



BED TIME STORIES

Sayyida Fatimah Zahra

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SAYYIDA FATIMAH ZAHRA (S.A.)

Sayyida Fatimah Zahra (s.a.) was born on 20th Jamadi ul Akhir 615 *hijra* in Makka, five years after the declaration of the Prophethood of the last Messenger of Allah, Muhammad al-Mustafa (s.a.w.w.). She was the only daughter of the Holy Prophet.

Her mother, Khadija al-Kubra, was a noble and pious lady.

She is one of the four purified chosen women of all the times. She was also one of the richest traders among the Quraysh of Arabia, and willingly spent her money to spread Islam. When Khadija al-Kubra was pregnant with Fatimah, she (Fatimah) used to speak to her from her womb but Khadija did not disclose it to the Holy Prophet. One day Holy Prophet entered the house and found Khadija speaking to some one while no one was in the room. He inquired as to whom she was speaking. "With the baby which I carry in my womb,"

She replied. The Holy Prophet told her to be thankful to Allah because their daughter would be the mother of his eleven generations of successors and be the wife of his first *wasi*, Ali (a.s.). This was an honour for Khadija who had helped the Holy Prophet and Islam with her money.

When Khadija's pregnancy had become apparent, the infidels asked the Holy Prophet to split the moon to prove that he was the true Messenger of Allah. After this the Quraysh completely boycotted the Holy Prophet and when her time of delivery drew near, Quraysh women refused to come to her help because she was the wife of Muhammad. But Khadija did not lack help. Four women excelling in beauty and purity appeared at her door. They were Safura, daughter of Prophet Shuyab; Kulsum sister of Prophet Musa; Asiya, wife of Firawn; and Maryam, mother of prophet Isa. It was they who assisted Khadija during her labour. When the baby Sayyida Fatimah was born she immediately prostrated and raised her finger to

say that Allah is One. Allah sent an angel to tell Khadija to name the baby “Fatimah”.

Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) had many titles. So, she was also known as *Siddiqa* (the true), *Mubarakkah* (the blessed), *Tahira* (the virtuous), *Batul* (the chaste), *Muhaddatah* (a person other than a prophet to whom the angels speak), and *Zahra* (the splendid and beautiful).

Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) was the only daughter of the Holy Prophet. She was also his only surviving child. In her appearance, manner and speech she was a true reflection of her father. She grew up in a house which was a model for the followers of Islam. The Holy Prophet loved and respected his daughter and often said: “Whoso annoys her has annoyed me, whoso torments her has tormented me, whoso loves her has loved me.”

When she would enter a room, the Holy Prophet would always stand up to welcome her, thus showing his respect for her. People asked

the Holy Prophet why he stood to greet her. He said: “She is the leader of women and I am the leader of men.” He would often praise her and comment on her status in Islam.

When Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) was still a child she realised that people of Makka had long been jealous of the family of Bani Hashim. They completely boycotted them. When their enmity actually threatened their lives, Abu Talib took all his family to a cave known as “Shib Abu Talib,” well away from Makka. She was then just two years old.

They lived in hiding for 3 years. They lived there with very little food and water. After some days they had to eat leaves and grass. They suffered such hardships in the cave for three years but they all had struggled for the truth - There is no god save Allah. When the Makkans were defeated, the Holy Prophet returned honourably to the city with his kind and protective guardian - Abu Talib. It was in the Shib Abu Talib that the sons of Abu Talib,

Ali, Jafar and Aqil, and daughter of the Holy Prophet prepared themselves to meet the challenges of the future.

At the age of 5 years she found her mother ailing and bed-ridden. At this tender age she nursed her mother as well as run the house. At last her mother died.

In the same year the Holy Prophet's beloved uncle, Abu Talib, died. He was so grieved that he declared it *amal huzn* (the year of grief and sorrow). It was a period of great hardship.

The Holy Prophet himself took care of Sayyida Fatimah's upbringing and education. He called her Zahra (bright and beautiful). When he was not at home she was kept under the care of Imam Ali's mother Fatimah bint Asad and sister Umm Hani.

Very often the Holy Prophet would be attacked in the street and would come home injured and bleeding. Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) would clean his

wounds and take care of him. He therefore also called her *umm abiha* (mother of her father).

One day Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) saw the infidels put camel's placenta on her father while he was prostrating in the house of Allah, so she cleaned his back and, bitterly crying, cursed the infidels and supplicated to Allah for justice.

It was during this period that Abu Sufiyan, an arch enemy of the tribe of Bani Hashim, became the chief of Makka and plotted to kill the Holy Prophet. Almighty Allah asked the Holy Prophet to leave and migrate to Madina.

Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) was left behind with Fatimah bint Asad and other ladies of the house. As a ruse Imam Ali (a.s.) slept on the Prophet's bed covering himself with his quilt, this was a very crucial time for the family of the Holy Prophet.

Later, Imam Ali took Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) and other ladies of Bani Hashim in a caravan to

Quba. At Zajnan the small group was attacked by the infidels of Makka but they soon fled.

There was peace and harmony in Madina and the Holy Prophet preached the religion of Allah. Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) spent her time taking care of her father, helping others, and teaching Islam to the women. She would lay stress on *hijab* (veiling), as a very necessary style of living for Muslim women. Once a blind man came into the house while the Holy Prophet was sitting with her. She at once stood up and went into another room. When her father wanted to know the reason for her departure, she said: "No doubt he is blind but he can smell my fragrance." At this the Holy Prophet said: "I bear witness that you are a part of me."

One night Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) heard a young girl crying as her mother had died and she needed some help. Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) went to her house with a few ladies and performed the duties which she required for the burial.

One day the Holy Prophet saw that his dearest daughter was reciting the name of Allah after her prayers. He kissed her and told that Allah had sent her his blessings and had revealed a special method of reciting the *tasbih* in His praise which would be known by her name till the day of judgement. He recommended her to recite the following recitation after every obligatory *salat* and before going to bed.

Allahu Akbar [Allah is Great] 34 times

Alhamdulillah [Praise be to Allah] 33 times

Subhanallah [Glory be to Allah] 33 times

La illaha illallah [There is no god save Allah] Once

The marriage of Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) was finalized according to the command of Allah. There were many proposals for the hand of Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) but there was a proposal from Imam Ali (a.s.) also.

The Holy Prophet told his followers that Allah would give him a sign in the form of a shooting star that would stop over the house of

the person whose hand he should accept for his daughter.

At the nightfall the whole city watched and every suitor hoped that the star would stay at his house. They had decorated their homes with lights. Then a bright star slowly descended towards the city of Madina. Not drawn to the illuminations in the city, it sought a light (*nur*) which in return would add to its glory. There in near darkness was a house that attracted the star. Its owner was on his prayer mat engrossed in the worship of his divine creator. The star circled three times round the house of Imam Ali.

During this time Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) was on her prayer-mat glorifying Allah and reciting *tasbih Zahra - Allahu Akbar, Alhamdulillah, Subhanallah, La illaha illallah.*

The Holy Prophet called Imam Ali and told him that Allah had chosen him to be the husband of Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.). At once Ali (a.s.)

prostrated in thankfulness. Then he asked the Holy Prophet to take Sayyida Fatimah's consent and be a witness. The Holy Prophet came back after taking her consent and said: "She agrees. I agree. My Allah agrees. O Allah bless both of them, glorify their children. Give them the keys of Your beneficence, Your treasures of wisdom and Your authority, and make them a source of blessings and peace to my *ummah*."

Next morning there was rejoicing in the heavens and on the earth as the Holy Prophet publicly accepted the proposal of Imam Ali (a.s.).

He then asked Imam Ali (a.s.): "How will you meet the expenses of this wedding?" Imam Ali (a.s.) said, "I have a horse, a sword and a coat of mail." The Holy Prophet said: "You need the horse for travelling and the sword to fight against the enemies of Islam, so sell the coat of mail." Imam Ali sold the coat of mail for 500 dirhams. He took the money to Holy Prophet and it was accepted as a dowry. The auspicious

marriage was held on the 1st of Zilhaj. The Holy Prophet gave a feast to the people of Madina. Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) moved from the house of Prophethood to the house of Imamat.

Next day a needy woman knocked at her door. Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) could not find anything, so she gave away her bridal dress.

In the year of her marriage Allah changed the direction of *Qibla* towards Holy Kabah instead of Bayt al-Muqaddas. Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) and Imam Ali (a.s.) had four children - Imam Hasan (a.s.), Imam Husayn (a.s.), Sayyida Zaynab (s.a.) and Sayyida Ummi Kulsum (s.a.). The Almighty Allah had chosen 11 Imams in her progeny.

Fizza, a woman belonging to the Habush community, was given as a maid to the Holy Prophet by the king of Egypt. The Holy Prophet named her Fizza (silver) when she came into the fold of Islam. After Sayyida Fatimah's marriage, Fizza came along with

her to Imam Ali's house. Fizza had a very commanding personality and Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) was very fond of her and treated her as a sister. They shared the work load in the house. Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) taught religion to Fizza. Fizza loved Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.) very much and the children also respected her as a mother. Fizza knew what hard life Imam Ali's family lived.

It is said that Fizza, having noticed simple and without luxury life in the house of Imam Ali and Sayyida Fatimah, one day told Imam Ali (a.s.) that she could turn iron into silver. The Imam asked her to look down at the floor. She saw a stream of gold coming out from a crack in the floor. Imam Ali (a.s.) told her: "We thank Allah for whatever He has given us."

One day when Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.) were ill the Holy Prophet asked Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) and Imam Ali (a.s.) to vow to fast for three consecutive days if they get well and pray for their well-being. When they

got well Ali (a.s.) and Fatimah (s.a.) observed fasts. Fizza of her own free will and out of love for the Ahlul Bayt, also observed these fasts. Allah rewarded her by using the word *fizza* (silver) three times in Surah Dahr. She knew the Quran thoroughly and often quoted verses in the course of every day conversation.

Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) would stay up praying the whole night. When she would stand for prayer a light (*nur*) hallowed her face. With total submission of her body and soul she would beseech the Almighty Allah to forgive the *ummah* of her father, and protect her relatives and her family from breaking the laws made by Allah.

After migration to Madina the Holy Prophet and Imam Ali had to fight many wars. In the battle of Badr Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) used to pray for their safe return. In the battle of Uhad Sayyida Fatimah had accompanied the Holy Prophet and Imam Ali (a.s.). In this battle the Holy Prophet had been injured. Imam Ali (a.s.)

and Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) cleaned his wounds and applied medication.

In the event of the blanket (*kisa*) when the five pure (*panjatan*) had gathered under a blanket, Jibrail asked Allah who the *panjatan* were. He introduced them through Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) as her father, her husband and her two sons. Jibrail was sent down with verse 33 of Surah al-Ahzab known as ayah tathir

Verily, verily Allah intends but to keep off from you (every kind of) uncleanness, O you Ahlul Bayt (the people of the house), and purify you (with) a thorough purification.

Such were the virtues of Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.)

REVELATION OF SURAH DAHR

As related earlier, one day when Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) found both her sons ill, her father advised her and Imam Ali (a.s.) to make a promise to Allah that they would observe fasts for three consecutive days if their sons got well. Soon the boys returned to normal

health. Imam Ali (a.s.), Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.), Hasan (a.s.) and Husayn (a.s.) and Fizza fasted three successive days. Each day a different person came at the time of breaking the fast and knocked at their door. The man who came on the first day said: “O Ahlul Bayt of the Messenger of Allah, I am a poor man. I am hungry. Give me something to eat.”

All that was there to eat was given away to him.

The man who came on the second day said: “O Ahlul Bayt of the Messenger of Allah, my parents are dead. I am a destitute. Will you satisfy my hunger?”

All that was there to eat was given away to him.

The man who came on the third day said: “O Ahlul Bayt of the Messenger of Allah, I was a slave and have just been freed. Give me some food.”

Again all that was there to eat was given away to him.

Each night the Ahlul Bayt drank water and went to sleep without food.

After this event verses 5 to 11 of Surah al-Dahr were revealed.

Verily, the righteous shall drink a cup tempered with camphor (kafur),

From a spring which the servants of Allah shall drink and make it flow in abundance;

They fulfil their vows, and fear the day whose evil shall spread far and wide,

And (inspite of their own needs) they give food, for love of Him, to the poor, and the orphan and the captive,

(Saying): "We feed you only for the sake of Allah; we do not seek any recompense from you, nor (even) thanks.

Verily, we fear from our Lord a stem day of distress."

So Allah will guard them from the evil of that day, and cause them to find cheerfulness and happiness.

Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) accompanied her father

when he went for his last *hajj*. She was amongst those who witnessed the message at Ghadir Khum where the Holy Prophet in the presence of huge gathering announced that her husband, Imam Ali, would be his successor.

MUBAHILA

In the 9th *hijra* the Holy Prophet sent invitation to many people to accept the true religion of Allah. An invitation was sent to Christians of Najran. Fourteen scholars came forward for discussion with the Holy Prophet. Arguments were presented by both sides, but the Christians did not listen to reason.

Then the following Quranic verse was revealed: *And say to him who disputes with you therein after the knowledge has come to you (O Muhammad): Come, let us summon our sons, and your sons, and our women and your women, and ourselves and yourselves, and then let us humbly pray and invoke the curse of Allah on the liars.*

The Christian responded: “Assign for us a solemn meeting that we can pray to our Lord to curse the other side. If they are the followers of falsehood.”

Early next morning on 24th Zilhijjah, a huge crowd stood in wait. At the appointed hour, the Holy Prophet came forward with Imam Husayn (a.s.) in his arms, Imam Hasan (a.s.) holding his finger, Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.), and Imam Ali (a.s.) behind her. When the chief-monk looked at the faces of the pure five (*panjatan pak*) radiating with divine light he was filled with awe, so he said to his followers: “O Christians, I see the faces of those whose prayers would be answered even if they were to ask Allah to move a mountain, so do not continue this meeting. If they curse, you will be destroyed and no Christian will remain on earth until the day of resurrection.”

The Christians agreed with the wisdom of their chief and readily agreed to arrive at a settlement.

On the 11th *hijra* the Holy Prophet fell ill and his health steadily deteriorated. Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) remained at his side taking care of him night and day. Seeing her suffering, her father took her in his arms and kissed her. She began to weep. He whispered in her ear and she cried harder. He whispered something again and that time she smiled. The first time he had told her about his death. The second time he told her that she would die within three months of his death. Soon after there was a knock at the door as someone sought permission to enter. She refused him permission saying that her father was ill and therefore resting. A little later there was a knock again and the same conversation took place. When this had happened for the third time the Holy Prophet said: “O Fatimah it is Izrail, the angel of death, who is seeking permission to come to me. It is the supreme dignity granted by Allah to you and your house that Izrail is seeking permission to enter. He usually enters without permission. Please allow him to come in and perform his duty of taking my soul as ordered by Allah.”

This was the 28th Safar in 11 *hijra*.

No one ever saw Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) smile again. When people visited her to share her sorrow and comfort her, she would say: “The misfortunes I have had to face, after the death of my father, would have turned the day into night and made the stony mountains crumble into soft sand.”

CONFISCATION OF FADAK

The garden of Fadak was given to the Holy Prophet as his share after the battle of Khaybar. As Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) was his only surviving child, he gifted this property to her. She in turn distributed the income earned from this garden amongst the poor Muslims. But after the death of the Holy Prophet everything changed. People who had called themselves friends actually proved to be enemies. They confiscated (seized) this land but ultimately it was the poor Muslims who suffered as they could not get the money earned from the land any more.

They did this so that the Ahlul Bayt would stop giving charity in the way of Allah to the true believers. The ruling party forgot that the Ahlul Bayt gave everything which they had, especially Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) gave away whatever was in her hands.

Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) stood up for her rights and with her both sons, Hasan (a.s.) and Husayn (a.s.) she went to *masjid* (mosque) *nabawwi* to seek justice.

They asked for her witnesses and she presented Imam Ali, her husband and her two sons. They refused to accept them as witnesses. Though in the heaven and the earth they were recognised as masters and on the day of judgement Allah will take their words as true. Finally she exposed the real intentions of the ruling party before the public. They wanted to undo the economic independence of the Ahlul Bayt so as to force them to accept the authority of the rulers.

Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) lived only for 95 days after the death of the Holy Prophet. She cried so much that people complained that it disturbed them. Therefore, Imam Ali (a.s.) built her a shelter in Jannatul Baqi where she would take her children every morning and remain until the evening. This house was called *bayt ul huzn* (house of morning). What really alarmed the people was that she was protesting against the injustice of the rulers of the day who wrongfully deprived Ali (a.s.) from the office of khilafat. The rulers did not want the people to rise in revolt against them. They warned her, but Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) continued her struggle for justice. One day her house was broken into and set on fire. Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) suffered serious injuries and fractured her ribs which caused the death of her third son, Muhsin, who was in her womb.

One day Imam Ali (a.s.) came home and found Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) working in the house even though she was ill. Imam Ali (a.s.) asked her to take rest. She said: “This is the last day of

my life, so I want to bathe my children and wash their clothes. I will not be able to do this work any more.” Imam Ali (a.s.) asked her, “How can you say that this is the last day of your life.” She replied: “I saw my father, the Holy Prophet, in my dream informing me that I will join him to night.” Then she informed Imam Ali (a.s.) of all that she wished to be done after her death. She continued: “O Abul Hasan, please forgive if I have ever disobeyed you.” Imam Ali (a.s.) replied: “You are so pious and devoted to Allah that you have never disobeyed me. Surely it is very painful for me to part from you. But we all belong to Allah and death is certain.” Then they both cried. Imam Ali embraced her and said: “Instruct me to do what you wish.”

Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) said: “I ask that after me you marry a noble lady as you will need a companion. Also, please perform my funeral and burial rites yourself and do not allow my enemies and the enemies of the Ahlul Bayt to attend my funeral. I do not want them to even join in the funeral prayers. My coffin should be taken out at night while the people are asleep.”

After this conversation Imam Ali (a.s.) took Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.) to the mosque and Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) prepared for *salat*. She told Asma bint Umayy: “I am going to offer my prayers, please remain outside my room and enter when you cannot hear me glorifying Allah.”

Asma bint Umayy waited as directed. Hasnayn returned from the mosque and anxiously inquired about their beloved mother. Asma bint Umayy pointed to the room. There they saw their mother dead on her prayer-mat. It was on the third of Jamadi al-Thani.

According to the wishes of Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.), Imam Ali (a.s.) gave her the funeral bath. While he was bathing her he cried out loud when he saw her broken ribs. After completing her last rites, in the dead of night, a mourning procession, consisting of Imam Ali (a.s.), Imam Hasan (a.s.), Imam Husayn (a.s.), Abu Zar Ghaffari, Ammar Yasir, Miqdad and Salman al-Farsi left the house, carried her to her final

resting place. As the coffin of Sayyida Fatimah was being lowered a pair of hands appeared and the voice of Holy Prophet was heard saying “Give my beloved daughter to me.”

Imam Ali (a.s.) said: “It is sad to say that she had suffered a lot of hardships and finally is coming to you. I looked after her to the best of my ability but people grieved her very much.”

After performing all duties Imam Ali (a.s.) sat near the grave and said: “She is the ever prevailing soul of paradise, her fragrance sits around my heart and soul, even though she is no more with me.”

Imam Ali had dug forty other graves nearby so that no one would be able to locate Sayyida Fatimah’s grave.

At sunrise, people gathered to participate in Sayyida Fatimah’s burial rites but were informed that she had already been buried the previous night. They rushed to Jannatul Baqi (graveyard)

seeking to find her grave but they found forty graves there and could not locate the real grave of Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.).

Pursuing their enmity towards Ahlul Bayt, the rulers decided to dig the grave of Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) and exhume her body to offer funeral prayers.

When this news reached Imam Ali (a.s.), he rushed to the graveyard with sword drawn. There he warned the mob: “By Allah, if anyone tries to shift even a stone from these graves his head will not remain with his body. My Zulfiqar will not return to the scabbard until and unless it severs your heads.” Seeing danger, they returned home.

Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.) was the true reflection of her father. Because of her position in *din al Islam*, Allah selected her to introduce her father, husband and son in the event of the blanket.

She has been stated *madan al-risalah* (the mine

of *risalat*) because her descendants (progeny) kept alive the message of the Messenger of Allah - *LA ILAHA ILLALLAH*. None from among the *ummah* came forward to save Islam other than the descendants of Sayyida Fatimah (s.a.).

She was the only woman selected by the Holy Prophet to accompany him on the occasion of Mubahila.

She was the superior-most woman of all women from the beginning to the end, bright and beautiful, the first lady of Paradise, pure and holy. She has no equal. She is the pride of Ahlul Bayt.

Dua al-Nur and Salat al-Istighasah was taught by her to her faithful followers.

She led a very simple life although she had every means, worldly as well as heavenly.

The Holy Prophet said:

“Love Fatimah, she is from me, love for her

brings benefits to mankind in misfortune, on death bed, in the grave, at *pul sirat* (the scaling bridge) and on the day of judgement.”

Whenever the poor passed by her house, their needs were satisfied. She never turned them away. Her generosity and charity were known to all.

Her house was a model of wisdom and learning. It is from her family that our 12th Imam, Imam Sahibuz Zaman (a.s.) will come to spread justice, love and understanding and the religion of Allah, Islam.

THE HOLY QURAN SAYS

Verily, verily Allah intends but to keep off from you (every kind of) uncleanness, O you Ahlul Bayt (the people of the house), and purify you (with) a thorough purification.

THE HOLY PROPHET SAID

My Ahlul Bayt are like the ark of Nuh. Whoever comes on it is saved, whoever stays back is drowned.

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