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God gave victory to Islam in the battle of Badr in the year 2 of Hijri. Two months after the battle, Fatima Zahra, the daughter of Muhammad Mustafa, and Ali, the son of Abu Talib were married.

Fatima Zahra was only five years old when her mother – Khadija, may God bless her – died, and thenceforth, her father, Muhammad Mustafa, the Apostle of God, took charge of the duties of a mother also for her. The death of her mother had created a void in her life but her father filled it with his love and tenderness.

Muhammad, the Messenger of God, gave the utmost attention to the education and upbringing of his daughter. If he was the ideal for all men, his daughter had to be the ideal for all women, and she was. He made her the ideal of womanhood in Islam. She was the personification of devotion and obedience to the Creator, and she was the embodiment of all heavenly purity and saintliness. In character and personality, she bore a most striking resemblance to her father. Fatima, the daughter, was the image of Muhammad, the father.

By dint of obedience and service to God, Fatima Zahra rose to the highest rank in His sight, as attested by Al-Qur'an al-Majid. God bestowed the greatest honors upon her, and the Prophet of Islam, on his part, showed her the mark of greatest respect, one which he did not show to any other man or woman at any time in his life.

When Fatima grew up, two old companions – first one and then the other – asked her father for her hand in marriage. But he turned away from them in disgust, and said:

“This matter of the marriage of Fatima, my daughter, is in the hands of Allah Himself, and He alone will select a spouse for her”.

Allah duly made His selection. He selected His slave, Ali ibn Abi Talib, to be the spouse of the daughter

of His most favorite slave, Muhammad Mustafa. He wished to see Fatima bint Muhammad and Ali ibn Abi Talib married.

Two months after the battle of Badr, i.e., in the month of Zilqa'ad (the 11th month) of 2 A.H., Ali called on Muhammad Mustafa, and said: "O Messenger of God, you have brought me up as your own child. You have overwhelmed me with your gifts, your generosity and your kindness. I owe you everything in my life. Now I seek one more kindness from you."

The Apostle understood what Ali was trying to say. His face lighted up in a broad smile, and he bade Ali to wait for a few moments until he obtained his daughter's answer. He entered the house, told Fatima that Ali was asking for her hand in marriage, and asked her what was her response. She kept quiet. He interpreted her silence as her assent, returned to Ali, informed him that his proposal was accepted, and told him to make preparations for the wedding.

On the last day of Zilqa'ad (the 11th month), Muhammad Mustafa, the Apostle of God, invited the Muhajireen and the Ansar, to attend a banquet, on the occasion of the marriage of his daughter. He was going to be their host. When all the guests arrived, and were seated, he obtained, once again, the formal consent of his daughter for her marriage with Ali ibn Abi Talib.

Muhammad Mustafa praised Allah, and thanked Him for all His mercies. He then read the sermon of marriage; declared Ali and Fatima husband and wife, and invoked the blessings of Allah upon both of them. All the guests congratulated the Apostle on this most auspicious occasion. After this ceremony, the guests feasted upon lamb meat, bread, date fruit and milk.

A few days later, i.e., in Zilhajj (the 12th month), Fatima Zahra had to bid farewell to her parental home so she could go to the house of her husband. Her father assisted her in riding his she-camel. Medina rang with the shouts of Allah-o-Akbar. Salman the Persian held the reins of the she-camel, and walked in front of it, as he recited Qur'an. The Apostle of God walked on one side of the she-camel, and Hamza, the Lion of God, on the other.

All the young cavaliers of Banu Hashim rode as escorts of the bride, with gleaming swords held high. Behind them were the Muhajir and Ansar women, and behind them came the Muhajireen and the Ansar themselves. They were reciting hymns from Al-Qur'an al-Majid to the glory of God. The recitation of hymns was punctuated from time to time by thunderous shouts of Allah-o-Akbar.

This heavenly cavalcade made a circuit of the Great Mosque of Medina, and then halted at its destination – the house of the bridegroom – Ali ibn Abi Talib. Muhammad Mustafa aided his daughter in alighting from the she-camel. He held her hand, and symbolically placed it in the hand of her husband, and then, standing at the threshold of the house, said the following prayer:

"O Allah! I commend Fatima and Ali, Thy humble slaves, to Thy protection. Be Thou their Protector. Bless them. Be pleased with them, and bestow Thy boundless grace, mercy, and Thy best rewards upon

them. Make their marriage fruitful, and make both of them steadfast in Thy love, and Thy service.”

It was a truly happy day in the life of Muhammad Mustafa. But how he must have wished that his beloved wife and friend, Khadija, were with him so both of them together could witness the wedding of their daughter.

A few days later, the Apostle of God called on his daughter, and asked her how she had found her husband. She said that she found him the best companion in giving devotion and obedience to God. Later, he asked Ali how he had found his wife, and he said that he found her the best companion in giving service to the Creator. The greatest moments of life for both husband and wife were those when they went into the Presence of their Lord, and were absorbed in praying to Him.

Between Ali and Fatima Zahra, there was total identity of interests. Both were brought up and educated by Muhammad Mustafa, the Messenger of God, and Khadija-tul-Kubra. Both, therefore, shared the ideals of their parents. Both put service to God ahead of everything else. There was absolutely no room for any disagreement between them. Their thoughts, words and deeds, all were “conditioned” by Al-Qur’an al-Majid. Their marriage therefore, was just as perfect and just as happy as the marriage of Muhammad and Khadija had been.

As noted above, Fatima's greatest pleasure was to wait upon Allah. She spent most of her time in prayer. Her second greatest pleasure was to carry out her duties toward her family. God was pleased to bestow upon her four children – first two boys and then two girls. She ground grain in a mill which her father had given her as part of her dowry, and baked bread for them. Grinding grain day after day caused blisters to form on her hands but she never complained to her husband or to her father about them, and did all her housework cheerfully.

The household duties could become quite exacting for Fatima Zahra but she found happiness and strength in the remembrance of God. The Book of God was her constant companion. She forgot the drudgery of work as she read passages from that book. And when she put her children to sleep in the crib, she again read selections from the same book as “lullabies” to them.

They grew up hearing Al-Qur’an al-Majid from their infancy. She etched the Word of God upon their young hearts. Through such “osmosis,” Qur’an and the children of Fatima Zahra became inseparable for all time.

In the same year, i.e., in 2 A.H., public prayers on the two holidays for the Muslims, viz., Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adha, were made a *sunnat* (meritorious) for them.

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