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A Short History of Fadak after the Martyrdom of Fatimah (sa)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The motive which causes us to further pursue the history of Fadak and to extract the continuation of events after it for a period of three centuries from the texts of the historical books is to clarify three questions

- a. The rule of annulment of inheritance from prophets made by the Holy Prophet (S), in other words, that the property of the Holy Prophet (S) is a part of the public treasury and belongs to all Muslims. This was claimed by the first Caliph Abu Bakr, and was rejected by his successors, both by the next two caliphs (Umar and Uthman), and by the Umayyads and the Abbasids. We must consider that the lawfulness and rightfulness of their caliphate depended upon the correctness
- b. Imam 'Ali (as) and the descendants of Fatimah (sa) never had any hesitation regarding the rightfulness and justifiability of their claim. They insisted and confirmed that Fatimah (sa) had always been right and that Abu Bakr's claim had always been rejected, and they did not yield to the false claim.
- c. Whenever one of the Caliphs made a decision to put into effect Allah's command, in regards to Fadak, to observe justice and equity, and to restore the right to the entitled one in conformity with Islamic rules, he used to return back the Fadak to the descendants of Fatimah (sa) and to hand it over to them.
 1. Umar was the most harsh person in keeping Fatimah (sa) from Fadak and her inheritance as he himself confessed:

When the Messenger of Allah (S) died I came along with Abu Bakr to 'Ali ibn Abu Talib, and said: 'What do you have to say about what has been left by the Messenger of Allah?' , He replied: 'We have the

most rights with the Holy Prophet (S). ‘ I (Umar) said: ‘ Even those properties of Khaibar?’

He said: ‘ Yes, even those of Khaybar. ‘ I said: ‘ Even those of Fadak? ‘, He replied: ‘ Yes, even those of Fadak.’ Then I said: ‘By Allah, we say no, even if you cut our necks with saws.’

Sunni reference:

– Majma al Zawaid, vol 9 pp 39–40

As mentioned in the previous article, Umar took the document of Fadak and tore it up. But when Umar became caliph (13/634–23/644) he gave back the Fadak to the inheritors of the Holy Prophet (S). Yaqut al Hamawi, the famous historian and geographer, following the event of Fadak said:

Then, when Umar ibn al Khattab became the caliph and gained victories and the Muslims had secured abundant wealth (i.e the public treasury satisfied the caliphate’s needs), he made his judgement contrary to that of his predecessor, and that was to give it (Fadak) back to the Prophet’s heirs. At that time ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib and Abbas ibn Abd al Muttalib disputed Fadak. ‘Ali said that the Holy Prophet (S) had bestowed it on Fatimah (sa) during his life time. Abbas denied and used to say, ‘This was in the possession of the Holy Prophet (S), and I am sharing with his heirs.’ They were disputing this with among each other and asked Umar to settle the case: ‘Both of you are more conscious and aware to your problem; but I only give it to you.’ (See note for this para)

Sunni references:

– Mujam al Buldan, vol 4 p 238–9

– Wafa al Wafa, vol 3 p 999

– Tadhīb al Tadhīb, vol 10 p 124

– Lisan al Arab, vol 10 p 473

– Taj al Arus, vol 7 p 166

(Note: The last part of the historic event has been inserted after wards to demonstrate the matter of inheritance by the brother of the deceased or the paternal uncle of the deceased when he has no sons. problem is a matter of dispute between Islamic Sects. The judicial and the jurisprudential discussion is separate from our goal. We are only discussing the matter historically. Abbas had no claim in this case because he had not shown that he had a share in this property, nor did his descendants consider it to be among their assets even when they had become caliphs and were reigning. They owed this estate either in their position as Caliphs, or they used to return it to the descendants of Fatimah (sa) when they had decided to be just governors.)

2. When Uthman ibn Affan became the caliph after the death for Umar he granted Fadak to Marwan ibn al Hakam, his cousin, and this was one of the causes of the vindictive feelings among the Muslims towards Uthman, which ended in the revolt against him and his murder.

Sunni references:

- as Sunan al Kubra, vol 6 p 301
- Wafa al Wafa, vol 3 p 1000
- Sharah, ibn Al Hadid, vol 1 p 198
- al Maarif, al Qutaybah, p 195
- al Iqd al Farid, vol 4 p 283, 485
- at Tarikh, Abul Fida, vol 1 p 168
- Ibn al Wardi, vol 1 p 204

In this way Fadak fell into the possession of Marwan; he used to sell crops and products for at least ten thousand dinars per year, and if in some years its income decreased, this drop was not very pronounced. This was its usual profit until the time of the Caliphate of Umar ibn Abd al Aziz (in 100.718).

Sunni references:

- Tabaqat, Ibn Sa'ad, vol 5 p 286-7
- Subh al Asha, vol 4 p 291

3. When Muawiyah ibn Abu Sufyan became the Caliph, he became the partner with Marwan and others in Fadak. He allotted one third to Marwan, and one third to Amr ibn Uthman ibn Affan and one third to his son, Yazid. This was after the death of Imam Hasan (as). In the words of the Sunni historian, Yaqubi

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Sunni reference:

- at Tarikh, Yaqubi, vol 2 p 199

It was in the possession of the three above mentioned persons until Marwan became Caliph and then he completely took over possession over it. Then he donated to his two sons, Abd al Malik and Abd al Aziz. Then Abd al Aziz donated his share to his son (Umar ibn Abd al Aziz).

4. When Umar ibn Abd al Aziz became the Caliph he delivered a lecture and mentioned that: 'Verily, Fadak was among the things that Allah had bestowed on His Messenger, and no horse, nor camel was pricked against it.'

As he mentioned the case of Fadak during the past caliphates he said: Then Marwan gave it to my father and to Abd al Malik. It became mine and of al Walids and Sulaymans (two sons of Abd al Malik).

When al Walid became caliph I asked him for his share and he gave it to me. Then I gathered the three parts and I possess no property more preferable to me than this. Be witness that I returned it to its original state. He wrote this to his governor in Medina (Abu Bakr ibn Muhammad ibn Amr ibn Hazm) and

ordered him to carry out what he had declared in the speech he delivered. Then Fadak came into the possession of the children of Fatimah (sa).

This was the first removal of oppression by returning Fadak to the Children of 'Ali (as).

Shi'a reference:

– al Awa'il, Abu Hilal al Askari, p 209

5. When Yazid ibn Abd al Malik became caliph (101/720–105/724) he seized Fadak and they (the children of Imam 'Ali (as)) were dispossessed. It fell into the possession of the Banu Marwan as it had been previously. They passed it from hand to hand until their caliphate expired and passed away to Banu al Abbas.

6. When Abul Abbas Abdullah as Saffah became the first caliph of the Abbasid Dynasty (132/749–136/754) he gave back Fadak to the Children of Fatimah (sa) and submitted it to Abdullah ibn al Hasan ibn al Hasan ibn 'Ali ibn Abi Talib.

7. When Abu Jafar Abdullah al Mansur ad Dawaniqi (136/754–158/775) became the caliph, he seized Fadak from the children of Fatimah (sa).

8. When Muhammad al Mahdi ibn al Mansur became caliph (158/775–169/785) he returned Fadak to the children of Fatimah (sa).

9. The Musa al Hadi ibn al Mahdi (169/785–170/786) and his brother Harun ar Rashid (170/786–193/809) seized it from the descendants of Fatimah (sa) and it was in the possession of Banu al Abbas until the time that al-Mamun became the Caliph (193/831–218/833)

10. al Mamun al Abbasi gave it back to the descendants of Fatimah (sa). It is narrated through al Mahdi ibn Sabiq that: al Mamun one day sat to hear the complaints of the people and to judge in cases. The first utter complaint which he received caused him to weep when he looked at it. He asked where the attorney of Fatimah (sa), daughter of the Holy Prophet (S) was? An old man stood up and came forth, arguing with him about Fadak and al Mamun also argued with him until he overcame al Mamun.

Shi'a reference:

– al Awa'il, p 209

al Mamun summoned the Islamic Jurisprudents and interrogated them about the claim of Banu Fatimah. They narrated to al Mamun that the Holy Prophet (S) gifted Fadak to Fatimah (sa) and that after the death of the Holy Prophet (S), Fatimah (sa) demanded Abu Bakr to return Fadak to her. He asked her to bring witnesses to her claim regarding the gift. She brought, 'Ali, al Hasan, al Hussain and Umm Ayman, as her witnesses. They witnessed the case in her favor. Abu Bakr rejected their witness.

Then al Mamun asked the scholars: 'What is your view about Umm Ayman?' They replied: 'She is a woman to whom the Holy Prophet (S) bore witness that she is an inhabitant of Paradise.' al Mamun disputed at length with them and forced them to accept the arguments put forth by proofs till they confessed that 'Ali, al Hasan, al Hussain and Umm Ayman had witnessed only the truth. When they unanimously accepted this matter, he restored Fadak to the descendants of Fatimah (sa).

Sunni reference:

– at Tarikh, al Yaqubi, vol 3 p 195–96

11. During the period of al Mamun's caliphate Fadak was in the possession of Fatimah's descendants, and this was confirmed during the caliphate of al Mutasim (218/833–227/842) and al Wathiq (227/842 – 232/847).

12. When Jafar al Mutawakkil became the caliph (232/847–247/861), the one among them who was marked as an arch enemy of the progeny of the Holy Prophet (S), both of those alive and of those dead, gave the order to recapture Fadak from the descendants of Fatimah (sa).

Shi'a references:

– Kashf al Ghumnah, vol 2 p 121–2

– al Bihar, vol 8 p 108

– Safinah al Bihar, vol 2 p 351

13. When al Mutawwakil was killed and al Muntasir (his son) succeeded him (247/861–248/862), he gave the order to restore Fadak to the descendants of al Hasan and al Husayn and delivered the donations of Abu Talib to them and this was in 248/862.

Sunni references (For 3 – 13)

– Futuh al Buldan, vol 1 p 33–8

– Mujam al Buldan, vol 4 p 238–40

– at Tarikh, Yaqubi, vol 2 p 199, vol 3 p 48, 195–96

– al Kamil, Ibn Atheer, vol 2 p 224–225, vol 3 p 457, 497, vol 5 p 63 vol 7 p 116

– al Iqd al Farid, vol 4 p 216, 283, 435

– Wafa al Wafa, vol 3 p 999–1000

– al Tabaqat al Kabir, vol 5 p 286–7

– Tarikh ul Khulafa, p 231–32, 356

– Muruj ad Dhahab, vol 4 p 82

– Sirah Umar ibn Abd al Aziz, Ibn al Jawzi, p 110

– Sharah, ibn Al Hadid, vol 16 p 277–78

14. It seemed that Fadak was recaptured from the descendants of Fatimah (sa) after the death of al

Muntasir, because Abul Hasan 'Ali ibn Isa al Iribili (died 692/1293) mentioned: al Mutadid (279/892–289/902) returned Fadak to the descendants of Fatimah.

Then he mentioned that al Muqtafi (289/902–295/908) seized it from them. It is said also that al Muqtadir (295/908–320/932) returned it to them.

Shi'a references:

- Kash al Ghummah, vol 2 p 122
- al Bihar, vol 8 p 108

15. After this long period of recapturing and restoration, Fadak was returned to the possession of the usurpers and their heirs as it seems, no further mention was made in History and the curtain fell!

Is it (then that) the judgement of (the times of pagan) ignorance they desire? And who (else) can be better than Allah to judge for a people of assured faith. (5:50)

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