Tracing the Scholars of Islam

Series 38

Fatimah al-Fihri

The Woman Linked With the Founding of the Mosque and Centre of Learning of al-Qarawiyyin in Fez



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

TRACING THE SCHOLARS OF ISLAM

SERIES 38

FATIMAH AL-FIHRI

The Woman Linked With the Founding of the Mosque and Centre of Learning of al-Qarawiyyin in Fez

إِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ مَسَٰجِدَ ٱللَّهِ مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلْيَوْمِ ٱلْءَاخِرِ وَأَقَامَ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَءَاتَى ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ وَلَمْ يَخْشَ إِلَّا ٱللَّهَ فَعَسَىٰٓ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ أَن يَكُونُوا۟ مِنَ ٱلْمُهْتَدِينَ

"The mosques of Allah are only to be maintained by those who believe in Allah and the Last Day and establish prayer and give zakah and do not fear except Allah, for it is expected that those will be of the [rightly] guided."

SURAH AT-TAWBAH 9:18

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise is due to Allah, who made His mosques houses of worship and learning, maintained by those who believe. Blessings and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and upon his family and his Companions.

This eBook is specially dedicated to my beloved wife,

ZAHARAH MOHD LATIF;

my dear children,

MUHAMMAD HAFIZ, NOOR HAZWANI, ABDUL HAKIM, NOOR HIDAYAH, NOR AQILA and **NOR ATIQAH**;

and my sons- and daughters-in-law,

FAZILAH, MALEK, HANIN, FAIRIZAL and **FIRWAN**.

This thirty-eighth book of Tracing the Scholars of Islam — the first woman in this series — tells the story of Fatimah al-Fihri, who according to tradition spent her wealth to build the mosque of al-Qarawiyyin in Fez. May her story teach us to spend our wealth on knowledge, and to judge history honestly.

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ABOUT THE COVER OF THIS EBOOK

The cover of this eBook is an **AI-generated image** — an ***imaginative depiction, not a real likeness*** of Fatimah al-Fihri. This label is also printed on the cover. This time the viewpoint is ***from a rooftop***, behind the figure; she is shown ***without a face*** and modestly dressed.

She stands at the rooftop parapet, watching a **modest mosque** being built below — with **wooden scaffolding**, **horseshoe arches**, a **well** in the courtyard, and workers carrying **bricks** and **timber**.

In the background are the **earthen houses of Fez** on the hillsides, a river valley and **morning mist**. The mosque is painted ***simply***, because its beautiful decorations were only added centuries later.

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FATIMAH AL-FIHRI

The thirty-eighth book of **Tracing the Scholars of Islam** tells the story of ***Fatimah bint Muhammad al-Fihri al-Qurashiyyah***, known as ***Umm al-Banin***. She is ***the first woman*** in this series.

According to tradition, she spent her inheritance to build the ***Mosque of al-Qarawiyyin*** in ***Fez***, Morocco, in the 9th century CE. The mosque later grew into a famous ***centre of learning***, and today a ***university***.

This eBook also covers ***the city of Fez*** in the Idrisid era, ***the role of the mosque*** in Islam, ***spending and endowment***, the history of al-Qarawiyyin as ***a centre of learning***, the place of ***women in seeking knowledge***, and how to ***assess her story*** honestly.

Note: The translation of Qur'anic verses in this eBook is that of Sahih International. The grading of each Hadith is stated in the Hadith box. Information from books of history and modern research is **biographical narration (not Hadith)** *and is placed in the brown "History Note" boxes. The cover image is an AI-generated image and is marked as such. Her years of birth and death are estimates.*

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MAINTAINING THE MOSQUES OF ALLAH

SURAH AT-TAWBAH 9:18

إِنَّمَا يَعۡمُرُ مَسَٰجِدَ ٱللَّهِ مَنۡ ءَامَنَ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلۡيَوۡمِ ٱلۡأٓخِرِ وَأَقَامَ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَءَاتَى
ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ وَلَمۡ يَخۡشَ إِلَّا ٱللَّهَۖ فَعَسَىٰٓ أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ أَن يَكُونُواْ مِنَ ٱلۡمُهۡتَدِينَ ١٨

The mosques of Allah are only to be maintained by those who believe in Allah and the Last Day and establish prayer and give zakah and do not fear except Allah, for it is expected that those will be of the [rightly] guided.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/9:18

Allah says that ***"The mosques of Allah are only to be maintained by those who believe in Allah"*** and the Last Day. Maintaining mosques includes ***building them***, ***filling them with worship***, and ***making them places of learning***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 9:18.

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MOSQUES ARE FOR ALLAH ALONE

SURAH AL-JINN 72:18

وَأَنَّ ٱلْمَسَٰجِدَ لِلَّهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوا۟ مَعَ ٱللَّهِ أَحَدًا ﴿١٨﴾

And [He revealed] that the masjids are for Allah, so do not invoke with Allah anyone.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/72:18

"the masjids are for Allah". Tafsir Ibn Kathir 72:18.

SURAH AN-NUR 24:36

فِى بُيُوتٍ أَذِنَ ٱللَّهُ أَن تُرْفَعَ وَيُذْكَرَ فِيهَا ٱسْمُهُۥ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُۥ فِيهَا بِٱلْغُدُوِّ وَٱلْـَٔاصَالِ ﴿٣٦﴾

[Such niches are] in mosques which Allah has ordered to be raised and that His name be mentioned therein; exalting Him within them in the morning and the evenings.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/24:36

The light of Allah's guidance shines ***"in mosques which Allah has ordered to be raised and that His name be mentioned therein"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 24:36.

WAYS TO MAINTAIN THE MOSQUE	EXAMPLE
Building and repairing	Contributing wealth, effort and skills.
Filling it with worship	Congregational prayer, remembrance and Qur'an recitation.
Teaching knowledge	Religious classes, lectures and study circles.
Keeping it clean	Community clean-ups and small donations.

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MEN AND WOMEN WHO DO RIGHTEOUS DEEDS

SURAH AN-NAHL 16:97

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَٰلِحًا مِّن ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهُۥ حَيَوٰةً طَيِّبَةً ۖ
وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُم بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا۟ يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٧﴾

Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/16:97

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life". Tafsir Ibn Kathir 16:97.

SURAH AL 'IMRAN 3:195

فَٱسْتَجَابَ لَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ أَنِّى لَآ أُضِيعُ عَمَلَ عَٰمِلٍ مِّنكُم مِّن ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنثَىٰ ۖ
بَعْضُكُم مِّنۢ بَعْضٍ ۖ فَٱلَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا۟ وَأُخْرِجُوا۟ مِن دِيَٰرِهِمْ وَأُوذُوا۟ فِى سَبِيلِى
وَقَٰتَلُوا۟ وَقُتِلُوا۟ لَأُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّـَٔاتِهِمْ وَلَأُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ جَنَّٰتٍ تَجْرِى مِن تَحْتِهَا
ٱلْأَنْهَٰرُ ثَوَابًا مِّنْ عِندِ ٱللَّهِ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ عِندَهُۥ حُسْنُ ٱلثَّوَابِ ﴿١٩٥﴾

And their Lord responded to them, "Never will I allow to be lost the work of [any] worker among you, whether male or female; you are of one another. So those who emigrated or were evicted from their homes or were harmed in My cause or fought or were killed - I will surely remove from them their misdeeds, and I will surely admit them to gardens beneath which rivers flow as reward from Allah, and Allah has with Him the best reward."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/3:195

Allah says: ***"Never will I allow to be lost the work of [any] worker among you, whether male or female"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 3:195.

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WOMEN IN ISLAMIC HISTORY

WOMAN	CONTRIBUTION
Khadijah رضى الله عنها	Supported the da'wah with her wealth and support.
'A'ishah رضى الله عنها	Narrated thousands of Hadith and taught the Companions.
Fatimah al-Fihri	According to tradition, built al-Qarawiyyin in Fez.
Mariam al-Ijliya	An astrolabe maker in Aleppo (Book 39).

Righteous deeds are not limited to men. Muslim women throughout history have contributed to ***knowledge, wealth and the building of society***.

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WOMEN BUILDERS IN HISTORY

Fatimah al-Fihri was not the only Muslim woman who built ***public facilities*** for the Ummah. Islamic history records many women who spent their wealth on mosques, schools and water supplies.

HISTORY NOTE: ZUBAIDAH AND THE HAJJ WELLS

Zubaidah, wife of the Caliph Harun ar-Rashid, is remembered for funding ***water channels*** for the people of Makkah and the pilgrims, and wells along the Hajj road from Iraq known as ***Darb Zubaidah***.

As with the story of Fatimah al-Fihri, the details come from historical sources and ***not all can be confirmed***, but the remains of her works are still studied today.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, “Zubaidah bint Ja‘far”. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zubaidah_bint_Ja%27far

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FORMS OF WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTION

FORM OF CONTRIBUTION	EXAMPLE
Mosques	According to tradition, al-Qarawiyyin and al-Andalusiyyin in Fez.
Water supply	Channels and wells for pilgrims.
Madrasas	Many noblewomen endowed schools.
Knowledge	Women Hadith scholars who taught both men and women.

These contributions show that Muslim women have always been ***partners in building*** Islamic civilisation.

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THE AGE: FEZ AND THE IDRISID DYNASTY

The city of ***Fez*** was founded by the ***Idrisid*** dynasty around ***789 CE***. According to the World Heritage site, the capital was built between ***789 and 808 CE***, and the ***Medina of Fez*** was inscribed as a ***UNESCO World Heritage Site*** in ***1981*** (World Heritage Site: Medina of Fez).

HISTORY NOTE: A CITY OF NEWCOMERS

Fez received many newcomers from ***Kairouan*** (Tunisia) and ***al-Andalus***. They lived on the two banks of the river — the ***al-Qarawiyyin*** quarter and the ***al-Andalusiyyin*** quarter.

These newcomers brought ***skills, trade and learning***, making Fez one of the most important cities in Morocco.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, “Fatima al-Fihriya”. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fatima_al-Fihriya

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FEZ IN HISTORY

YEAR	EVENT
c. 789 CE	The city of Fez is founded by the Idrisid dynasty.
Early 9th c. CE	Newcomers from Kairouan and al-Andalus settle in Fez.
859 CE	According to tradition, the foundations of al-Qarawiyyin are laid.
1135 CE	The mosque is enlarged by the Almoravid ruler.
1981 CE	The Medina of Fez is inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

A city built by many peoples shows that ***migration and unity*** can produce a great civilisation.

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WHO WAS FATIMAH AL-FIHRI?

According to tradition, Fatimah al-Fihri was ***born around 800 CE*** in ***Kairouan*** (now Tunisia). Her family migrated to ***Fez*** in the early period of the ***Idrisid*** dynasty.

Her father, ***Muhammad al-Fihri***, was a wealthy merchant. After his death, Fatimah and her sister ***Maryam*** inherited great wealth. According to the same tradition, Maryam built the ***Mosque of al-Andalusiyyin*** across the river.

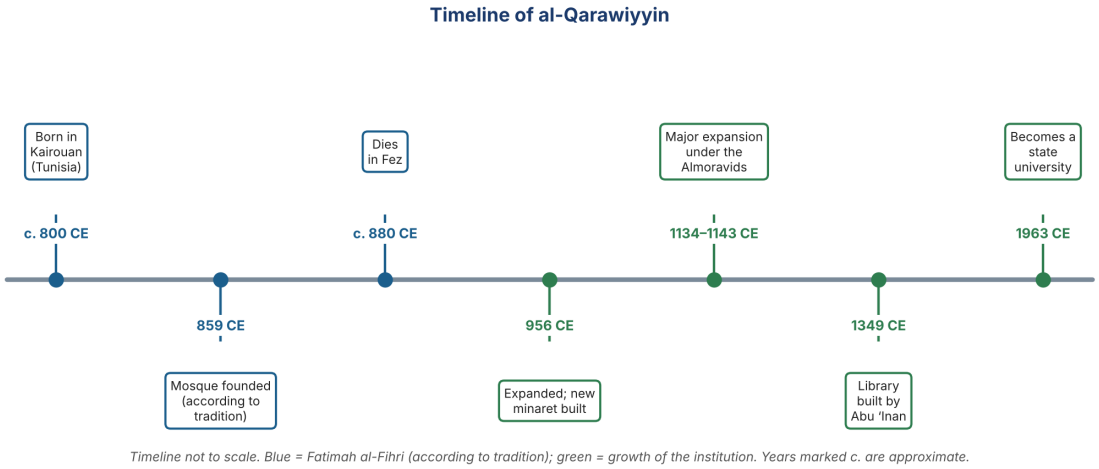


Figure 1: Timeline of Fatimah al-Fihri and the Mosque of al-Qarawiyyin.

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THE HIJRAH OF THE AL-FIHRI FAMILY

According to tradition, the al-Fihri family left ***Qayrawan*** and migrated to ***Fez*** to begin a new life. The Qur'an promises abundance to those who emigrate for the sake of Allah:

SURAH AN-NISA' 4:100

۞ وَمَن يُهَاجِرْ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ يَجِدْ فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ مُرَٰغَمًا كَثِيرًا وَسَعَةً ۚ وَمَن يَخْرُجْ مِنۢ بَيْتِهِۦ مُهَاجِرًا إِلَى ٱللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِۦ ثُمَّ يُدْرِكْهُ ٱلْمَوْتُ فَقَدْ وَقَعَ أَجْرُهُۥ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ ۗ وَكَانَ ٱللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا ﴿١٠٠﴾

And whoever emigrates for the cause of Allah will find on the earth many [alternative] locations and abundance. And whoever leaves his home as an emigrant to Allah and His Messenger and then death overtakes him - his reward has already become incumbent upon Allah. And Allah is ever Forgiving and Merciful.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/4:100

"whoever emigrates for the cause of Allah will find on the earth many [alternative] locations and abundance". Tafsir Ibn Kathir 4:100.

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LESSONS FROM HIJRAH

HIJRAH	LESSON
Leaving one's homeland	Courage to begin something new.
Bringing skills and wealth	Contributing to the new place.
Building a mosque in the new place	Making religion the foundation of society.
Mixing with other migrants	Building unity between peoples.

This migrant family did not only seek a living, but ***gave back*** to the society that welcomed them — through ***a mosque and knowledge***.

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SINCERITY FOR ALLAH

Tradition says Fatimah al-Fihri ***fasted*** throughout the building of the mosque — a sign that she sought ***the pleasure of Allah***. Every deed is judged by its ***intention***:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 1 — THE FIRST HADITH OF AL-ARBA'IN AN-NAWAWIYYAH

حَدَّثَنَا الْحُمَيْدِيُّ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ الزُّبَيْرِ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ سَعِيدٍ الْأَنْصَارِيُّ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ التَّيْمِيُّ، أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ عَلْقَمَةَ بْنَ وَقَّاصٍ اللَّيْثِيَّ، يَقُولُ سَمِعْتُ عُمَرَ بْنَ الْخَطَّابِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَلَى الْمِنْبَرِ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، يَقُولُ «إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ، وَإِنَّمَا لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مَا نَوَى، فَمَنْ كَانَتْ هِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى دُنْيَا يُصِيبُهَا أَوْ إِلَى امْرَأَةٍ يَنْكِحُهَا، فَهِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى مَا هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِ».

TRANSLATION:

'Alqamah ibn Waqqas al-Laythi said: I heard 'Umar ibn al-Khattab رضى الله عنه say on the pulpit: I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: **"Actions are only by intentions, and every person will have only what he intended. So whoever emigrated for worldly gain he would attain, or for a woman he would marry, his emigration is for that to which he emigrated."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from al-Humaydi 'Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr, from Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah, from Yahya ibn Sa'id al-Ansari, from Muhammad ibn Ibrahim at-Taymi, from 'Alqamah ibn Waqqas al-Laythi, from 'Umar ibn al-Khattab رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Beginning of Revelation, Hadith No. 1 (the first Hadith of Sahih al-Bukhari); also narrated by Muslim (No. 1907).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:1

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Every deed depends on its intention. Building a mosque, giving charity or teaching becomes ***a great act of worship*** when done ***for Allah***, not for name or human praise.

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THE MOSQUE OF AL-QARAWIYYIN

Tradition says the foundations were laid on ***1 Ramadan 245 AH (859 CE)***. The name "al-Qarawiyyin" means ***"the people of Kairouan"***, after the newcomers from that city.

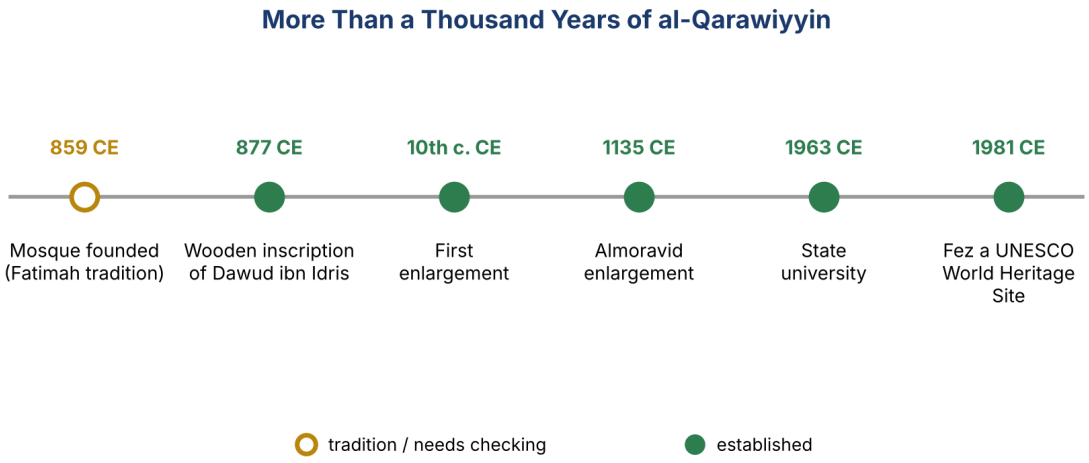


Figure 2: More than a thousand years of al-Qarawiyyin.

From a small mosque, al-Qarawiyyin was ***expanded many times***. In ***1135 CE***, the Almoravid ruler ***'Ali ibn Yusuf*** enlarged it from ***18 to 21 aisles*** (World Heritage Site).

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FROM MOSQUE TO UNIVERSITY

Among those who studied or taught there were ***al-Idrisi*** and ***Ibn Khaldun*** — two figures already told in this series. In ***1963 CE***, al-Qarawiyyin became a Moroccan ***state university***.

STAGE	DESCRIPTION
A small mosque	A place of prayer for the people of the Qarawiyyin quarter.
A great mosque	Expanded by ruler after ruler.
A centre of study	Study circles, a library and scholars.
A university	A Moroccan state university since 1963 CE.

This journey shows how a mosque can become ***a source of knowledge*** for the Ummah over centuries.

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THE ROLE OF THE MOSQUE IN ISLAM

Since the time of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the mosque has not only been a place of prayer. It is also ***a centre of learning, consultation and community service***.

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 645 (MUTTAFAQ 'ALAIH)

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ يُوسُفَ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنَا مَالِكٌ، عَنْ نَافِعٍ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ «صَلاَةُ الْجَمَاعَةِ تَفْضُلُ صَلاَةَ الْفَذِّ بِسَبْعٍ وَعِشْرِينَ دَرَجَةً».

TRANSLATION:

'Abdullah ibn 'Umar رضى الله عنهما reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"Prayer in congregation is superior to prayer offered alone by twenty-seven degrees."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Abdullah ibn Yusuf, from Imam Malik ibn Anas, from Nafi', from 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Call to Prayer, Hadith No. 645. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 650) and in the Muwatta' of Imam Malik.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:645

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Prayer in congregation is twenty-seven degrees better than prayer alone. A mosque filled with worshippers gathers the Ummah, and so becomes the right place for ***teaching and learning***.

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ROLES OF THE MOSQUE

ROLE	EXAMPLE
Worship	Prayer, retreat (i'tikaf) and remembrance.
Knowledge	Circles of Qur'an, Hadith, jurisprudence and language.
Welfare	Helping the poor and travellers.
Community	A place to meet, consult and solve problems.

Al-Qarawiyyin is a fine example of a mosque that fulfilled ***all these roles*** until it became known throughout the world.

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WHERE DOES HER STORY COME FROM?

The detailed story of Fatimah al-Fihri comes mainly from the book ***Rawd al-Qirtas*** by ***Ibn Abi Zar'***, written in the early 14th century CE.

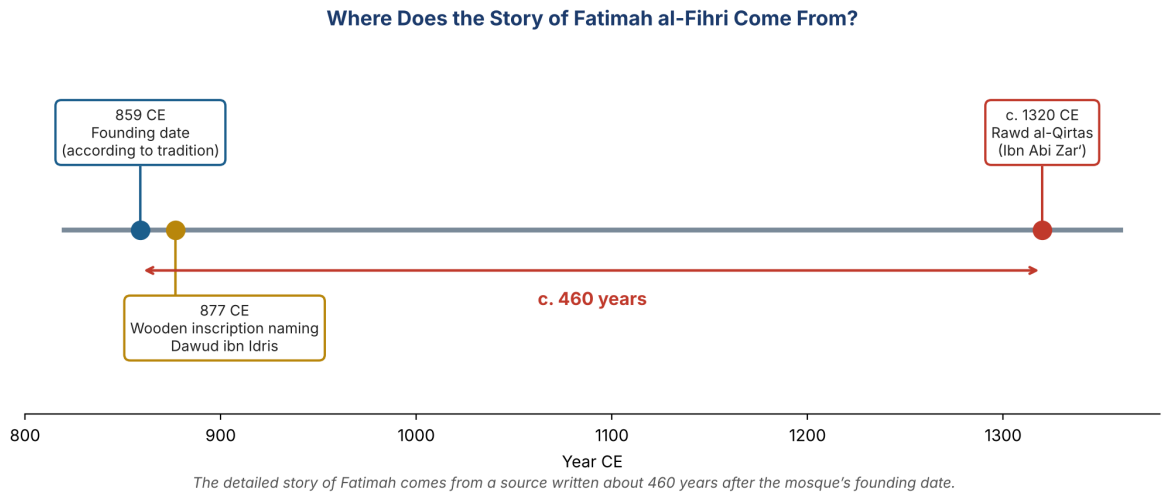


Figure 3: The time gap between the mosque's founding date and the main source of Fatimah al-Fihri's story.

HISTORY NOTE: WHAT DO HISTORIANS SAY?

Some modern historians — such as ***Roger Le Tourneau***, ***Jonathan Bloom*** and ***Chafik Benchekroun*** — doubt the details of this story. For example, the tale of ***two sisters building two mosques*** is considered too "neat" to be certain.

A ***wooden inscription*** found during 20th-century renovations names ***Dawud ibn Idris*** as founder of "this mosque" in ***263 AH (877 CE)***. Some researchers believe the inscription came from another mosque.

In short, Fatimah's existence ***is accepted by Moroccan tradition***, but the details of her life ***cannot be fully confirmed***.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Fatima al-Fihriya". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fatima_al-Fihriya

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BUILDING A MOSQUE FOR ALLAH

Building a mosque is a deed whose ***reward continues***. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ spoke of its reward:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 450

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ سُلَيْمَانَ، حَدَّثَنِي ابْنُ وَهْبٍ، أَخْبَرَنِي عَمْرٌو، أَنَّ بُكَيْرًا، حَدَّثَهُ أَنَّ عَاصِمَ بْنَ عُمَرَ بْنِ قَتَادَةَ حَدَّثَهُ أَنَّهُ، سَمِعَ عُبَيْدَ اللَّهِ الْخَوْلاَنِيَّ، أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ عُثْمَانَ بْنَ عَفَّانَ، يَقُولُ عِنْدَ قَوْلِ النَّاسِ فِيهِ حِينَ بَنَى مَسْجِدَ الرَّسُولِ صلى الله عليه وسلم إِنَّكُمْ أَكْثَرْتُمْ، وَإِنِّي سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَقُولُ «مَنْ بَنَى مَسْجِدًا ـ قَالَ بُكَيْرٌ حَسِبْتُ أَنَّهُ قَالَ ـ يَبْتَغِي بِهِ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ، بَنَى اللَّهُ لَهُ مِثْلَهُ فِي الْجَنَّةِ».

TRANSLATION:

'Ubaydullah al-Khawlani heard 'Uthman ibn 'Affan رضى الله عنه say, when people objected to him as he was (re)building the Mosque of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: "You have said too much. Indeed I heard the Prophet ﷺ say: **'Whoever builds a mosque** — Bukayr said: I think he said — **seeking the Face of Allah by it, Allah will build for him the like of it in Paradise.'**"

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Yahya ibn Sulayman, from Ibn Wahb, from 'Amr (ibn al-Harith), from Bukayr, from 'Asim ibn 'Umar ibn Qatadah, from 'Ubaydullah al-Khawlani, from 'Uthman ibn 'Affan رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Prayer, Chapter on Whoever Builds a Mosque, Hadith No. 450. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 533).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:450

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

What matters is ***sincerity*** — building a mosque ***seeking the Face of Allah***, not for name or glory. Wealth spent on the house of Allah and on knowledge is ***an investment for the Hereafter***.

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SPENDING WHAT YOU LOVE

According to tradition, Fatimah al-Fihri used her ***inheritance*** — wealth that must have been very precious to her — to build the mosque.

SURAH AL 'IMRAN 3:92

لَن تَنَالُواْ ٱلۡبِرَّ حَتَّىٰ تُنفِقُواْ مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَۚ وَمَا تُنفِقُواْ مِن شَيۡءٖ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ بِهِۦ عَلِيمٞ ٩٢

Never will you attain the good [reward] until you spend [in the way of Allah] from that which you love. And whatever you spend - indeed, Allah is Knowing of it.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/3:92

"Never will you attain the good [reward] until you spend [in the way of Allah] from that which you love". Tafsir Ibn Kathir 3:92.

SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:261

مَّثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمۡوَٰلَهُمۡ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنۢبَتَتۡ سَبۡعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنۢبُلَةٖ مِّاْئَةُ حَبَّةٖۗ وَٱللَّهُ يُضَٰعِفُ لِمَن يَشَآءُۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٢٦١

The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/2:261

Spending in the way of Allah is ***"like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 2:261.

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HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 73

حَدَّثَنَا الْحُمَيْدِيُّ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي إِسْمَاعِيلُ بْنُ أَبِي خَالِدٍ، عَلَى غَيْرِ مَا حَدَّثَنَاهُ الزُّهْرِيُّ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ قَيْسَ بْنَ أَبِي حَازِمٍ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ مَسْعُودٍ، قَالَ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم « لاَ حَسَدَ إِلاَّ فِي اثْنَتَيْنِ رَجُلٌ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ مَالاً فَسُلِّطَ عَلَى هَلَكَتِهِ فِي الْحَقِّ، وَرَجُلٌ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْحِكْمَةَ، فَهْوَ يَقْضِي بِهَا وَيُعَلِّمُهَا ».

TRANSLATION:

‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ud رضى الله عنه said: The Prophet ﷺ said: **“There is no envy except in two cases: a man whom Allah has given wealth and he spends it in the way of truth, and a man whom Allah has given wisdom (knowledge) and he judges by it and teaches it.”**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from al-Humaidi, from Sufyan ibn ‘Uyainah, from Isma‘il ibn Abi Khalid, from Qais ibn Abi Hazim, from ‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ud رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Knowledge, chapter on envying in knowledge and wisdom, Hadith No. 73. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 816).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:73

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

There is no envy except in two things: one who spends his wealth in the cause of truth, and one who teaches his knowledge. The story of al-Qarawiyyin joins ***both*** — wealth to build, and knowledge taught within it.

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DEEDS THAT LAST

Wealth and family will be left behind, but ***deeds*** remain with us:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 6514 (MUTTAFAQ 'ALAYH)

حَدَّثَنَا الْحُمَيْدِيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ أَبِي بَكْرِ بْنِ عَمْرِو بْنِ حَزْمٍ، سَمِعَ أَنَسَ بْنَ مَالِكٍ، يَقُولُ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهُ صلى الله عليه وسلم «يَتْبَعُ الْمَيِّتَ ثَلاَثَةٌ، فَيَرْجِعُ اثْنَانِ وَيَبْقَى مَعَهُ وَاحِدٌ، يَتْبَعُهُ أَهْلُهُ وَمَالُهُ وَعَمَلُهُ، فَيَرْجِعُ أَهْلُهُ وَمَالُهُ، وَيَبْقَى عَمَلُهُ».

TRANSLATION:

Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"Three things follow the deceased; two return and one remains with him. He is followed by his family, his wealth and his deeds. His family and his wealth return, and his deeds remain."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from al-Humaydi, from Sufyan (ibn 'Uyaynah), from 'Abdullah ibn Abi Bakr ibn 'Amr ibn Hazm, from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Softening the Heart, Chapter: The Agony of Death, Hadith No. 6514. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 2960).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:6514

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Family and wealth return, while deeds remain. Mosques, endowments and beneficial knowledge are deeds that ***keep bringing reward*** even long after their owner is gone.

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ENDOWMENTS FOR KNOWLEDGE

TYPE OF ENDOWMENT	EXAMPLE TODAY
Mosques and prayer halls	Building or repairing places of worship.
Schools and madrasas	Buildings, books and scholarships.
Libraries	Books and reading materials for the public.
Cash endowment	Small donations pooled for large projects.

We do not need to be as wealthy as Fatimah al-Fihri to give an endowment. ***Small, sincere contributions*** are also accepted by Allah.

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PRESERVING KNOWLEDGE SO IT IS NOT LOST

Institutions like al-Qarawiyyin preserve ***knowledge and scholars*** from generation to generation. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ warned about the loss of knowledge:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 100 (MUTTAFAQ 'ALAIH)

حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ بْنُ أَبِي أُوَيْسٍ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي مَالِكٌ، عَنْ هِشَامِ بْنِ عُرْوَةَ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرِو بْنِ الْعَاصِ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَقُولُ «إِنَّ اللَّهَ لاَ يَقْبِضُ الْعِلْمَ انْتِزَاعًا، يَنْتَزِعُهُ مِنَ الْعِبَادِ، وَلَكِنْ يَقْبِضُ الْعِلْمَ بِقَبْضِ الْعُلَمَاءِ، حَتَّى إِذَا لَمْ يُبْقِ عَالِمًا، اتَّخَذَ النَّاسُ رُءُوسًا جُهَّالاً فَسُئِلُوا، فَأَفْتَوْا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ، فَضَلُّوا وَأَضَلُّوا». قَالَ الْفِرَبْرِيُّ حَدَّثَنَا عَبَّاسٌ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا قُتَيْبَةُ حَدَّثَنَا جَرِيرٌ عَنْ هِشَامٍ نَحْوَهُ.

TRANSLATION:

'Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn al-'As رضى الله عنهما said: I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: **"Allah does not take away knowledge by snatching it from His servants, but He takes away knowledge by taking away the scholars, until, when no scholar remains, people take ignorant leaders. They are asked and they give rulings without knowledge; so they go astray and lead others astray."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Isma'il ibn Abi Uways, from Imam Malik, from Hisham ibn 'Urwah, from his father, 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr, from 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn al-'As رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Knowledge, Hadith No. 100. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 2673).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:100

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Allah takes away knowledge by taking away the scholars. So Muslims must ***raise new scholars*** before the old ones pass away. Mosques, madrasas and universities are ***the workshops of scholars*** for the Ummah.

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WAYS OF PRESERVING KNOWLEDGE

WAY	EXAMPLE
Teaching the young	Study circles, schools and universities.
Keeping books	Libraries and the preservation of manuscripts.
Writing and publishing	Books, eBooks and articles.
Funding study	Endowments, scholarships and donations.

Al-Qarawiyyin has lasted more than ***a thousand years*** because the knowledge in it ***continued to be taught***, not merely stored.

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A CENTRE OF LEARNING IN THE MUSLIM WORLD

For centuries, al-Qarawiyyin was ***a centre of study*** that drew students from North Africa, al-Andalus and West Africa. There they studied ***the Qur'an, Hadith, Maliki jurisprudence, Arabic***, and other sciences.

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 5027

حَدَّثَنَا حَجَّاجُ بْنُ مِنْهَالٍ، حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي عَلْقَمَةُ بْنُ مَرْثَدٍ، سَمِعْتُ سَعْدَ بْنَ عُبَيْدَةَ، عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ السُّلَمِيِّ، عَنْ عُثْمَانَ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ «خَيْرُكُمْ مَنْ تَعَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ وَعَلَّمَهُ». قَالَ وَأَقْرَأَ أَبُو عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ فِي إِمْرَةِ عُثْمَانَ حَتَّى كَانَ الْحَجَّاجُ، قَالَ وَذَاكَ الَّذِي أَقْعَدَنِي مَقْعَدِي هَذَا.

TRANSLATION:

'Uthman رضى الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"The best of you are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it."** (Sa'd ibn 'Ubaydah) said: Abu 'Abd ar-Rahman (as-Sulami) taught the Qur'an from the caliphate of 'Uthman until the time of al-Hajjaj, and he said: "That is what has kept me sitting in this seat of mine."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Hajjaj ibn Minhal, from Shu'bah, from 'Alqamah ibn Marthad, from Sa'd ibn 'Ubaydah, from Abu 'Abd ar-Rahman as-Sulami, from 'Uthman ibn 'Affan رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Virtues of the Qur'an, Hadith No. 5027.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:5027

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

The best of you are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it. A mosque that is a place of learning and teaching the Qur'an gathers ***the best people*** of the Ummah.

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FIELDS OF STUDY AT AL-QARAWIYYIN

FIELD	EXAMPLE
Qur'an and tafsir	Memorisation, recitation and explanation.
Hadith	Transmission and understanding of Hadith.
Jurisprudence	The Maliki school, dominant in Morocco.
Arabic	Grammar, literature and rhetoric.
Other sciences	Astronomy, mathematics and medicine in some periods.

Institutions like this show that ***the mosque and knowledge*** cannot be separated in Islamic civilisation.

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WOMEN AND KNOWLEDGE

Since the time of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, women have ***eagerly sought knowledge***. They themselves asked for special time to learn:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 101

حَدَّثَنَا آدَمُ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي ابْنُ الأَصْبَهَانِيِّ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أَبَا صَالِحٍ، ذَكْوَانَ يُحَدِّثُ عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الخُدْرِيِّ، قَالَتِ النِّسَاءُ لِلنَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم غَلَبَنَا عَلَيْكَ الرِّجَالُ، فَاجْعَلْ لَنَا يَوْمًا مِنْ نَفْسِكَ. فَوَعَدَهُنَّ يَوْمًا لَقِيَهُنَّ فِيهِ، فَوَعَظَهُنَّ وَأَمَرَهُنَّ، فَكَانَ فِيمَا قَالَ لَهُنَّ «مَا مِنْكُنَّ امْرَأَةٌ تُقَدِّمُ ثَلاَثَةً مِنْ وَلَدِهَا إِلاَّ كَانَ لَهَا حِجَابًا مِنَ النَّارِ». فَقَالَتِ امْرَأَةٌ وَاثْنَيْنِ فَقَالَ «وَاثْنَيْنِ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Sa'id al-Khudri رضى الله عنه narrated: **The women said to the Prophet ﷺ: "The men have taken all your time from us, so appoint a day for us from yourself."** So he promised them a day on which he met them, advised them and instructed them. Among what he said to them was: "There is no woman among you who loses three of her children but they will be a shield for her from the Fire." A woman asked: "And two?" He said: "And two."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Adam, from Shu'bah, from Ibn al-Asbahani, from Abu Salih Dhakwan, from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Knowledge, Chapter on Setting a Special Day for Teaching Women, Hadith No. 101.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:101

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ ***granted the women's request*** and set a special day to teach them. Knowledge is the right of ***both men and women***.

SURAH AL-AHZAB 33:35

إِنَّ ٱلْمُسْلِمِينَ وَٱلْمُسْلِمَٰتِ وَٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَٱلْمُؤْمِنَٰتِ وَٱلْقَٰنِتِينَ وَٱلْقَٰنِتَٰتِ
وَٱلصَّٰدِقِينَ وَٱلصَّٰدِقَٰتِ وَٱلصَّٰبِرِينَ وَٱلصَّٰبِرَٰتِ وَٱلْخَٰشِعِينَ وَٱلْخَٰشِعَٰتِ

وَٱلْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ وَٱلْمُتَصَدِّقَٰتِ وَٱلصَّٰٓئِمِينَ وَٱلصَّٰٓئِمَٰتِ وَٱلْحَٰفِظِينَ فُرُوجَهُمْ وَٱلْحَٰفِظَٰتِ وَٱلذَّٰكِرِينَ ٱللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَٱلذَّٰكِرَٰتِ أَعَدَّ ٱللَّهُ لَهُم مَّغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٣٥﴾

Indeed, the Muslim men and Muslim women, the believing men and believing women, the obedient men and obedient women, the truthful men and truthful women, the patient men and patient women, the humble men and humble women, the charitable men and charitable women, the fasting men and fasting women, the men who guard their private parts and the women who do so, and the men who remember Allah often and the women who do so - for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/33:35

Allah mentions men and women ***together*** in every good quality — including ***"the charitable men and charitable women"*** — and has prepared for them all ***forgiveness and a great reward***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 33:35.

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KNOWLEDGE RAISES RANKS

SURAH AL-MUJADILAH 58:11

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمۡ تَفَسَّحُواْ فِي ٱلۡمَجَٰلِسِ فَٱفۡسَحُواْ يَفۡسَحِ ٱللَّهُ لَكُمۡۖ وَإِذَا قِيلَ ٱنشُزُواْ فَٱنشُزُواْ يَرۡفَعِ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ مِنكُمۡ وَٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ ٱلۡعِلۡمَ دَرَجَٰتٖۚ وَٱللَّهُ بِمَا تَعۡمَلُونَ خَبِيرٞ ١١

O you who have believed, when you are told, "Space yourselves" in assemblies, then make space; Allah will make space for you. And when you are told, "Arise," then arise; Allah will raise those who have believed among you and those who were given knowledge, by degrees. And Allah is Acquainted with what you do.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/58:11

Allah ***"will raise those who have believed among you and those who were given knowledge"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 58:11.

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GIRLS' EDUCATION TODAY

More than a thousand years after Fatimah al-Fihri, girls' education remains a challenge in many places. According to ***UNESCO*** (2025), about ***122 million*** girls worldwide are still ***out of school***, although ***50 million*** more have enrolled since 2015 (UNESCO).

CHALLENGE	SOLUTION
Poverty	Scholarships, endowments and education aid.
Distant schools	Building schools and providing transport.
Very early marriage	Awareness of the right to education.
Few women teachers	Training more women teachers.

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CONTINUING FATIMAH'S LEGACY

The story of Fatimah al-Fihri — though its details are debated — inspires many Muslim women to ***contribute to knowledge***. Every mother, teacher and donor who supports children's education ***continues this legacy***.

ROLE	HOW TO CONTRIBUTE
Parents	Encouraging both sons and daughters to learn.
Teachers	Teaching sincerely and patiently.
Donors	Supporting schools and scholarships.
Students	Studying hard and teaching others.

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DAUGHTERS: A MERCY AND A SHIELD

Fatimah al-Fihri was ***a daughter*** who inherited her father's wealth and used it for good. Islam honours daughters and promises a great reward to those who raise them well:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 1418 (MUTTAFAQ 'ALAYH)

حَدَّثَنَا بِشْرُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ، أَخْبَرَنَا مَعْمَرٌ، عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ أَبِي بَكْرِ بْنِ حَزْمٍ، عَنْ عُرْوَةَ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ ـ رضى الله عنها ـ قَالَتْ دَخَلَتِ امْرَأَةٌ مَعَهَا ابْنَتَانِ لَهَا تَسْأَلُ، فَلَمْ تَجِدْ عِنْدِي شَيْئًا غَيْرَ تَمْرَةٍ فَأَعْطَيْتُهَا إِيَّاهَا، فَقَسَمَتْهَا بَيْنَ ابْنَتَيْهَا وَلَمْ تَأْكُلْ مِنْهَا، ثُمَّ قَامَتْ فَخَرَجَتْ، فَدَخَلَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ صلى الله عليه وسلم عَلَيْنَا، فَأَخْبَرْتُهُ فَقَالَ «مَنِ ابْتُلِيَ مِنْ هَذِهِ الْبَنَاتِ بِشَيْءٍ كُنَّ لَهُ سِتْرًا مِنَ النَّارِ».

TRANSLATION:

'A'ishah رضى الله عنها said: A woman came with her two daughters, asking for help. I had nothing but a single date, so I gave it to her. She divided it between her two daughters and ate none of it herself, then got up and left. The Prophet ﷺ came in and I told him, and he said: **"Whoever is tried with any of these daughters (and treats them well), they will be a shield for him from the Fire."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Bishr ibn Muhammad, from 'Abdullah (ibn al-Mubarak), from Ma'mar, from az-Zuhri, from 'Abdullah ibn Abi Bakr ibn Hazm, from 'Urwah, from 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Zakat, Chapter: Give Charity Even With Half a Date, Hadith No. 1418. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 2629).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:1418

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Daughters raised well become a shield from the Fire.

CALLING TO GOOD

Everyone who studied at al-Qarawiyyin and spread their knowledge adds ***reward*** to those who built it and taught there:

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2674

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ، وَابْنُ حُجْرٍ، قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - يَعْنُونَ ابْنَ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ «مَنْ دَعَا إِلَى هُدًى كَانَ لَهُ مِنَ الأَجْرِ مِثْلُ أُجُورِ مَنْ تَبِعَهُ لاَ يَنْقُصُ ذَلِكَ مِنْ أُجُورِهِمْ شَيْئًا وَمَنْ دَعَا إِلَى ضَلاَلَةٍ كَانَ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الإِثْمِ مِثْلُ آثَامِ مَنْ تَبِعَهُ لاَ يَنْقُصُ ذَلِكَ مِنْ آثَامِهِمْ شَيْئًا».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"Whoever calls to guidance will have a reward like the rewards of those who follow him, without that diminishing their rewards in the least.** And whoever calls to misguidance will bear a sin like the sins of those who follow him, without that diminishing their sins in the least."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya ibn Ayyub, Qutaybah ibn Sa'id and 'Ali ibn Hujr, from Isma'il ibn Ja'far, from al-'Ala' ibn 'Abd ar-Rahman, from his father 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn Ya'qub, from Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Knowledge, Hadith No. 2674.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2674

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Whoever calls to guidance will have a reward like those who follow him. One mosque built sincerely can produce ***thousands of scholars***, and its reward keeps flowing.

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ESTABLISHED REPORTS AND POPULAR STORIES

The table below separates what is established from what needs checking about Fatimah al-Fihri.

STORIES AND THEIR STATUS

POPULAR CLAIM	STATUS
The Mosque of al-Qarawiyyin in Fez has existed since the 9th century CE.	Established. It dates from the Idrisid period and was expanded many times.
Fatimah al-Fihri built the mosque in 859 CE.	Traditional account (Rawd al-Qirtas, 14th century CE); its details are disputed by some historians.
She fasted throughout the mosque's construction.	Traditional account; cannot be confirmed.
Her sister Maryam built the Mosque of al-Andalusiyyin.	Traditional account; considered too "neat" by some historians.
She founded "the world's first university".	Exaggerated. It began as a mosque and centre of study; it became a state university in 1963 CE.
Al-Qarawiyyin is the oldest educational institution still operating.	Recognised by UNESCO and Guinness; some scholars dispute the use of the term "university".

REFLECTION — HONOURING WITHOUT EXAGGERATING

Although the details of her story cannot be confirmed, ***al-Qarawiyyin*** still stands as proof that ***wealth endowed for knowledge*** can bring benefit for more than a thousand years.

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LESSONS AND CONCLUSION

LESSONS FROM THIS EBOOK

First: Maintain the mosques of Allah with worship and knowledge (9:18; 72:18; 24:36).

Second: Allah does not waste the deeds of men and women (16:97; 3:195).

Third: Migration and unity produce civilisation — the story of Fez.

Fourth: Make your intention sincere for Allah (Sahih al-Bukhari 1).

Fifth: Fill mosques with congregational prayer and learning (Sahih al-Bukhari 645).

Sixth: Build and support mosques for Allah (Sahih al-Bukhari 450).

Seventh: Spend from what you love (3:92; 2:261; Sahih al-Bukhari 73).

Eighth: Lasting deeds are the true provision (Sahih al-Bukhari 6514).

Ninth: Learn and teach the Qur'an (Sahih al-Bukhari 5027).

Tenth: Knowledge is the right of men and women (Sahih al-Bukhari 101; 33:35; 58:11).

Eleventh: Call to good (Sahih Muslim 2674).

Twelfth: Separate established history from popular stories.

CONCLUSION

According to tradition, Fatimah al-Fihri ***died around 880 CE*** in Fez. The next book of **Tracing the Scholars of Islam**, in sha Allah, will tell the story of ***Mariam al-Ijliya***, the woman astrolabe maker of Aleppo. Wallahu a'lam.

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GLOSSARY AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

GLOSSARY

TERM	MEANING
Umm al-Banin	Fatimah al-Fihri's title, meaning "mother of children".
Al-Qarawiyyin	"The people of Kairouan"; the name of the mosque in Fez.
Idrisids	The dynasty that founded Fez.
Waqf (endowment)	Property given permanently for the public good.
Infaq	Spending wealth in the way of Allah.
Halaqah	A study circle seated around a teacher.
Rawd al-Qirtas	A history of Morocco by Ibn Abi Zar'.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What are the ways of maintaining a mosque (9:18)?

2. Why is intention so important in building a mosque?

3. What does "spending from what you love" (3:92) mean?

4. Why do some historians doubt the details of Fatimah al-Fihri's story?

5. How can we help girls' education today?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Visit a nearby mosque and list the learning activities held there.

Activity 2: Join or start a small endowment fund to buy books for a mosque or school library.

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SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:261

مَّثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمۡوَٰلَهُمۡ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنۢبَتَتۡ سَبۡعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنۢبُلَةٖ مِّاْئَةُ حَبَّةٖۗ وَٱللَّهُ يُضَٰعِفُ لِمَن يَشَآءُۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٢٦١

The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/2:261

SURAH SABA' 34:39

قُلۡ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَبۡسُطُ ٱلرِّزۡقَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ مِنۡ عِبَادِهِۦ وَيَقۡدِرُ لَهُۥۚ وَمَآ أَنفَقۡتُم مِّن شَيۡءٖ فَهُوَ يُخۡلِفُهُۥۖ وَهُوَ خَيۡرُ ٱلرَّٰزِقِينَ ٣٩

Say, "Indeed, my Lord extends provision for whom He wills of His servants and restricts [it] for him. But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] - He will compensate it; and He is the best of providers."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/34:39

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2588

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، وَابْنُ، حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - وَهُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « مَا نَقَصَتْ صَدَقَةٌ مِنْ مَالٍ وَمَا زَادَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا بِعَفْوٍ إِلاَّ عِزًّا وَمَا تَوَاضَعَ أَحَدٌ لِلَّهِ إِلاَّ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Charity does not decrease wealth.

Allah does not increase a servant who forgives except in honour. And no one humbles himself for the sake of Allah except that Allah raises him in rank."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه .

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Virtue, Good Manners and Joining the Ties of Kinship (Kitab al-Birr wa al-Silah wa al-Adab), chapter on the encouragement of forgiveness and humility, Hadith No. 2588.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2588

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 1631

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ - يَعْنِي ابْنَ سَعِيدٍ - وَابْنُ حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - هُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « إِذَا مَاتَ الإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلاَّ مِنْ ثَلاَثَةٍ إِلاَّ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "When a person dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: an ongoing charity, knowledge that is benefited from, or a righteous child who prays for him."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه .

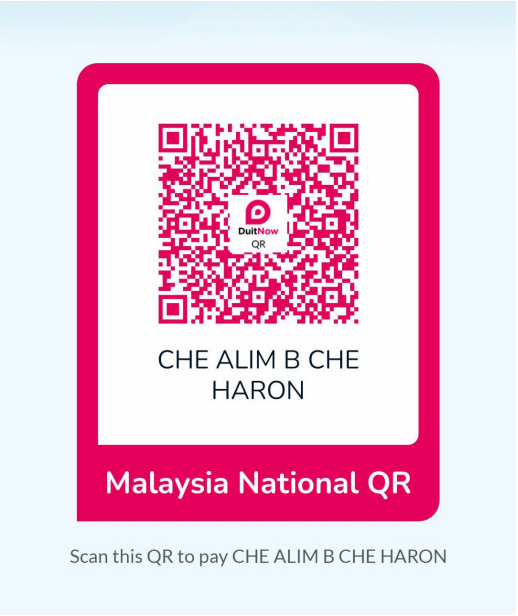
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GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:1631

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