



يا فاطمة الزهراء يا بنت محمد يا فرقة بين الرسول يا سيدتنا و مولانا
انا نؤمننا و نستشفينا و نؤمننا بك الى الله و نعتناك بين يدي حاجتنا



SAYYIDAH FATIMAH (AS)

سَيِّدَةُ فَاطِمَةَ (ع)

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 5

Lesson 1: Fāṭima's (as) Chastity

Objectives >>>

Students should understand:

- The meaning of Sayyedah Fāṭimah's title of al-Batūl
- The different aspects of hijāb exemplified by Sayyedah Fāṭimah and our role in upholding its value
- How Sayyedah Fāṭimah is a role model in her chastity and her family relations
- The limits that need to be observed when communicating and interacting with people of the opposite gender
- The status of Sayyedah Fāṭimah from her title al-Muḥaddathah
- The importance of maintaining strong parent-children relationships from Sayyedah Fāṭimah's life and the positive effects it has on the individual and society

In previous years we have learnt about Sayyedah Fāṭimah's noble family tree and the different aspects of her amazing character for which she earned her honourable titles. Through her we learnt about the importance of being chaste and discussed the effects of hijāb and chastity in both males and females and how to implement and maintain chastity in our society today. In this lesson we will further develop these ideas in order to appreciate chastity as being a key factor in nurturing a healthy individual, family and society as a whole.

SAYYEDAH FĀṬĪMAH – AL-BATŪL

Due to her endeavour to please God in all aspects of life, Sayyedah Fāṭimah was given many titles by the Almighty Allah and the Messenger of God. One of these titles was al-Batūl. This name was given to her because she devoted her life to worshipping and impressing Allah alone and not people. Al-Batūl means the one who detaches herself from anyone or anything other than Allah (SWT); this includes choosing Allah's pleasure over her own desires whole-heartedly and sincerely. Furthermore, al-Batūl means that her hope was only in Allah and she had fear of no one except of Allah (SWT).ⁱ This title has been displayed throughout her life where some of the instances include the following:

- Giving away her wedding dress to a poor person on her wedding night because she remembered the Qur'anic āyah:

“You will not attain righteousness until you give away that which you love most.” (3: 92)ⁱⁱ

- Along with her family, giving away her ifṭār for three consecutive nights to a poor person, an orphan and a captive of war respectively out of her love for Allah only.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Staying up in worship at nights until her legs would swell. She would never ask anything from anyone except from Allah as all her hope was in Him.
- Even though she was the most beautiful of women, she chose to be chaste to the extent that no man saw her nor did she lay her eyes on any man.

We learn from Sayyedah Fāṭimah al-Batūl that when we are faced with a dilemma between two things we should always opt for the action or path that will please Allah (SWT).

We can implement these qualities in our life in the following way:

The way we dress: For example if a female is to choose between two types of clothing, she should choose the one that is more modest even though her temptations incline towards the less modest one. This is because usually the less modest one is worn in order to impress the people in society whereas Allah loves that His female servant be free from the evil demands of society and be chaste, protected and honoured. Ladies need to remember that modest dress is something that covers the entire body (excluding the face and hands) including the shape of the body. Men need to remember that modest (or recommended) clothing covers the body and is not tight on the body in order to show-off one's muscles as this is more respectable.

When we look: When we come across something we should not be looking at, we should lower our gaze and look away, even though we may be tempted to look.

Outings: Another example is when we are invited to a wedding that will be conducted in a non-Islamic manner. Even though the couple may be your close relatives, you decline the invitation because you fear Allah and know that He would not like to see His servant in such a place.

SAYYEDAH FĀṬIMAH: THE HEART OF SOCIETY

Sayyedah Fāṭimah was the centre and only link connecting Prophecy and Imamah, as she was the only daughter of the Messenger, wife of an Imam and the mother of two Imams. This symbolises that Sayyedah Fāṭimah (as) plays a central role in the existence and establishment of Islam and the maintenance of a family and society. Hence through her teachings of Islam and the perfection of character that she demonstrated in her role as a daughter, wife, mother and servant and soldier of Allah (SWT) she gave life to society. We will take a look at what this means and relate it to our role as Muslims in a family and society today.

CONNECTION WITH ALLAH (SWT)

Sayyedah Fāṭimah was raised by the noble Prophet Muḥammad (saw) in a way that increased her connection with Allah (SWT) and detached her from the material aspects of this world.

Once the Holy Prophet had to go on a trip and during that time Imam 'Ali (as) had sent Sayyedah Fāṭimah two silver bracelets and a curtain which he had gained from the booty of a war. When the Prophet returned from his travel he first came to the house of his daughter, which was his usual practice, and saw that she was wearing the bracelets and that the curtain was hung up. He didn't show his usual happiness that he showed when he saw his daughter, and after staying for a short while he left.

Sayyedah Fāṭimah realised the reason for this and immediately called for Ḥasan and Ḥusayn and gave the curtain and bracelets to them to take to the Prophet. The Prophet was pleased with his daughter and took these and divided them amongst the poor who had no money or shelter.^{iv}

Not being attached to worldly things helps to establish a strong connection with our Lord. Through this we acknowledge His Love and Might and hence would only have hope in Allah and behave in a manner that gains His love and we would not fear anyone other than Allah. Once this connection is developed, we then have the courage to say no to any injustice and corruption and we pursue that which is right and pleasing to Allah. This in turn helps to develop a strong and peaceful society where everyone benefits.

CHASTITY IN SOCIAL RELATIONS

One of the main values that Sayyedah Fāṭimah (as) demonstrated in her life was chastity in social life. Let us look at some main principles to remember and practice in this regard:

- Talking to the opposite gender is not forbidden provided that it is limited to what is necessary. We have to remember that being related to someone does not give us an excuse to behave or talk to them freely nor to drop any part of hijāb and chastity.
- Inappropriate jokes should be avoided as it makes one feel less restricted with the opposite gender. It can lead to a 'friendly' nudge or handshake and harām talking or touching. If we need to speak to someone about an issue (such as in class or at university) then try to stick to that topic or talk respectfully to one another about a decent topic. Always think of what your action will lead to in the future before acting it out.
- A male and female (who are not maḥram to one another) should not be in a place on their own as Satan will always be around inciting them to commit a ḥarām act. We should not fool ourselves into thinking that we are very responsible and have pure intentions when it comes to the opposite gender and will never commit a sin; sometimes all it takes is one small temptation and at that spur of the moment a person may do something that they will regret forever.

Homework

1. Write a small paragraph on the meaning of the name al-Batūl and give examples from Sayyedah Fāṭimah's life.
2. You attend a co-education school and your teacher pairs you up with a boy/girl (the opposite gender) in your class to complete an assignment together. What are some of the limits required to be maintained when interacting with him/her.

Lesson 2: Fāṭima's (as) family life

In the previous lesson we learnt how Sayyedah Fāṭimah is a role model for both men and women in all aspects of life. We focused on her chastity and discussed how chastity plays a vital role in maintaining our connection with Allah and strengthening ourselves and the society. In this lesson, we will take messages from Sayyedah Fāṭimah's family life and how she built her family and raised her children.

SAYYEDAH FĀṬĪMAH'S MARRIAGE

When Sayyedah Fāṭimah reached the age of marriage, many companions approached the Prophet asking for her hand in marriage. However both the Prophet and Sayyedah Fāṭimah declined all the proposals. Imam 'Ali (as) was initially too shy to ask. However, when he found the courage to ask, the Prophet and Sayyedah Fāṭimah both agreed as they were aware of his devotion to Islam.^v From this Sayyedah Fāṭimah knew they had compatible qualities to support one another on their journey towards perfection and their beloved Lord.

FINDING A SPOUSE

When we reach the stage of life where we are searching for a spouse, we need to look for someone with similar goals in life, who has good character and is a practicing Muslim. We can find out about them by:

- Observing their behaviour in public
- Hearing others speak about that person or asking others about him/her
- It is permitted to speak to the person of the opposite gender within certain limits in order to find out more about him/her from this. Keep in mind that joking, flirting or spending endless hours talking on the phone, internet or directly is not required to find out details about others initially. This stage of 'getting to know each other' should be done with the knowledge of parents and their permission.

A DEVOUT WIFE

Sayyedah Fāṭimah (as) was the support of her husband, his best friend and soul-mate. She would never upset him in any of her words or actions. Imam 'Ali (as) said:

“By Allah, I never angered Fatima, or forced her to do something (she did not like), up to the day she died; nor did she ever anger or disobey me. In fact, when I looked at her, depression and sadness would be removed from my (heart).”^{vi}

Sayyedah Fāṭimah and Imam 'Ali divided the house chores and agreed that Imam 'Ali would sweep the floor, bring water and wood for the fire and Sayyedah Fāṭimah would grind (grains), knead (for bread) and bake.^{vii} This shows that both parents in the household need to help each other.

Sayyedah Fāṭimah worked extremely hard in the home to the extent where Imam 'Ali says:

“Fāṭimah would carry water in the water-skins until the marks (from carrying it) were left on her chest, she would grind the grains (with the hand mill) until her hands blistered, and she would sweep the floor until her clothes became dusty, she would light the fire under the cooking pot until her clothes would become black (with soot).”^{viii}

Sayyedah Fāṭimah (as) never nagged her husband, nor did she complain or ask something that her husband was not capable of providing. Imam 'Ali (as) said about his noble wife:

“We were so poor that the sheep-skin we had was our mattress to sleep on, it was our table cloth, our prayer mat. The rest of the house was covered with soft sand.”^{ix}

Throughout these hard times, Sayyedah Fāṭimah (as) never complained or asked for anything more.”

The way in which Sayyedah Fāṭimah (as) dealt with the hardships she faced throughout her life and the sacrifices she made for her family for the sake of Allah teach us all a great lesson. In addition, her efforts show that she truly earned the title of al-Batūl in all aspects of her life.



PLANNING A FAMILY

We have discussed that there are prerequisites required in order to build an ideal family, one of which was choosing the right spouse equal in spirit and manners. Sayyedah Fāṭimah refused to marry any of the men who had asked for her in marriage except Imam 'Ali (as) because she knew that only she and Imam 'Ali (as) had similar characteristics.. The Prophet said:

“If it wasn't for Ali, Fāṭimah would not have an equal match.”

This enabled a strong marital relationship which left its positive effects on their children. Sayyedah Fāṭimah (as) also sacrificed all she had for her family and never complained. One morning Imam 'Ali (as) woke up very hungry and asked if there was any food. She replied that there was nothing to eat that morning and there hadn't been any food for two days otherwise she would have preferred to give it to him and the children. Imam Ali (as) said to her, “Fāṭimah! Why didn't you tell me, so I could bring some food for you?” To which she answered, “Abul Ḥasan, I surely become ashamed before my God to ask you to do something you cannot do.”^x



A LOVING MOTHER

The mother is a central figure of the family as she maintains the household by managing her duties towards her husband and children. She is also a central figure in society because a healthy society arises from a healthy family. Sayyedah Fāṭimah attended the care of her children in all manners including emotionally and treated them equally.

Once Imams Ḥasan and Ḥusayn as young children were competing against each other as to whose writing was better. They went to their mother Fāṭimah to judge between them but she did not want to hurt either of their

feelings. She had a necklace with beads on it and said that she will drop the beads and whoever picks up the most would be the winner. At that moment Allah commanded Jibrāil to make it that both would pick up the same amount so that neither of them get hurt.^{xi}

Like her father had placed emphasis on her spiritual upbringing, she too focused on the spiritual upbringing of her children. Her children used to witness her staying up in worship every night. Once Imam Ḥasan (as) saw her at night standing in her prayer niche performing prayers until dawn and he heard her praying for all the believers mentioning their name. He noticed though that she would not pray for herself. Imam Ḥasan (as) asked her why she did not pray for herself in the way that she prayed for others. Sayyedah Fāṭimah's reply was,

“O my son! The neighbour first, then the house!”^{xii}

Sayyedah Fāṭimah clearly understood that the vital part in maintaining a strong household was to focus on the family members' connection with God. Once this is firmly established, the love for God will drive one to only perform what is right and pleasing to Allah.

LOVE FOR SAYYEDAH FĀṬIMAH

We have seen Sayyedah Fāṭimah's love for her father and family. However her love did not stop there and extends to all those who love her and her offspring.

When Sayyedah Fāṭimah (as) learnt of the dowry for her marriage she told her father the Prophet:

ⁱ eHawza, semester 2, course 5, lecture 30 (for the meaning of al-Bat'ul)

ⁱⁱ Fatima the Gracious, ch 27. On her wedding night she wore her dress that her father gave her. A poor person knocked at the door asking for clothes to wear. Fatima (as) was going to give the poor person her old worn dress (which was the only other dress she had) but she remembered the ayah in the Quran (mentioned in the text) and so immediately gave the poor person her new dress. Upon this, Jibrail descended by the command of Allah to replace her dress with a dress made in paradise.

ⁱⁱⁱ Surat al-Insan

^{iv} Bihar al-Anwar vol 43 page 83

^v Fatima the Gracious

^{vi} Fatima the Gracious, ch 30

“I kindly ask you to give it back and supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, to make my dowry the right to intercede for the sinners^{xiii} among Muslims (on the Day of Rising).”^{xiv}

On another occasion the noble Prophet (sawa) said:

“It is as though I can see my daughter Fāṭimah on the Day of Judgement and she arrives on an outstanding light. On her right there are seventy thousand angels escorting her and on her left side seventy thousand angels escorting her and from behind her seventy thousand angels as she arrives to lead the believing ladies to paradise. Then a voice will be heard saying, “O people of the Gathering! Lower your gaze (in humbleness) so that Fāṭimah the daughter of Muḥammad can pass by”. When she nears the gate of Paradise she will look to her side and God will ask her why she is looking around. She will say, “O Allah I wanted my status to be known on a day like today.” So Allah will reply, “O daughter of my beloved, turn back and look at the assembly, whoever in his or her heart there is even just a drop of love for you or any of your offspring, take their hand and lead them into paradise.”^{xv}

The effects of loving Sayyedah Fāṭimah (as) and taking her as a role model will be shown in this world and the next..

Homework

- Discuss ways that you would go about choosing a spouse, when you reach that stage of your life.
- Using examples from Sayyedah Fāṭimah's life, discuss some ways of nurturing our family positively.

^{vii} Bihar al-Anwar vol 43 page 150

^{viii} Fatima al-Ma'suma, by Sayyed Muhammad Husayn Fadlullah

^{ix} eHawza, 10 divine medals of honour

^x Fatima the Gracious

^{xi} Bihar al-anwar vol 43 page 309

^{xii} Fatima al-Ma'suma, by Sayyed Muhammad Husayn Fadlullah

^{xiii} Sinners here means those amongst the Muslims who have made mistakes or committed sins in their lives but their love for Ahlul Bayt remained intact.

^{xiv} Fatima the Gracious, chapter 26

^{xv} eHawza, semester 1, course 6, lecture 23