

Fatima (A.S.): The Perfect Ideal for Women of All Times

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Hazrat Fatima-Zahra (A.S.) was born on 20th Jamadi al-Thani[1], five years after the first revelation to the Noble Prophet Muhammad (A.S.). She died at the age of eighteen. Her mother Hazrat Khadija (A.S.) was the first and most respected wife of the Prophet (A.S.) who did not marry any other woman during her lifetime.

Hazrat Fatima (A.S.) was brought up under the fostering care of her father, the greatest teacher and benefactor of mankind. Unlike other children she possessed a sober temperament. Her weak constitution and frail health kept her away from the children's get-together and games. Her father's teachings, guidance and inspiration, developed her into an extremely cultured, amiable, sympathetic and enlightened lady.

Fatima (A.S.) greatly resembled her father in countenance and saintly habits. She was his most beloved daughter and had been immensely devoted to him after her mother's death, and in a way, to a great extent, made up for the loss of her mother. The Prophet (A.S.), on several occasions, gave expression to his extreme fraternal love for Fatima (A.S.). Once he said: "O Fatima! Allah will not like a person who displeases you and will be pleased with a person who wins your favor." On another occasion, the Prophet (A.S.) is reported to have said: "Fatima (A.S.) is my child. One who distresses her, distresses me and one who comforts her comforts me."

Aishah, who was one of the wives of the Prophet (A.S.), once said: "I have never come across a greater personality than that of Fatima (A.S.), except that of her father, the Prophet of Islam (A.S.)." Further, she added: "Fatima (A.S.) was the one whom the Prophet loved the most. She was dearest to him."

Fatima (A.S.) was hardly 10 years old at the time of her marriage with Imam Ali[2] (A.S.). All that she got in her dowry from her illustrious father was a leather water-carrier, an earthen pitcher, a mat and a corn grinding-stone. Addressing his daughter, the Prophet (A.S.) said: "My daughter, I have married you to a person who has stronger faith and is more learned than others and one who is distinguished for his morality and virtues."

Fatima (A.S.) married-life was smooth and simple. Indefatigable and persevering as he was, Ali (A.S.) labored hard all day long to earn his livelihood while his industrious, frugal and devoted wife labored at home, performing her household duties, which included grinding of corn and carrying water from the well. This ideal couple was known for their piety and

generosity. They never turned away a beggar from their door without giving him whatever they could. At times, they gave away their entire food to a beggar and they themselves remained hungry. The Prophet's beloved daughter was blessed with five children – three sons, Hassan, Hussain, Mohsen and two daughters, Zainab (A.S.) and Umm Kulsoom (A.S.). Hassan (A.S.) was born in the 3rd and Hussain (A.S.) in the 4th year of Hejira[3]. Both Hassan (A.S.) and Hussain (A.S.) were favorites of the Prophet (A.S.) who often carried them on his shoulders. They even sat on his back during his prostration in prayer. These two sons of Fatima and her daughter Zainab later played a significant and memorable role in the history of Islam.

The Prophet (A.S.) fell seriously ill soon after his return from the farewell pilgrimage. Fatima (A.S.) stayed at his bedside. He whispered something, which made her smile. After his death in 11 A.H., she related the incident to Aishah, saying that when her father told her that he was going to die, it made her weep, but when he told her that she would be the first person to join him in the next world, it made her happy. She could not survive after the Prophet (A.S.) for long. She passed away during the same year, 95 days after her father's death. At the time of her death, she was only 18 years old.

As per her will, Fatima (A.S.) was laid to rest by her aggrieved husband and small children in the dead of night, because the lady was displeased with those who had offended her and did not want any of them to be present at her funeral.

Even the spot where she was buried was kept secret by her family, and today no one knows for sure where actually the only surviving child of the Almighty's greatest Prophet rests in peace. Some say that she was laid to rest in the Baqi' Cemetery, while others say, she was buried besides her father, and still others claim that the blessed spot was her own home.

Speaking of her home, the household, which Allah has exalted, it is said that the Umayyah tyrants forcibly took it from her grandson, pulled it down and added it to the Prophet's Mosque. But, did they succeed in obliterating its sanctity or the memory of Fatima (A.S.)? No, they could not. Allah's promise is true no matter what the devious may desire. Without doubt, the Prophet had Fatima (A.S.) in mind when he had expressed those famous words: "Between my grave and my pulpit is a flower-bed of the Garden of Paradise."

Almighty Allah bestowed Hazrat Fatima-Zahra (A.S.) with a vast greatness and a high level of majesty, which no other woman can ever claim to have reached. She is the greatest lady in humanity, who as mankind advances in understanding and realization of facts, the greatness of her noble personality will become more apparent and the deep meanings and characteristics of her noble actions will be more appreciated. She is the perfect example of how a daughter, a wife and a mother should act. She also shows us the Muslim women's role in the social field

within the limits of religion and virtue. Her noble life confirms that Islam does not deprive
.women of acquiring scientific, cultural and literary knowledge