that before anyone or anything, a child needs his mother to meet his needs. Hence, for this reason, the day when Bilal, the *mua'dhin*<sup>19</sup> of the Prophet, went to see Lady Fatimah to repay his debt, and saw her making flour while Hasan was crying beside the mill. Bilal said, "What can I do for you? Should I take the child or grind the flour?"

<sup>17</sup> *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 43, p. 283. Arabic text is as follows:

كَانَ النَّبِيُّ ص يُصَلِّي فَإِذَا سَجَدَ وَتَبَّ الْحَسَنُ وَالْحُسَيْنُ عَلَى ظَهْرِهِ فَإِذَا أَرَادُوا أَنْ يَمْتَنِعُوا أَشَارَ إِلَيْهِمْ أَنْ  
دَعَوْهُمَا فَلَمَّا قَضَى الصَّلَاةَ وَضَعَهُمَا فِي حَجْرِهِ وَقَالَ مَنْ أَحَبَّنِي فَلْيُحِبِّ هَذَيْنِ وَ فِي رِوَايَةِ الْجَلْبَةِ ذَرَوْهَا  
بِأَيِّ وَ أُمِّي مَنْ أَحَبَّنِي فَلْيُحِبِّ هَذَيْنِ

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* p. 286. Arabic text is as follows:

اشبهه اباك يا حسن و اقلع عن الحق الردن و اعبد الها ذا منن و لا توال ذا الاحن

<sup>19</sup> One who calls to prayer

Lady Fatimah replied, “I will take the child.” Bilal took the mill, and in doing so, arrived late at the mosque. When the Prophet came to know of Bilal’s assistance, he said, “You showed mercy to her, may God show mercy to you.”<sup>20</sup>

### *Nutrition for the Child*

Knowing too well that the mother’s milk is the only necessary and highly beneficial source of nutrition for an infant, and since she was not able to fully feed her child, she gave Hasan to Umm Ayman<sup>21</sup> and Husayn to Umm al-Fadl<sup>22</sup> for their feeding. These two women excelled in faith, God-consciousness, righteousness, and virtuousness, both of whom the Prophet praised and labeled them as those of the people of heaven.<sup>23</sup>

The use of permissible (*halaal*) and pure foods has an immense effect on an individual’s body and soul. Lady Fatimah and her husband, Ali bin Abi Talib, never ate unlawful food. Ali fed his children through his hard labor in farming along with other efforts.

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<sup>20</sup> Majlisi, 43/76

<sup>21</sup> Umm Ayman, the freed slave and nurturer of the Messenger of God who accompanied the Prophet in wars and the Holy Prophet named her as one of the people of paradise. She was at the service of the Prophet of God and Lady Zahra. Ibn Sa’d, 8/224-226; Majlisi, 43/204. Gharavi Naeeni, 47

<sup>22</sup> The sister of Maymunah, wife of the Holy Prophet, Asma bint Umayy and Salma, wife of Hamza and wife of Abd al-Muttalib and the first woman to accept Islam in Mecca after Lady Khadijah. The Prophet would visit her and praise her. Ibn Athir wrote Husayn as Hasan and wrote this content in regards to Imam Hasan. Ibn Sa’d, vol. 8, p. 278; Saduq, vol. 2, p. 363; Ibn Athir, vol. 2, p. 14; Gharavi Naeeni, p. 90

<sup>23</sup> Refer to: al-Tabaqat al-Kubra: 8/224-226 and 278

### *Talking with Children*

Speaking kindly and politely plays an affective role in the personality and spiritual strength of a child. It is an Islamic etiquette to warmly greet (*salaam*) others and fully respond to it. The parents' polite manners and observing respect with one another provides the children with an excellent model to follow. Hadith al-Kisa portrays a) the method Hasan and Husayn spoke with their mother, b) Lady Fatimah's response, c) the manner in which her holiness spoke with her husband, and d) respecting elders and seeking their permission:

...و اذا بولدى الحسن قد اقبل و قال السلام عليك يا امّاه  
 فقلت و عليك السلام يا قرّة عيني و ثمرة فؤادى...فاقبل الحسن  
 نحو الكساء و قال السلام عليك يا جدّاه يا رسول الله اتاذن لى  
 ان ادخل معك تحت الكساء فقال و عليك السلام يا ولدى و  
 يا صاحب حوضى قد اذنت لك...فاقبل عند ذلك ابو الحسن  
 على بن ابيطالب و قال السلام عليك يا بنت رسول الله فقلت  
 و عليك السلام يا ابا الحسن و يا امير المؤمنين...

...My son Hasan came in and said, "Peace be upon you, mother." I replied, "And upon you peace, O light of my eyes, and delight of my heart."...Hasan went near the cloak and said, "Peace be upon you, O grandfather, O messenger of God. May I enter the cloak with you?" He replied, "And upon you peace, my son and master of my fountain (*Kawthar*), you are given permission to enter."...After a while, Abul Hasan, Ali bin Abi Talib came in and said, "Peace be upon you, O daughter of the

Prophet of God.” I replied “And upon you peace, O father of Hasan, and the commander of the faithful...”<sup>24</sup>

The etiquette and respect visible in Lady Fatimah’s speech led to more love and affection in the family. The respectful way in which Hasan and Husayn asked for permission from their grandfather to enter was learned from the speech and actions of their parents. Even when speaking to each other, they observed etiquette and respect, where Imam Baqir says, “Imam Husayn out of respect would not speak when in the presence of Imam Hasan.”<sup>25</sup>

### ***Honesty and Integrity***

Sincerity and truthfulness encompass all virtues of knowledge and action. It is not possible to have honesty and not have modesty, courage, wisdom, and justice – the four bases of ethics – because an individual is an embodiment of his belief, faith, and actions; and when he decides to say nothing but the truth, he is required to make these three factors in correspondence with one another.

Therefore, if he acknowledges the truth, he says nothing but the truth, and will only say what he believes in and will only do that which corresponds with his words. This is when pure faith, exceeding morals, and good deeds will be provided for him. A child learns these traits from his teacher, specifically his parents, and eventually makes a habit of it; thus, having honesty and integrity is not only the main source of peace and comfort, it is one of the most important traits for a parent or teacher. Lady Fatimah

<sup>24</sup> Qummi, p. 1129

<sup>25</sup> *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 43, p. 319. Arabic text is as follows:

ما تكلم الحسين بين يدي الحسن اعظاما له

was the best of people in her honesty and integrity. Ayesha says about her, "I have never seen a person more honest than Lady Fatimah, unless if it were her children."<sup>26</sup> Such a mother raised such children.

### ***Respecting Others' Rights and Being Organized***

Part of good upbringing is teaching children to respect other people's rights; as a result, this should train them to adhere to respecting others and prevent them from bullying or oppressing others.

This was strongly practiced in Lady Fatimah's household; her husband said, "One day the Holy Prophet was at our house when Hasan wanted water. The Messenger of God milked some milk and gave it to Hasan. Husayn got up to take the bowl of milk from Hasan, but the Prophet prevented him. Lady Fatimah said, 'Oh Messenger of God, it seems you like Hasan more.' The Prophet said, "I don't like him better; he asked for water first."<sup>27</sup>

Salman al-Farsi says, "Lady Fatimah was busy grinding the grains to flour and Husayn was crying from hunger. I said, 'Oh daughter of the Messenger of God, why don't you get help from Fiddah<sup>28</sup>?' She replied, 'The Prophet has said that one day the work is for Fiddah and one day for me. And her turn was yesterday.'<sup>29</sup>

### ***Happiness and Care***

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. vol. 43, pp. 25 and 68

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. vol. 43, p. 283. Arabic text is as follows:

ما هو بأحبها الي و لکنه استسقى اول

<sup>28</sup> Lady Fatimah's helper

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. p. 28

Naturally, Lady Fatimah wanted her children to be happy. Since she would think of her children's future and the days they will spend motherless after her death, during her last moments in this world she recommended Imam Ali to marry her niece, Umamah<sup>30</sup> and for the children to be well cared for, she asked Imam Ali to spend one night with the children and one night with his wife.

### ***Simple Living, Patience, and Contentment***

Lady Fatimah, the daughter of the Holy Prophet, the daughter of the leader of Muslims, and the ruler of the land could have anything she wanted. Instead, she chose to live simply, carefully sustaining and not wasting God's blessings; and this was a model lifestyle for her children. Lady Fatimah's generosity was learned from her father: she was still young when she gave a needy person her wedding dress on the night of her wedding, when every bride dreams of wearing a wedding dress. Imam Hasan said about the Prophet's generosity: "He was very generous and forgiving and would give his wealth for the sake of God over and over again"<sup>31</sup> and "He gave his wealth for the sake of God so many times, that at the time of his death he was in debt."<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid. p. 217

<sup>31</sup> 'Awalim al-Ulum, vol. 16, Chapter *Asceticism and Collection of Good Manners*

<sup>32</sup> Reminder: At the time of her death, Lady Fatimah made a will for her property, benefits, and income to be for Amir al-Mo'minin and after him for Hasan and after him for Husayn. (Bihar al-Anwar: 43/235). The report that they were in debt during their time of martyrdom, shows their extent of generosity that they were so generous, at the time of their martyrdom they were in debt. Majlisi, vol. 43, p. 321

Sunni scholar Ibn Athir writes the following about Imam Hasan: “Hasan was gentle and benevolent. He was also a God-conscious ascetic. He let go of the world for the love of that which is with God.”<sup>33</sup>

About Imam Husayn the following has been said:

-He would give lots of charity (*sadaqah*).<sup>34</sup>

-He would spend for the sake of God in such a way that at the time of his death he was in debt.<sup>35</sup>

-He would honor guests and grant the requester and would handle the state of the poor.<sup>36</sup>

Lady Zaynab was also said to be the best of women in being charitable and generous.<sup>37</sup>

If Lady Fatimah had not given for the sake of God, such as offering her only loaf of bread to the poor after fasting for three days, Hasanayn and Fiddah would not have learned to do the same. It was the mother’s actions that taught Hasan and Husayn to be generous, merciful, and honorable.

If Lady Fatimah did not endure difficulties, struggles, and distress, like carrying the jug of water, grinding grains into flour to bake bread, and the household chores and child-caring, how would Lady Zaynab face the exhausting hardship of gathering the orphans in Karbala, and would she have been able endure caring for the sick in the desert with no helper?

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<sup>33</sup> Ibn Athir, vol. 2, p. 18

<sup>34</sup> Ibn Athir: vol. 2, p. 27

<sup>35</sup> Majlisi: vol. 43, p. 321

<sup>36</sup> Qummi, *Nafs al-Mahmum*: p. 21

<sup>37</sup> Gharavi Naeeni, p. 194

When they had no food in the house, Lady Fatimah did not ask for anything from her husband. Imam Ali asked, "Why didn't you say anything?" Lady Fatimah replied, "The Prophet forbade me to ask you for anything. He told me: Do not ask your cousin for anything. If he brings [home] something [appreciate it] and if he does not [have anything to] bring do not ask him."<sup>38</sup> This sort of patience and contentment from Lady Fatimah was a lesson in the life and patience of her daughters' family life. She lived such a life that her daughter Zaynab managed to turn away from her husband's wealthy living and go through difficulties of traveling into the deserts.<sup>39</sup>

Ali said, "Other than the piece of sheepskin that Lady Fatimah and I would sleep on at night and the camel would eat grass on, we had nothing else."<sup>40</sup>

### *Worship and Intimacy with the Qur'an*

Lady Fatimah was raised by the great man who familiarized her with Islamic knowledge, morals, and Qur'anic recitation and teachings from early childhood. As a result, she continuously found intimacy with God's words. Such a mother taught this intimacy and understanding to her children, and this familiarity developed within those great figures as well. From childhood they witnessed their mother's sincere affection with the Holy Book. She taught them until she passed on this intimacy to her children which soon became apparent in their personality. Imam Husayn

<sup>38</sup> *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 43, p. 31. Arabic text is as follows:

كان رسول الله (ص) نهاني أن أسألك شيئاً فقال: لا تسألين ابن عمك شيئاً إن جارك بشئ و الأ فلا تسأليه

<sup>39</sup> Gharavi Naeeni, p. 194

<sup>40</sup> *Manaqib Aal Abi Talib*, vol. 2, p. 96, *Fasl fi al-Musabiqah bil-Zuhd wa al-Qina'ah*

spent the entire night of Ashurah reciting the Qur'an, praying, supplicating, and asking for forgiveness.<sup>41</sup>

Praying for and thinking about others was another lesson Lady Fatima passed on to her children. Imam Hasan said, "There was no one more devout than Lady Fatimah in the world; she would stand for so long until her feet would swell."<sup>42</sup> He also said, "My mother, Lady Fatimah, would worship a great deal in her place of worship and I would hear her continuously pray for all the believing men and women, everyone other than herself."<sup>43</sup> Imam Hasan said, "I saw my mother, Lady Fatimah, who was standing at the altar the night of Friday bowing and prostrating in prayer until dawn."<sup>44</sup>

It was the result of Lady Fatimah's worshipping that Imam Ali ibn Husayn said about his father, "Imam Husayn would pray a thousand rak'ahs throughout the day and night."<sup>45</sup> Imam Husayn's plenteous fasts and prayers, which have been cited by Ibn Athir,<sup>46</sup> were cultured through his parents. Their mother's worship and her three-day consecutive fast was a matter well ingrained in Hasanain's mind and they mirrored that quality throughout their lives.

One day, Imam Ali, due to Fatima's exhaustion and pain from household work, encouraged her to go to the Prophet to request a maid. Instead of

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<sup>41</sup> Mufid, 215 and 216

<sup>42</sup> ما كان في الدنيا أعبد من فاطمة، كانت تقوم حتى تتورم قدمها

<sup>43</sup> *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 43, p. 76 and 82; Mahallati, vol. 1, p. 179

<sup>44</sup> *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 2, p. 96. Arabic text is as follows:

رأيت امي فاطمه قامت في محرابها ليلة جمعة فلم تزل راکعة و ساجدة حتى انفجر عمود الصبح

<sup>45</sup> Qummi, *Nafs al-Mahmum*: p. 212; Ibn Abd Rubah: vol. 3, p. 169

<sup>46</sup> Ibn Athir: vol. 2, p. 27

giving a maid, the Prophet taught her the supplication of prayer beads (*dhikr tasbih*) and they were pleased. Ali said, “We went to request something worldly, and God gave us the reward of the hereafter.”<sup>47</sup>

The idea of praying to reduce the weight of heavy loads of work and troublesome matters helped Lady Zaynab on the day of Ashura, when Imam Sajjad<sup>48</sup> witnessed her observing the night prayers (*salat ul-layl*) and supplicating and praying for God’s assistance to tolerate the suffering, disasters, and troubles to come. In humility, reverence, and worship, Zaynab was her parents’ successor. She would spend most of the night in prayer and was constantly reciting Qur’an.<sup>49</sup>

### *The Degree of Modesty and Islamic Clothing*

It has been narrated from Imam Ali who said, “One day we were in the presence of the Prophet when he asked, “What is best action for a woman?” We were all unable to answer until we parted. I went to Lady Fatimah, narrated the Prophet’s saying, and said none of us knew the answer. Lady Fatimah then responded, “The best thing for a woman is for her to not see a man (stranger/unlawful man) and for a man (stranger/unlawful) to not see a woman.’ I returned to the Prophet and said, “Oh Messenger of God, you asked us what is best for a woman...” and I told him the answer. The Prophet then asked, ‘Who told you this?’ I said, ‘Lady Fatimah.’ The Prophet was pleased and said, “Fatimah is part of me.”<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Majlisi, vol. 43, p. 85

<sup>48</sup> Mahallati, vol. 3, p. 62 - Imam Sajjad said about her, “I saw my aunt praying while sitting and busy in worship that night.”

<sup>49</sup> Mahallati, vol. 3, p. 62

<sup>50</sup> Arbali: vol. 2, p. 94

Lady Fatimah taught this principle to her children, especially her daughters and to Muslim women and girls. It has been reported regarding Umm Kulthum, “During the time Lady Fatimah was saying farewell to this world, Umm Kulthum, who was only five years old, put a burqa on her face and a cloak which dragged on the floor on her head and said with anguish, “Oh father, Oh Prophet of God! Truly this moment is like the time we lost you. There will no longer be any meeting (between us and our mother until the hereafter).”<sup>51</sup>

Chastity, purity, virtuous morality, and the status of Lady Fatimah was so eminent that when friends and foe wanted to introduce Imam Hasan or Imam Husayn to one another, they would say, “This is the son of Fatimah.”<sup>52</sup>

### ***Protecting rightful leadership and defending the truth***

It was Lady Fatimah’s pleading to, defending the truth and the rightful leadership that taught her daughter Zaynab how to defend the family of the Prophet in the court of Yazid.<sup>53</sup> Protecting the leadership (*wilayah*), which led to the martyrdom of Lady Fatimah, was an example for Zaynab to overlook the wealth and the comfort of her husband’s home, and to support Imam Husayn, she executed her duty; she set out into the desert, along with her sons, beside her leader and master, to perform her mission.

It was Lady Fatimah’s speeches in the mosque of Medina and in her encounters with the elders of that city as well as the wives of the

<sup>51</sup> *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 43, p. 191. Arabic text is as follows:

يا ابتاه يا رسول الله الآن حقاً فقد ناك فقدا لا لقاء بعده ابدا

<sup>52</sup> Ibn Shahr Ashub, vol. 3, p. 186; Majlisi, vol. 43, p. 345

<sup>53</sup> Ibn Tafur, p. 20; Amin, vol. 7; Majlisi, vol. 45

companions that created a strong Zaynab who with her firm words and sermons shook the market and court of Kufa,<sup>54</sup> brought a tremor and fear to the court of Damascus,<sup>55</sup> and awoke the Muslim people from negligence.

Lady Fatimah's courage in front of a large gathering that included the mosque's worshippers, the caliph and his followers, and the well-known companions of the Prophet was exhibited again and again. This occurred when Imam Hasan spoke to Mu'awiya in the mosque, when Imam Husayn renounced allegiance to Yazid's governor in Medina, and when Lady Zaynab talked in the palaces of Ibn Ziyad and Yazid.<sup>56</sup>

Every day Lady Fatimah would take Hasan and Husayn with her to *Bayt al-Ahzan* (the House of Sorrow) to grieve over her great father. Her deep sorrow and tears were due to separation from him and the discontinuity of revelation and the right of leadership that was denied. She shared this grief with her two children, and took them to observe the actions of the companions after the passing of the Prophet and learn how selfishness and carelessness can quickly cause serious problems in the society and in the Ummah.

In the mosque of the Prophet while delivering a sermon to the companions of the Prophet, Lady Fatimah said:

فاتقوا الله حق تقاته و أطيعوه فيما أمركم به...

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<sup>54</sup> Majmu'ah al-Khatib al-Dawiyah fi Wajh Yazid bin Muawiyah, p. 12

<sup>55</sup> ibid, p. 20

<sup>56</sup> Usd al-Ghaba: 2/19; A'yan al-Shi'ah: vol. 7; Bihar al-Anwar: vol. 45; Balaghah al-Nisa: p. 20; Maqtal al-Husayn: 2/40

Exercise God-consciousness (*taqwa*), as He deserves and obey Him in what He has commanded you to do, (i.e. accepting the leadership and guardianship of our family and obeying us).

In another section of this sermon, Lady Fatimah said, “He made obeying us [the Ahlul Bayt] the cause of order for nations and our leadership a safe haven from segregation and separation.”<sup>57</sup>

She had protected the Imam of her time and through her struggle she showed her children and all people that the most valuable and precious being in every era is the Imam of the time. It was with this teaching that Lady Zaynab, followed Imam Husayn and cared for him until the end. She also cared for and protected the successor to Imam Husayn – Imam Sajjad – who was ill in Karbala, and prevented an aggression towards him in the court of Ibn Ziyad and Yazid.

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<sup>57</sup> طاعتنا نظاما للملة و امامتنا امانا من الفرقة Arbali, vol. 2, p. 110

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