

Foreword by the Translator

Any historical figure with a multi-dimensional personality calls for a researcher with a multi-dimensional personality to appreciate, analyze and introduce him or her to the public. But when it comes to the most distinguished individuals, only very few researchers are capable of the task. Otherwise, the personality in question may not be properly evaluated and his or her impact in history may be misrepresented.

However, when it comes to people like our Lady Fatimah al-Zahra (as) – who is not only distinguished amongst men and women of all time, but who was chosen by Allah the All-Knowing, and hence His choice was based on absolute knowledge of that personality and all others – then it needs someone really capable, who must not only be an excellent researcher, but who must also have a feeling for the life in question, to live it, love it, appreciate it and – in the case of Fatimah (as) – follow it.

One such person is his eminence Sayyid Muhammad Husain Fadlullah, who has been studying the lives of the infallibles, and digging among the treasures which resulted from their infallibility – i.e. the two fundamental aspects: knowledge which never errs, and perfect conduct which never sins – for almost five decades now. His eminence has succeeded in using the hadith, conduct and lives of Ahlul Bayt (as) to formulate general ideas and theories on various issues, the most important of which is probably their practical application, which Muslims badly needed. Instead of concentrating on a limited number of issues, he went through the whole of the tradition of Ahlul Bayt (as), to tackle all issues and challenges.

Using the unrivalled tradition of Ahlul Bayt (as), he has lectured and written on various issues: from the fundamental principles and branches of Islam to social questions, such as friendship, and to difficult areas such as feminine issues, linking all this with the present state of the Muslims and the challenge to effect fundamental change for the better. As for the methods, he has adhered to the methods used by Ahlul Bayt (as) – Qur'anic interpretation, hadith, letters, sermons, supplications, dialogues, struggle and protest – to show the Muslims how to hold on to the Book of Allah, how to follow the sunnah of the Prophet (sawa), how to communicate with enemies and rivals, how to communicate with Allah through the wonderful supplications of the Imams (as), how to carry out dialogue in the gentle, wise Qur'anic manner, how to protest and how to join and behave in the struggle.

Our Lady Fatimah (as) had a unique position even amongst Ahlul Bayt (as), being the only daughter of

the Prophet (sawa) to be chosen by Allah amongst the infallibles, and the only one linking Prophethood to Imamah, and the one who suffered terrible, unexpected injustice. In the light of this, his eminence Sayyid Fadlullah has had to summon all his undisputed capabilities to introduce her (as) in the manner which she would have wished: the infallible, a worshipper, struggler, protester, in all the shades of her holy personality, including the oppressed, but not only the oppressed. His eminence wanted Muslims, both the followers of Ahlul Bayt (as) and those from the other schools of thought, to know Fatimah (as) in her struggle and protest, not only in the injustice and cruelty they contain, but also to the full extent of their vigour.

In brief – as far as I can understand – his eminence wants Muslims to react to Fatimah (as) with admiration for her uncompromising protest and the stance which she took, and with heartfelt sympathy for the most cruel and most disloyal injustice which she suffered. This cannot be achieved without learning, with full awareness, about the life of al-Zahra (as) and trying to implement it in their lives – as far as possible – so that they emerge from their continuous experience of her (as) as staunch followers and supporters.

From this point onwards, including the introduction, only his eminence's words alone shall be used, selected from different speeches, lectures and interviews. Because of the concise nature of the book, excerpts were chosen rather than complete pieces. That said I believe that the selected excerpts should prove sufficient to give some idea about his eminence's true feelings, thoughts and beliefs about our Lady Fatimah's exalted character, and also of his efforts to introduce her to the people in the most effective way.

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