

Marriage of Bibi Fatimah (A.S.)

Bibi Fatimah (A), the best of all women, was the only daughter of the Holy Prophet (S). Whenever she came into his presence, the Holy Prophet (S) would stand up in respect, not because she was his daughter, but because she possessed the highest qualities of piety and faith amongst all women.

Because of the excellence of Bibi Fatimah (A), the Holy Prophet (S) received numerous offers for her hand in marriage from wealthy families and chiefs of tribes. He refused them all, saying that he was waiting for the order of Allah regarding the person to whom his daughter should be married.

The Muslims realised that the person who married this great lady would not need to be rich and powerful, but would have to possess her qualities of truthfulness, piety and excellence. Therefore, some people suggested to Imam Ali (A) that he should go to the Holy Prophet (S) and place a proposal for himself. Imam Ali (A) also wished this, and he approached the Holy Prophet (S). Imam Ali (A) felt shy at his request but when the Holy Prophet (S) encouraged him to speak what was on his mind, he managed to tell him.

When the Holy Prophet (S) heard the proposal he was so pleased that he smiled and said, "It is a welcome and happy proposal." However, he asked Imam Ali (A) to wait till he asked his daughter. When the Holy Prophet (S) mentioned the proposal of Imam Ali (A) to Bibi Fatimah (A), she remained quiet due to her modesty. The Holy Prophet (S) declared, "Her silence means her consent."

In those days, Imam Ali (A) owned nothing except his sword and battle armour. He was advised by the Holy Prophet (S) to sell the armour to meet the expense of marriage. With the money from the sale, the items of dowry for Bibi Fatimah (A) were purchased.

These consisted of some perfume, a shirt, a black bath robe, a head-dress, a bed made of wood and date palm fibre, two mattresses of Egyptian linen, four pillows, a curtain, a mat, two millstones (for grinding flour), a water skin, a wooden bowl for milk, a container for water, some jars, two silver bangles and one copper vessel.

The marriage ceremony was performed by the Holy Prophet (S) in the month of Ramadhan 2 A.H. All the Muhajireen and Ansar gathered for the wedding, and Imam Ali (A) arranged for a feast (Walimah) in honour of his wife.

The Holy Prophet (S) informed his daughter of the virtues and qualities of her husband. Then he turned to Imam Ali (A) and mentioned the excellence of his daughter and said that if Imam Ali (A) had not been born, there would have been none else to match her. He then divided the duties of life between them. He told Bibi Fatimah (A) to take care of all the household affairs while he made Imam Ali (A) responsible for the outdoor duties.

From this marriage Imam Ali (A) and Bibi Fatimah (A) were blessed with two sons, Imam Hasan (A) and Imam Husain (A), and two daughters, Bibi Zainab (A) and Bibi Umme Kulthum (A).