

## Chapter 5: Backlash

﴿إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيراً﴾<sup>1</sup>

***Allah only wishes to remove all abomination from you, O members of the Family, and to make you pure and immaculate. (Holy Qur’an, 33:33)***

### Attempt to Burn the House of Fatima al-Zahra

The day after the Saqifah, ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattab, along with a group of individuals came to the house of the daughter of the Holy Prophet. In the house, there was ‘Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Fatima, and their two sons, Hasan and Husayn, who were still in a state of deep sorrow over the death of the Prophet.

Fatima opened the door and asked ‘Umar, “Did you come here to burn our house?” ‘Umar retorted, “Yes, unless you enter into what the nation entered in [meaning allegiance to Abu Bakr].”<sup>1</sup> ‘Umar then slammed open the door against Fatima at which point she found herself being squeezed between the door and the wall of her house, causing one of her ribs to break. At that time, she was pregnant with the third grandson of the Holy Prophet; however, the force that ‘Umar applied on the door caused her to have a miscarriage, and the baby who had been named Muhsin by the Prophet, was stillborn only a few days after the death of his grandfather.

Many historians have narrated this event with some of them providing details that others omit. Ibn Abd Rabah al-Andalusi says:<sup>2</sup>

Those who refrained from giving the bayah (allegiance) to Abu Bakr were ‘Ali, Abbas (the uncle of the Prophet), Zubayr Ibn al-Awam (cousin of the Prophet) and Sa’d Ibn Ibadah. As for ‘Ali and Abbas, they sat in the house of Fatima until Abu Bakr sent ‘Umar to take them out of the house of Fatima, and he (Abu Bakr) said to him (‘Umar), “If they refuse, then fight them.” Thus, he (‘Umar) came with a torch of fire to engulf the house on them and upon arriving, he encountered Fatima. She said, “O Ibn al-Khattab, did you come to burn our house?” He said, “Yes, unless you enter into what the ummah entered into.”

Al-Tabari also relates the story; however, he says that Talha, Zubayr, and some men from the Muhajireen were also in the house. He goes on to say that ‘Umar told them, “By Allah, I will burn the house unless you come out for the *bayah* (allegiance).” Raising his sword, Zubayr came out of the house, but he fell to the ground and was attacked. In the ensuing chaos, his sword was taken away.<sup>3</sup>

Ibn Abil Hadid says:

When Fatima saw what ‘Umar did, she cried and wailed, and many women from Bani Hashim gathered with her. They came to her and she said, “O Abu Bakr, how fast you launched your strike on the family of the Prophet after the death of the Prophet. By Allah, I will never speak to you until I meet Allah!”<sup>4</sup>

The historian, al-Baladri reports:

Abu Bakr sent for ‘Ali, asking him to pay allegiance. He didn’t pay allegiance and thus ‘Umar came with a torch to the house of ‘Ali and Fatima. He came face to face with Fatima and she said to him, “Are you really going to burn the door of the house?” ‘Umar answered, “Yes indeed.”<sup>5</sup>

Other Sunni authors go on to state that had Fatima al-Zahra not opened the door, ‘Umar would have proceeded to burn down the entire house. They say that ‘Umar was shouting from outside the house saying, “Burn the house with the people inside it!”<sup>6</sup> The companions who were around ‘Umar saw him gathering wood and warned him, “‘Umar, you know that Fatima lives in this house.” ‘Umar answered, “Still, even if she lives here I am going to burn the house!”<sup>7</sup>

Some other narrations have unsubstantially claimed that an opposition group had gathered at the house of Fatima ready to act against Abu Bakr. However, the truth is that some of the previously mentioned prominent Sunni historians do not mention this at all – scholars such as al-Shahristani, al-Baladri, al-Safti, al-Jawhari, Ibn Abd Rabbah al-Andalusi, and Urwat Ibn Zubayr. Thus, this claim was just an excuse put forth later on in order to justify the actions of ‘Umar and his group.

These prominent Sunni scholars also name the individuals who participated with ‘Umar in the attack on Fatima al-Zahra’s home and they include the following: Ubayd Ibn Hubayr, Thabit Ibn Qays, Muhammad Ibn Muslim, Khalid Ibn al-Waleed, al-Mugheerah Ibn Shu’bah, Abu Ubaydah Ibn al-Jarrah, Sa’d Mawla Abi Udaybah, Ma’adh Ibn Jabal, Qunfud, ‘Uthman, Abd al-Rahman Ibn Auf, Ziyad Ibn Ubayd, Mu’awiyah Ibn Abu Sufyan, and ‘Amr Ibn al-Aas.

Many years later at a meeting between Imam Hasan (the first grandson of the Prophet and son of Fatima and ‘Ali) and Mu’awiyah Ibn Abu Sufyan in the presence of Mugheerah Ibn Shu’bah, the Imam said to Mugheerah, “You are the one who hit Fatima,<sup>8</sup> the daughter of the Prophet until you made her bleed and she miscarried her baby. You wanted to humiliate the Prophet, and you opposed his teachings and violated the respect of the Prophet. You know that the Prophet said to Fatima al-Zahra, ‘You are the leader of the women of Paradise.’ By Allah, your fate will be the Fire.”<sup>9</sup>

Other Sunni historians who narrate this meeting are Ibn Qutaybah, 10 Ibn Abil Hadid, 11 and al-Mahqari. 12 However, as for Fatima's unborn son (who was killed during the attack), Ibn Qutaybah says that Muhsin Ibn 'Ali perished when he was a baby, but he does not mention how. 13

Setting aside the events that occurred at the door of Fatima's home, did 'Umar have the right to enter her home? According to the Holy Qur'an, no one may enter another person's house without permission, as Allah orders:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ بُيُوتِكُمْ حَتَّى تَسْتَأْنِسُوا وَتُسَلِّمُوا عَلَى أَهْلِهَا ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ. فَإِن لَّمْ تَجِدُوا فِيهَا أَحَدًا فَلَا تَدْخُلُوهَا حَتَّى يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ وَإِن قِيلَ لَكُمْ ارْجِعُوا فَارْجِعُوا هُوَ أَزْكَى لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٧﴾

***O you who believe! Enter not the houses other than your [own] houses until you have sought familiarity and saluted their inhabitants; this is best for you; haply you may remember. But if you do not find anyone in there, then enter them not until permission is given to you; and if it is said unto you 'Go you back' then go back, for it is purer for you; and God knows what all of you do. (24:27-28)***

Even the Messenger of Allah did not enter the house of his daughter and grandchildren without first asking permission!

It is indeed disheartening that such an event occurred despite Allah's commandment that the ummah is to treat the family of the Prophet with adoration:

قُلْ لَّا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِلَّا الْمَوَدَّةَ فِي الْقُرْبَىٰ ﴿٢٣﴾

***Say: 'I demand not of you any recompense for it (the toils of the apostleship) save the love of (my) relatives.'* (42:23)**

## **Regret for the Actions Taken Against Fatima**

As time passed, Abu Bakr felt the pangs of remorse about the incident at Fatima al-Zahra's home and said, "Every man sleeps next to his wife, embracing her, enjoying his family, and you left me with my misery. I don't need your *bayah*, I don't need it, take it away from me." Near the end of his life he also mentioned, "I was sad for three things that I did, and I wish I hadn't done them. One of them is that I exposed the house of Fatima." 14

Perhaps Abu Bakr's guilt came from the fact that he had ordered 'Umar to subdue whoever was in the house if they did not surrender, even though he knew that those in the house included Fatima al-Zahra – the beloved daughter of the Holy Prophet and his grandsons, Hasan and Husayn. The guilt drove Abu Bakr to seek reconciliation, so he asked 'Umar to accompany him to reconcile with Fatima al-Zahra and said to 'Umar, "Since we have angered Fatima, let us go and make her happy."<sup>15</sup>

Initially, they sought permission from her to enter her house, but she refused, so they asked 'Ali and he allowed them in. Both Abu Bakr and 'Umar Ibn Khattab sat in front of Fatima al-Zahra, but she turned her head towards the wall.

Abu Bakr said to her, "O beloved daughter of the Prophet, you are dearer to me than my daughter Aishah, and I wish that on the day your father died, I would have died instead and that I would not have remained (alive) after him. You are angry because we did not grant you your inheritance since we heard your father say, 'We don't leave any inheritance; whatever we leave is charity.'"

With her head still turned against them, Fatima al-Zahra replied, "If I remind you of a saying of my father, would you acknowledge it, and if you acknowledge it, would you practice and implement it?" Both of them said they would and thus she said, "I ask you by Allah, did you not hear the Prophet of Allah saying, 'The pleasure of Fatima is my pleasure, and her wrath and anger is my anger, and whoever loves my daughter Fatima loves me, and whoever pleases her pleases me, and whoever angers her angers me?'"<sup>16</sup> They said, "Yes, we heard this from the Messenger of Allah." She continued, "Then I testify before Allah and His angels that you have angered me, and when I meet the Prophet, I will raise my grievances with you to him."

According to al-Tabari,<sup>17</sup> al-Bukhari,<sup>18</sup> and al-Muslim,<sup>19</sup> Fatima al-Zahra refused to speak with Abu Bakr until she died. Even at her funeral, her wishes were for them not to be present, thus 'Ali buried her at night according to her wishes and did not allow Abu Bakr and 'Umar to participate in her burial.

The exact date when Fatima al-Zahra died is uncertain. According to Abul Faraj al-Isfahani,<sup>20</sup> she lived a maximum of six months after the death of her father, while others mention a minimum period of forty days. What the author upholds is that of the narration of Imam Muhammad al-Baqir, in which he stated she died three months after the departure of the Messenger of Allah.

## **Usurping the Land of Fadak**

Muslim commentators report that when the verse, "And give your kin their rightful due" was revealed,<sup>21</sup> the Holy Prophet asked the Angel Gabriel what he was being directed to do, and Gabriel replied that Allah was commanding him to give Fadak, a piece of land north of Madinah, to his daughter Fatima al-Zahra and the Holy Prophet avidly complied.

However, after the death of the Prophet, Abu Bakr confiscated the land from Fatima on the pretext that

the Holy Prophet had said, “We the prophets, do not leave any inheritance. Whatever we leave behind is charity.” This is a statement that not only contradicts the wishes of the Prophet, but also a precedent of the Qur’an that states,

***“And Sulayman inherited from Dawud.”***<sup>22</sup>

Nevertheless, when Abu Bakr and ‘Umar later came to power, they both gave preference to Lady Aishah. History narrates that on several occasions, the exception to their rule that “prophets do not leave inheritance” was enacted.

For instance, both Abu Bakr and ‘Umar allowed Lady Aishah to inherit the house of the Holy Prophet, although she did not have the absolute right to inherit the home exclusively, considering that she was merely one out of the nine wives of the Prophet, while the other wives were renounced of their share of the home inheritance. The property was hers and she exercised her control of it by permitting the burial of her father, Abu Bakr in the room of the Holy Prophet, next to the Prophet, while refusing the grandson of the Holy Prophet, Hasan to be buried next to his grandfather.

When ‘Uthman came to power, Lady Aishah and Hafsa (two wives of the Prophet) asked him to grant them more of the inheritance of the Prophet, however ‘Uthman rebuked Lady Aishah by saying, “Didn’t you come here with another man named Malik Ibn Aus al-Nadhari and say that the Prophet said, ‘We don’t leave inheritance?’ Didn’t you prevent Fatima al-Zahra from taking her share of the inheritance of the Prophet, and now you have come to ask for your share?”

Enraged, Lady Aishah went to the Mosque of the Holy Prophet, raised the Prophet’s shirt and cried that ‘Uthman had disagreed with “the owner of this shirt.” In turn, ‘Uthman cited verse 66: 10 of the Qur’an drawing a parallel about the disobedient wives of the prophets Nuh and Lut to her.

Ironically, ‘Uthman did not return the land of Fadak to the children of Fatima al-Zahra nor allow Lady Aishah to have it, nor did he give it as charity, as the hadith that he was claiming to act under said. Instead, ‘Uthman gave it as a gift to one of his family members named Marwan Ibn al-Hakam, whom the Holy Prophet had cursed and exiled from Madinah for his sedition and rampage against Islam.<sup>23</sup>

## **Story of Fadak**

In the once populated Jewish territory of Khaybar, which is north of Madinah in a town known as Fadak, lay the start of one of the most contentious issues in the history of Islam – the right of inheritance of the Prophet’s daughter, Fatima al-Zahra.

Both schools of thought (The School of the Ahlul Bayt – also known as the Shi’a; and The School of the Companions – also known as the Sunni) have their own version on how the episode regarding Fadak unfolded.

The position of the School of the Companions is that the family of the Prophet had no right to inherit Fadak because the Prophet himself narrated that he does not leave behind any bequests; while the School of the Ahlul Bayt claim otherwise and add that Fadak was not only Fatima al-Zahra's right to inherit, but also that her father bestowed it to her during his lifetime by the decree of Allah. In addition, scholars who follow the Ahlul Bayt contest that by stripping Fatima of her resources also meant the weakening of 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib of the means to defend his rightful entitlement to the leadership of the community.

Both schools of thought relate that Fadak was a well-developed and productive farmland owned by the Jews of the Bani Nadir tribe (the Jews of Madinah) near Khaybar. The Jews who lived in Khaybar posed a persistent threat to the newly established Islamic community. Several attempts were made by them to destabilize and destroy the Islamic community, and thus the Prophet sent his army, led by 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib, to conquer their castle in the seventh year of the Hijrah. What remained after the acquisition was the Jewish village of Fadak.

After witnessing the defeat of Khaybar, the Jews of Fadak met with an envoy of the Prophet. Preferring survival, these Jews struck a settlement with the Prophet, and in this deal, they relinquished half of the settlement of Fadak. In addition, they also agreed to deliver half of their part of Fadak's yearly production to the Prophet, and in return, the Jewish villagers could live peacefully under the protection of the Islamic state.

Therefore, after conquering Khaybar and taking possession of half of the land of Fadak and its yearly revenues without embattlement, the attention then turned towards the issue of its ownership. In accordance with Islam, land or wealth acquired through military intervention becomes the property of the Muslim community; but in all other circumstances, land or wealth acquired without the use of military might becomes the sole property of the Prophet, as indicated in the Qur'an where Allah says:

﴿وَمَا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ مِنْهُمْ فَمَا أَوْجَفْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ خَيْلٍ وَلَا رِكَابٍ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُسَلِّطُ رَسُولَهُ عَلَىٰ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ﴾

***What God has bestowed on His Apostle and taken away from them – for this you made no expedition with either cavalry or camels: but God gives power to His apostles over any He pleases: and God has power over all things. (59:6)***

Allah further adds in the following verse:

﴿مَا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْقُرَىٰ فَلِللَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ﴾

***What God has bestowed on His Apostle and taken away from the people of the townships belongs to God, to His Apostle and to kindred and orphans... (59:7)***

Thus, the followers of the Ahlul Bayt have long claimed that Fadak belonged to the Prophet and their belief is based on the Qur'anic verses mentioned above (c. 59:6–7), in addition to the recorded traditions.

According to the School of the Companions, they too believe that Fadak was the property of the Prophet since it was acquired without the use of force.<sup>24</sup> For example, it is narrated in the Sunni books of tradition that 'Umar is reported to have said, "The property of Bani Nadir was among that which Allah bestowed on His Messenger; against them neither horses nor camels were pricked, but they belonged specifically to the Messenger of Allah."<sup>25</sup>

Therefore, the matter of Allah granting ownership of Fadak to the Prophet is not disputed in either school of thought. The disagreement amongst the schools began in regards to what the Prophet did with Fadak during his lifetime, and thus, they narrate the story of Fadak differently.

Shi'a scholars believe that during his lifetime, the Prophet bestowed Fadak upon his daughter Fatima al-Zahra. These scholars cite a letter written by 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib to the governor of Basra, 'Uthman Ibn Hunaif in which he stated, "Yes, Fadak was the only land under the heavens which was in our possession; but the inclinations of certain men lusted for it and the souls of others relinquished it."

On the other hand, those who deny that the Prophet presented Fadak to Fatima al-Zahra reason that the notion that the Prophet would grant one of his children such an abundant gift and would neglect the others is unimaginable.

They reason that this would mean that the Prophet would have acted contrary to the Islamic concept of parental fairness, since he had more children other than Fatima. In order to defend this theory, they cite the following tradition, "The companion Basheer Ibn Sa'd came to the Prophet telling him that he had given one of his sons a garden as a gift and requested the Prophet to be a witness thereto. The Prophet asked whether he had given a similar gift to all of his children. When he replied that he had not done so, then the Prophet told him, 'Go away, for I will not be a witness to injustice.'"<sup>26</sup>

The Ahlul Bayt rebut that the Prophet acted fairly when he presented Fadak to Fatima al-Zahra for several reasons. Firstly, Fatima was no ordinary child from the Prophet's children; and he showed her a lofty position through his exceptional treatment towards her. For example, he would stand up to greet her, offer his seat to her, and only permit the door to her home to be adjacent to his home and the mosque.

The Prophet used to say the following about her, "Fatima is the mother of her father (*Umme Abeeha*)."<sup>27</sup> Secondly, she was the only daughter regarded and revered in the Qur'an and *sunnah* as the leader of all the women. Thirdly, she was the only child of the Prophet whom Allah had purified.<sup>28</sup> Fourthly, through

her came the Prophet's eleven descendents and successors. Lastly and most importantly, it was the decree of Allah to gift Fatima al-Zahra the land of Fadak.

The Ahlul Bayt scholars also draw upon Sunni references to solidify their belief that Fadak was indeed a gift to Fatima al-Zahra. For instance, when chapter 17, verse 26 was revealed in the Qur'an,<sup>29</sup> Sunni commentators say that it pertained to the Prophet bestowing Fadak upon his daughter Fatima al-Zahra. Sunni traditionalists narrated that the Prophet asked the Angel Gabriel in reference to,

***“And render to the kindred their rights” (17:26)***

the following, “Who are the kinsmen and what is their due?” The Angel Gabriel replied, “Give Fadak to Fatima for it is her due, and whatever is due to Allah and the Prophet out of Fadak also belongs to her, so entrust it to her also.”<sup>30</sup>

As mentioned earlier, according to both schools of thought, Fadak belonged to the Prophet who then presented it to Fatima al-Zahra.<sup>31</sup> According to the Sunni version of events, after the departure of the Prophet and the succession of Abu Bakr, he (Abu Bakr) was obligated by the Prophet's tradition to seize his (the Prophet's) assets as public property. The Shi'a version argues that confiscation of Fadak and other properties were unwarranted based on the Qur'an and that Abu Bakr's tradition was unfounded.

According to the teachings of the Ahlul Bayt, Fadak had been in Fatima al-Zahra's possession for four years prior to the death of the Prophet. They also make a strong point that Abu Bakr had known all along that the Prophet gifted Fadak to Fatima al-Zahra because he had been present during the conquest of Khaybar and had known what the Prophet did with Fadak afterwards.

According to both schools of thought, upon becoming caliph, Abu Bakr ousted Fatima's hired residents from the land of Fadak and confiscated the land along with other properties that she owned in Madinah. Fatima immediately went to Abu Bakr to protest the seizures and he dismissed her claim by citing the following tradition of the Prophet, “We, the folk of prophets do not leave bequests; what we leave is for alms.”<sup>32</sup>

Fatima al-Zahra employed various means to prove her entitlement to the land. First, she came seeking Fadak as an entitlement of a gift by her father; however, Abu Bakr refused her claim on the account of him hearing from the Prophet that prophets do not leave inheritance.

She rebutted his argument by stating that the land was a gift, thus not considered a bequest. After Abu Bakr's continued refusal to relinquish her property, Fatima then requested her right to inheritance according to the Qur'an for which Abu Bakr asked her to bring forth witnesses.

Some Sunni scholars question as to why Fatima al-Zahra claimed Fadak as her inheritance if it was a gift. The response is that Fatima al-Zahra was compelled to claim her right as an inheritance according to the Qur'an because Abu Bakr would not recognize it as a gift. Besides, if both schools of thought have

recorded narrations that Fadak was gifted to Fatima al-Zahra during the life of the Prophet then Abu Bakr's narration does not apply to this case. He had no grounds to claim it as the Prophet's property because it no longer belonged to the Prophet.

According to other reports, Fatima al-Zahra claimed Fadak as being a gift from the Prophet, which Abu Bakr requested witnesses in which Fatima al-Zahra brought forward witnesses.<sup>33</sup> In some accounts, the witnesses were 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Umme Ayman (the wife of the Prophet), and Rabah, a freed slave of the Prophet.<sup>34</sup> In other accounts, the witnesses were 'Ali and Umme Ayman.<sup>35</sup> While in others, the witnesses were 'Ali, Hasan, and Husayn; and in some traditions, Umme Ayman<sup>36</sup> is also included, however Abu Bakr rejected all of these people. In some of the reports, Abu Bakr refused Fatima al-Zahra's witnesses on account of them being her immediate family members. In other reports, he denied her witnesses on account that they fell short of the criteria needed to be witnesses.

In regards to the witnesses, Shi'a scholars disapprove of Abu Bakr requesting Fatima al-Zahra to bring forth witnesses on account of the following arguments: Fatima's testimony alone should have sufficed, and there was no need for any witnesses on the account of Allah having purified her, which was also extended to 'Ali, Hasan, and Husayn.<sup>37</sup>

In contrast, on a different occasion, Abu Bakr had accepted the testimony of one person, such as Jabir Ibn Abdullah al-Ansari, so why did he then deny Fatima al-Zahra's testimony? The event is recorded in history as follows:

When the Prophet died, Abu Bakr received some property from al-Ala al-Hadrami. Abu Bakr said to the people, "Whoever has a money claim on the Prophet or was promised something by him should come to us (so that we may pay him his right)." Jabir added, I said (to Abu Bakr), "Allah's Apostle promised me that he would give me this much, and this much, and this much (spreading his hands three times)." Jabir added, "Abu Bakr counted for me and handed me five hundred gold pieces, and then five hundred, and then five hundred (more)."<sup>38</sup>

Many more exceptions to the 'verse of evidence,' (c. 2:282) as recorded in the traditions narrated by the School of the Companions can be seen, such as in the example of Khazima Ibn Thabit. This individual gave evidence in support of the Prophet in a case concerning the sale of a horse, in which an Arab man had made a claim against the Prophet and his (*Khazima's*) single testimony was considered sufficient, and through this the Prophet gave him the title of "*Dhush Shahadatain*" (the person whose single testimony is equivalent to two people) because he was regarded as being equal to two just witnesses."<sup>39</sup> Thus, again why is it that Abu Bakr could not make an exception for Fatima al-Zahra?

A critical examination into Abu Bakr's narration shows us the reason. Abu Bakr said, "I heard the Messenger saying, 'We do not leave inheritance. What we leave behind is charity.'"<sup>40</sup> The Shi'a scholars deny such a tradition because it goes against the Qur'anic injunction regarding inheritance<sup>41</sup> and the verses that mention about past prophets inheriting.<sup>42</sup> Nonetheless, Abu Bakr upheld the above quoted

alleged tradition in the face of Fatima al-Zahra's claim and the clear verses of the Qur'an.

According to Sunni tradition, the hadith Abu Bakr quoted is considered as genuine, since it can be found in what they describe as *sahih* (authentic) books, such as *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih al-Muslim*, thus making the tradition irrefutable. In addition to their own sources, they also refer to traditions from Shi'a books on the subject. For example, from one of the major four books of the Shi'a, *al-Kafi* by Shaykh al-Kulayni, Imam Jafar as-Sadiq has been quoted as saying that the Prophet said, "...And the *ulama* (Islamic scholars) are the heirs of the *anbiya* (prophets); and the *anbiya* did not leave *dinars* and *dirhams* (money) as inheritance; but they do leave knowledge. Therefore, whosoever takes knowledge has taken a great portion."<sup>43</sup>

In addition, in order to justify that Abu Bakr acted rightfully in denying Fadak to Fatima al-Zahra, Sunni scholars also cite the following tradition mentioned in the Shi'a books, "Women do not inherit anything of the land or fixed property."<sup>44</sup> They also cite the following hadith, "They (women) will get the value of the bricks, the building, the wood and the bamboo. As for the land and the fixed property, they will get no inheritance from that."<sup>45</sup>

However, the Shi'a scholars do not remain silent when hadith are cited from their books in order to justify actions taken against Fatima al-Zahra. The scholars explain that the tradition regarding the "*anbiya* (prophets) not leaving inheritance" is not in reference to the traditional inheritance of heirs; but rather, it is in the context of inheriting the spirit and knowledge of Islam.

Moreover, Shi'a scholars point not only towards the Qur'anic verses that mention prophets inheriting, such as Prophet Sulayman inheriting from Prophet Dawud,<sup>46</sup> but also, that Prophet Muhammad himself inherited from his father. Abdullah Ibn Abdul Muttalib (the Prophet's father) left to Aminah (the Prophet's mother) a legacy of five colored camels and a small flock of sheep which was inherited by the Prophet.<sup>47</sup>

In regards to the tradition that women are not permitted to inherit land or property, Shi'a scholars say that the tradition only applies to the inheritance of a wife from her husband. Thus, it is not applicable to Abu Bakr's action in denying Fatima her right to inherit from her father. Plus they argue that had Abu Bakr's tradition been accurate then Fatima al-Zahra and 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib would have known about it for several reasons.

First, they were closest to the Prophet and such a tradition would have affected them both. In addition, 'Ali would have certainly been aware of the hadith since he was the "gateway" of Islamic knowledge. The Prophet used to refer to 'Ali as, "I am the city of knowledge and 'Ali is its gate." Secondly, they would have never come forward with such a claim if the tradition was accurate.

For the most part, Shi'a theologians and historians present undisputable arguments and we see that in all accounts, Fadak was rightfully the property of Fatima al-Zahra as it had been gifted to her; and if we presume that it was not gifted to her, then still, if analyzed objectively, one would conclude that she had

a right to claim it as an inheritance.

By virtue of Fatima al-Zahra's stature, her testimony, coupled with the Qur'an, take precedence over Abu Bakr's tradition and position. Thus, to justify Abu Bakr's action falls short before Fatima al-Zahra's grandeur. Although various reasons are cited by others to justify Abu Bakr's claim, but the main intent behind the confiscation of Fadak is closely tied to the usurpation of the Islamic leadership after the Prophet, and thus the underlying reason for the confiscation of Fadak was to deny 'Ali and Fatima al-Zahra any economic power which would have enabled them to forge a greater stand against Abu Bakr's leadership.

## Stand Against Imam 'Ali

Since power remained firm in the hands of the Quraysh group, and they limited their ranks to those who had refused to pay allegiance to 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib, 'Ali bore the brunt of this group's enmity.

The only individuals who could move up in the ranks were those who had refused to pay allegiance to 'Ali – people such as al-Mugheerah Ibn Shu'bah, 'Amr Ibn al-Aas, Abu Musa al-Ashari, Sa'd Ibn Abil Waqqas, Mu'awiyah Ibn Abu Sufyan, Abu Huraira, Utbah Ibn Abu Sufyan, Sa'ed Ibn al-Aas, and al-Waleed Ibn Uqbah.

For forty years, the leadership who bore deep animosity towards 'Ali, forced mercenary speakers to ascend the pulpit and curse him in addition to the daughter of the Holy Prophet and their children, Hasan and Husayn.<sup>48</sup> If anyone ventured outside of this jurisdiction and tried to mention the virtues of 'Ali, they were warned that that was a crime punishable by death.

This forced scholars, such as Hasan al-Basri to refer to the fourth caliph, 'Ali, as "Abu Zaynab (the father of Zaynab)." Their vindictiveness continued despite the agreed upon saying of Prophet Muhammad, narrated by both Sunni and Shi'a that, "O 'Ali, no one likes you except a believer, and no one hates you except a hypocrite."<sup>49</sup>

'Ali was of such a high status in the sight of the Holy Prophet that when *Surah al-Bara'at* (*The Disavowal*, also known as *al-Tawbah* (*The Repentance*)) was revealed, the Prophet sent Abu Bakr as the *amir* (caravan leader) of the Hajj to recite it (and thus to offer the Quraysh a stern warning).

However while on the way to Mecca, Abu Bakr was intercepted by 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib through the Divine decree given by Allah to Prophet Muhammad. The Angel Gabriel instructed the Prophet with Allah's order, "No one delivers on your behalf except yourself or a man from you." Afterwards the Prophet commented, "'Ali is from me, and I am from him, and no one delivers (the revelation) except me or 'Ali."<sup>50</sup>

In reality, the intense opposition towards 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib proves that without a doubt, the Quraysh group did recognize that 'Ali was bound to succeed the Prophet. What other reason could they possibly

have had for ritualizing invocations against him? If nothing else, he was a companion with the highest recorded caliber of service to Islam and the Prophet.

He was the father of the Prophet's grandchildren and he was never known to have committed any wrong act. Although he maintained that the caliphate should have gone to him, he did not raise arms, and he only assumed the caliphate after the institution itself had crumbled. Had he been only a mere contender, the ruling powers would have exiled him – even annihilated him, just as they did to companions such as Abu Dharr al-Ghifari.

Instead, the Quraysh group was more concerned with assassinating the character of 'Ali, and in hindsight, their propaganda campaign points all the more clearly to the reality that they were trying to cover up the Prophet's command that 'Ali was to be his successor.

In the end, this intense hatred turned into violent bloodshed when the wife of the Prophet, Lady Aishah, despite having been warned by the Prophet not to transgress against 'Ali,<sup>51</sup> mobilized 30,000 fighters and marched from Madinah to Basra in a confrontation known as the Battle of Camel (Battle of Jamal). Lady Aishah instigated the first battle in Islam in which Muslims raised swords against one another, and as a result, she caused the death of 20,000 Muslims from her side and another 500 from the defense of 'Ali's army.

Following her lead, Mu'awiyah also took arms against 'Ali during his caliphate resulting in the Battle of Siffeen, in which 70,000 Muslims lost their lives. Indeed, she did not take heed to what the Prophet had said to 'Ali, "May God fight the one who fights you and may God be hostile to the one who is hostile towards you."<sup>52</sup>

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1. Tarikh al-Tabari, 3:198; Tarikh Abul Fida, 1:156

2. Ibn Abd Rabbah al-Andalusi, Al-Aqd al-Farid, 4:259

3. Tarikh al-Tabari, 2:198

4. Ibn Abil Hadid, Sharh Nahjul-Balaghah, 2.:119

5. Al-Baladri, Ansab al-Ashraf, 1:586

6. Shahrestani, Al-Milal wal-Nihal, 1:56; Salah al-Din al-Susti; Al-Shafi'i, Manaqib al-Ibadah, 3:407

7. Ibn Qutaybah, Al-Imamah wal-Siyasah, 1:12; 'Umar Ridha (Kahhalah), Alam Al-Nisa, 4:14; Abd al-Fattah Abd al-Maqsud; Al-Saqifah wal-Khalifah, 14

8. When 'Umar attacked Fatima in her home, others physically accosted her as well.

9. Al-Tabrasi, Al-Ihtijaj, 1:414

10. Ibn Qutaybah, Al-Imamah wal-Siyasah, 1:12-13

11. Ibn Abil Hadid, Sharh Nahjul-Balaghah, 14:192

12. Al-Mahqari, Waqt Siffeen, 1:63

13. Ibn Qutaybah, Al-Ma'arif, 1:93

14. Lisan al Mizan, 8:189; Ibn Qutaybah, Al-Imamah wa Siyasah, 1:18; Ibn Abil Hadid, Sharh Nahjul-Balaghah, 6:51;

Tarikh al-Ya'qubi, 2:137

15. Ibn Qutaybah, Al-Imamah wal-Siyasah, 1:14

16. Sahih al-Bukhari, 5:36

17. Tarikh al-Tabari, 3:202
18. Sahih al-Bukhari, 4:96
19. Sahih al-Muslim, hadith 1259
20. Abul Faraj al-Isfahani, Maqatil al-Talibi'in, 19
21. Holy Qur'an, 17:26, 30:38
22. Holy Qur'an, 27:16
23. Ibn Qutaybah, Al-Marif, 195; Ibn Abil Hadid, Sharh Nahjul-Balaghah
24. Al-Tabari, The Last Years of the Prophet (English translation), 4:196; Futuhal Buldan, p.42; Tarikh al-Khamees, 2:64; Ibn Atheer, Tarikh al-Kamil, 2:85; Ibn Hisham, Seerah, 3:48; Ibn Khuldun, Al-Tarikh, 2, part 2
25. Sahih al-Bukhari, 4:46, 7:82, & 9:121-22; Sahih al-Muslim, 5:151; Abu Dawood, Sunan, 3:139-41; Nasa'i, Sunan, 7:132; Ahmad al-Hanbal, al-Musnad, p.25, 48, 60, & 208; Al-Kubra (Al-Bayhaqi), Sunan, 6:296-99
26. Sahih al-Muslim, Kitab al-Hibat, no. 14
27. Bihar al-Anwar, 43:19
28. Holy Qur'an, 33:33
29. Holy Qur'an, 17:26, "And render to the kindred their due rights..."
30. Narration can be found through al-Bazzaz, Abu Yala, Ibn Abi Hatim, Ibn Marduwayh, and others from Abu Said al-Khudri and through Ibn Marduwayh from Abdullah Ibn al-Abbas; al-Mustadrak, 4:63; History of Tabari, 3:3460; al-Istiab, 4:1793; Usud al-Ghabah, 5:567; al-Tabaqat, 8:192; al-Isabah, 4:432
31. 'Ali Ibn Burhanuddin al-Halabi al-Shafi, comp., Siratu'l-Halabiyya, p.39
32. Karmani's commentary, Sahih al-Bukhari, 15:4
33. Siratul Halabiyya, p.39
34. Al-Baladhuri, More Facts on Fadak, comments from Futuhal Buldan, p.48
35. Ibid
36. Al-Yaqubi, al-Tarikh, 3:195-96
37. Holy Qur'an, 33:33
38. Sahih al-Muslim, 7:75-76; Ahmad al-Hanbal, al-Musnad, 3:307-308
39. Sahih al-Bukhari, 4:24 & 6:146; Abu Dawud, Sunan, 3:308
40. Sahih al-Muslim, Kitab al-Jihad Was`-Siyar, no. 49
41. Holy Qur'an, 4:7 & 4:33
42. Holy Qur'an, 27:16 & 19:5-6
43. Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi, 1:42
44. Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi, 7:127
45. Bihar al-Anwar, 104:351
46. Holy Qur'an, 27:16
47. Tabaqat Ibn Sa'd, part 1:39; Moulana Shibli al-Noumani, Siratan Nabi, 1:122
48. Al-Kamil fil-Tarikh, 5:42
49. Sahih al-Tirmidhi, 2:301; Sahih al-Nisai, 2:271; Sahih Ibn Majah, p. 12; Abu Nuaym, Hiliyat al-Awiya, 4:185
50. Musnad Ahmad Ibn al-Hanbal, 4:164; Kanz al-Ummal, 6:153
51. Musnad Ahmad, 6:52; Al-Imamah wal-Siyasah, 1163; Tarikh al-Tabari, 4:469
52. Usud al-Ghabah, 2:154; Al-Isabah, 1:501

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