O Ali, Prepare My Funeral at Night

To some it may be unclear as to whether Hadrat Fatimah al-Zahra (A.S.)was oppressed and hurt after the demise of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.). The answer to this question can be clearly and completely found in the Sunni and Shia authentic history books that have recorded the events after the demise of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.).1 These books clearly state that Hadrat Fatimah (A.S.)had continuously complained about the tyranny of the ruler and his government in her short life time after the Prophet's (S.A.W.) demise.

If we take a brief look at her sermon given in the mosque of Medina and in the public presence of Muhajirin (Immigrants) and Ansaar2 (Helpers), we can observe that she questions the ruler and reproaches him with sharp speeches. At this point a question may occur to the mind: can the speech of Hadrat Fatimah (A.S.) be an implication and reaction of her being hurt and angry at the oppression of the first Caliph and his helpers? This implication can also be inferred by the famous saying of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) who has said: "The satisfaction and anger of Fatimah causes the satisfaction and anger of Allah."3 According to this narration, surely Allah (SWT) is angry with that person whom Hadrat Fatimah (A.S.)is angry at. Obviously one who has angered Allah (SWT) does not have the right to rule the Islamic Community….

That sermon had their impact as they thundered down upon the first Caliph and his followers. With her speech she changed the view of the people towards the tyranny. However, after she delivered the sermon in the mosque of Medina, a series of sorrowful events took place, which all caused Hadrat Fatimah (A.S.) to remain in bed…

… Amir al-Mu'minin (A.S.) felt that his wife wants to have a private conversation. He asked the other women who were in the room to leave. Then he sat beside Zahra's (A.S.) bed. He held her head against his chest and said: "Dear Fatimah! Tell me; tell me whatever is in your heart." Fatimah said: "My dear cousin! I am departing from this world. I saw my father in my dream an hour ago. He told me: 'Come to me my daughter; I am eager to see you.' So, my first word (question) to you is, during all this period that I was with you, have you heard a lie from me? Have I ever disobeyed any of your requests?" (In other words, forgive me if I have done you any wrong.) Upon hearing these words Amir al-Mu'minin (A.S.)became even more grieved and began to cry; he said: "We seek refuge in Allah; you were much greater than to have lied or disobeyed."

She then said: "My children are young4 and will lose their mother. Every man needs a wife and after me you will remarry. I ask you to marry "Imamah", the daughter of my stepsister who is

kinder than all others to my children." Then she continued: "My last will is to prepare my funeral at night; I do not want any of those who oppressed me to know about my funeral. I want you to wash me at night, put the shroud on me, perform the prayer upon my body, and bury me at night. And after my burial, sit beside my grave and recite Quran for me."

In that moment in which her head was on the chest of Imam Ali (A.S.), she said: "Peace be upon Gabriel, Peace be upon the Messenger of Allah."

And in those moments her soul left her holy body; her departure from this world turned off the lights in Imam Ali's (A.S.) home. Amir al-Mu'minin (A.S.) slowly put her head on the pillow. The children, now without a mother came in and threw themselves on their mother's body. Hassan (A.S.) had fallen on his mother's chest; he would kiss and say: "O Mother! It is me Hassan, talk to me." Hussain (A.S.) came and sat at the end of her feet. He hugged and kissed them and said: "O Mother! I am your Hussain, talk to me; my soul is about to separate from my body."

The sounds of wailing and crying could be heard from the house of Amir al-Mu'minin (A.S.). It was the first couple of hours after dusk. People of Medina knew about the illness of Hadrat Fatimah (A.S.), and hence were expecting her demise. The sound of moaning and crying went from one house to another until the whole town turned into a mourning ceremony.

As the narrator Qummi says: "The people of Medina all moaned at once; it was so loud that you would think the town is about to collapse... "5

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Footnotes:

1- Different narrations of this subject can be found in many of the popular Islamic historical and narrative books. For example, when Hadrat Fatimah (A.S.) heard the forged narration from the first Caliph, she became very angry. She knew that this forged narration, which even contradicted the verses of the holy Quran was only said to prevent her from receiving her right. This was to the extent that even the Sunni scholars such as Bukhari, Ahmad Hanbal, Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Kathir and others have recorded that Hadrat Fatimah (A.S.) remained angry at the first Caliph until the end of her life: Sahih Bukhari, vol. 4, p. 42 – Musnad Ahmad, vol. 1, p. 6 – Tabaghat al-Kubra, Vol. 8, p. 28 – al-Bidayah wa al-Nahayah, vol. 5, p. 306 and etc.

2- This sermon is known as the "Fadakiyah Sermon" and both Sunni and Shia scholars have narrated it. This sermon can also be found in the books: "Balaqat al-Nisa' " and "A'alam al-Nisa' " from the Sunni scholars, and "Kashf al-Qummah" and "Ihtijaj Tabarsi" from among the Shiite scholars.

3- Sunni sources: Mustadrak al-Sahihain, vol. 3, p. 154 – Tarikh al-Madinah Dimashq, vol. 3, p. 156 – Asad al-Qaabah, vol. 5, p. 522 – al-Isaabah, vol. 8, p. 265.
Shiite sources: Manaqib (Ibn Shahr Ashoob),Vol. 3, p. 107 – Amali Sheikh Toosi, p. 427 – Kashf al-Qummah, Vol. 2, p. 85. 4- Hadrat Fatimah (A.S.) had four children which in that time the eldest child was eight years old and the youngest was four.
5- Bayt al-Ahzaan, p. 78