

Wife, Children and Home Life of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (as): Commander of the faithful

Written by MT

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Amir ul Momineen (Commander of the faithful), Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (as) was married to Hazrat Fatima Zahra (sa), the daughter of Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) from Hazrat Khadija (sa). At the time of his marriage Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (as) being in his 21st year and Hazrat Fatima Zahra (sa) in 15th year of her life. Other narrations says Hazrat Fatima Zahra (sa) is in 10th year of her life.

It was very happy marriage. The transcendental distinctiveness of their respective characters blended so well with each other that they never quarreled and complained of one another and led a happy and contented life. Each one of them was rich in his own rights; Hazrat Fatima Zahra (sa) was the only heir of one of the richest women of Arabia, Hazrat Khadija (sa), and had inherited many orchards and gardens in Makkah and Madinah, besides that she was the daughter of the head of a rich clan and a king of a fast growing kingdom. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (as) was a marshal who had very handsome shares from the spoils of wars. Yet all that they owned went to the poor cripples and orphans and they themselves often starved. Their only luxury in life was prayers, and the company of each other and their children; and they willingly shared the sorrows and suffering of poor. They were given a slave girl, Bibi Fizza, but Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) had made arrangement that every alternate day was the off day of Bibi Fizza and her mistress would do all the household work. Even when Hazrat Fatima Zahra (sa) was ill on Bibi Fizza's off day, Bibi Fizza would not be allowed to attend to the duties, but Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (as) would work; and the hero of Badr, Uhud, Khandaq, Khaybar and Hunain was seen grinding oats, lighting the oven, preparing the bread and looking after the children.

Imam Jafar as-Sadiq (as) says, **"Amir al-Mu'minin used to cut wood, fetch water and sweep, while Fatimah (his wife) used to grind, knead and bake the bread."**

Even when he was Caliph, he used to go shopping and carry home his purchases himself. People seeing their Caliph, the highest person in the community doing so, used to hurry to him to help him with his burden, but he would deny them that pleasure and say: **"It is more fitting for a family head to carry his (own) burden."**

Hazrat Salman Farsi (ra) says: What a household, the daughter of Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) and wife of his vicegerent leading the life of a poor labourer. If they had spent one tenth of what they were distributing daily they would have led a life of ease and comfort.

From Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (as), the Lady of Light (Hazrat Fatima Zahra) had four children and the fifth (Mohsin) was a still birth. The causes of this mishap and also that of her death are very sad and tragic incidents of their lives. The names of their children were Hasan, Hussain, Zainab (wife of Abdullah ibn Jafar) and Umme Kulthum (wife of Ubaydullah ibn Jafar).

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During the lifetime of Hazrat Fatima Zahra (sa), Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (as) did not marry another woman. After her death he married Yamamah and at her death another lady, having the name of Hanafia, from whom he had a son, Muhammad Hanafia, and after her death, he married again, thus he had many children some of whom had unparalleled places in the history of mankind, e.g. Imam Hasan, Imam Hussain (the hero of Karbala), Hazrat Zainab (the defender of Islam in Kufa and Damascus), Hazrat Abbas (the commander of Hussain's army) and Muhammad Hanafia, the hero of the Battle of Nahrawan.

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