

Chapter 5: Fatima az-Zahra's Birth

The clear disagreement on Fatima's birth date is surprising. Some scholars state that she was born five years after revelation; while others say that she was born two, or, three years before that; and still others claim that she was born five years before revelation. It should be noted that the first statement was narrated from the Imams of Ahlul-Bayt (as) which a group of Sunni scholars endorsed the same viewpoint. On the other hand, some Sunni scholars, and narrators speak of the second date.

The following are narrations, which have been cited concerning the date of Fatima Zahra's birth:

1. Kafi (Kulayni):

"She was born five years after (the beginning of) Prophethood, and three years after Ascension to heaven. When the Prophet died, Fatima was eighteen years old...."

2. Al-Manaqib (Ibn Shahr Ashub):

"Fatima was born five years after (the beginning of) Prophethood, and three years after Ascension [to heaven], namely on the 20th of Jamadi al-Thani. She lived eight years in Mecca with her father, and then she immigrated..."

3. Al-Bihar: Imam Baqir (as) said:

"Fatima Bint Muhammad was born five years after the (first) revelation to Allah's Messenger. She died when she was eighteen years, and seventy-five days old."

4. Rawdhat al-Waedin:

"Fatima was born five years after the (first) revelation to the Prophet...."

5. Iqbal al-Aamal: Sheikh Mufeed in his book Hadaiq Ar-Ryadh, said:

"The 20th of Jamadi al-Thani was the birthday of Fatima Zahra during the second year after (the first) revelation."

6. Misbah al-Kaf'ami:

"Although it has been said that she was born five years after (the first) revelation, (Fatima) was born on Far-Ridha'y the 20th of Jamadi al-Thani, two years after revelation."

7. Misbahain:

"Far-Ridha'y the 20th of Jamadi al-Thani, two years after revelation, was the birthday of Fatima, as was cited by some narrations. It has been mentioned in a narration that she was born five years after revelation. The Sunnis narrate that she was born five years before revelation."

8. Dalal'el al-Imamah, on the authority of Imam Sadiq (as):

"Fatima was born on the 20th of Jamadi al-Thani, forty five years after the Prophet was born...etc." 1

The above-mentioned statements are a selection of narrations from the Imams of Ahlul-Bayt (as), and the old Shiite scholars (may Allah bless their souls) declaring that Fatima az-Zahra's birth took place after revelation. Contrary to this, the Sunni scholars have stated:

1. Ma'refat As-Sahabah by Abu Nu'eym:

"Fatima was the youngest of Allah's Messenger's daughters. She was born while Quraish was building Kaaba."

2. Maqatil At-Talibin by Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani:

"Fatima's birth took place before revelation, during the time that Quraish was building Kaaba."

3. Ibn al-Athir in al-Muhktar Fi Manaqib al-Akhiar.

4. Tabari in Dhakhaer al-Uqbi.

5. Suyuti in Ath-Thughour al-Basimah.

Perhaps more research would reveal that the Sunnis adopted this viewpoint in most of their books.

After briefly examining the above-mentioned narrations, and in view of the fact that neither Ascension [to heaven], nor, the Revelation took place before the beginning of Prophethood, it becomes clear that Lady Fatima az-Zahra's birth was after revelation. Therefore, the falsity of the traditions, which claim that she was born five years prior to the first revelation, becomes obvious.

There are two motives which can be cited for those who made such false claims: The first is to refute the prophetic traditions which reveal the story of heavenly food, and that Fatima was born from sperm produced from an apple that came from paradise.

The second is to prove that Fatima Zahra was unattractive to the point that she became eighteen years old before anyone asked to marry her.

(More light will be shed on this subject when we elaborate on Fatima's marriage.)

Nevertheless, Tabari in Dhakhaer al-Uqbi, Asfuri Shafe'i in Nuzhat al-Majalis and Qanduzi in Yanabea al-Mawaddah narrated that Khadija (as) said:

"... Then, when (Fatima's) delivery came near, I sent for the Quraishan midwives who refused to help me because of Muhammad (S). During childbirth, four ladies whose beauty, and brilliance were indescribable entered the house'.

One of them said:

"I am your Mother Eve"

The second said:

"I am Umm Kulthum, Musa's sister"

The third said:

"I am Mariam, and we have come to help you."

Here is the same narration but in a different manner:

'When Khadija was about to deliver, she sent for the Quraishan women to help her give birth to her child. They refused and said: 'We will not help you; for you became Muhammad's wife.'

In the meantime, four women entered the house; their beauty and brilliance cannot be described. One of them said:

'I am your Mother Eve.'

The second said:

'I am Asiya Bint Muzahim.'

The third said:

'I am Kulthum, Musa's sister.'

The fourth said:

"I am Mariam Bint Imran, (Isa's mother). We have come to deliver your child. "

Fatima was then born.

"When Fatima fell on the ground, she was in a prostrating position, raising her finger."

Furthermore, the detailed narration was mentioned by al-Mufaddal Ibn Amr on the authority of Imam Sadiq (as) in vol. 1 of Al-Bihar by Al-Majlisi.

In addition to what we have already mentioned about Fatima's birth, Ibn Asaker in At-Tarikh al-Kabir said:

"Khadija gave her children to other women for nursing; but when Fatima was born, Khadija herself nursed her."

This was also stated by Ibn Kathir in Al-Bidayah wan-Nihayah.

1. The above mentioned narrations were recorded in Bihar: v. 10.

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