

Hazrat Zahra (s.a.) And the Heart, Rending Episode of Fadak

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Article

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Preface

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God the Most Gracious, the Dispenser of Grace

وَمَا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ مِنْهُمْ فَمَا أُوجِفْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ خَيْلٍ وَلَا رِكَابٍ وَلَا كِنَّ اللَّهُ يُسَلِّطُ رُسُلَهُ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

“And whatever Allah restored to His Apostle from them, you did not press forward against it any horse or a riding camel, hut Allah gives authority to His Apostles against whom He Pleases, and Allah has power over all things.”(Sura Hashr, 59:6) [1](#)

مَا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْقُرَى فَلِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَأَبْنِ السَّبِيلِ

First part of the Ayah in Sura Hashr, 59:7

“Whatever Allah has restored to His Apostle from the people of the towns, it is for Allah and the Apostle, and for the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer...”

In the first part of the Ayah in Sura Rum, 30:38 God commanded:

فَاتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ

“Then give to the near of kin his due.”[2](#)

عن «أبي سعيد الخدري» يقول فيه

«لما نزل قوله تعالى - وَاتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ أعطى رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وآله) فاطمة فدكاً»

“Because this verse was revealed to the Holy Prophet (S), during his lifetime, gave Fadak to Fatimah (s.a.). [3](#)

عن أبي سعيد الخدري رضي الله عنه قال: لما نزلت على النبي صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم الآية (فآت ذا القربى حقه) دعا النبي صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم فاطمة عليها السلام فأعطاه فذاك فقال: هذا لك ولعقبك من بعدك.

The Apostle of Allah (S), because this verse was revealed to him by Allah, said to Fatimah (s.a.):

“O’ Fatimah, Fadak is yours and for you children after you.”

Imam Ali (a.s.) said:

بلى كانت في أيدينا فذاك من كل ما اظلمت السماء فشحت بها نفوس قوم وسخت عنها نفوس آخرين، ونعم الحكم ... الله

“Of course, all that we had in our possession under this sky was Fadak, but a group of people fell greedy for it and the rest of them withheld themselves from it. Allah, is after all the best arbiter.”[4](#)

قالت فاطمة لابي بكر:

«ان رسول الله(ص) جعل لي فذاك فاعطني اياها»

Fatimah (s.a.) said to Abu Bakr:

“Give Fadak to me because God’s prophet granted it to me.”[5](#)

Introduction: Fatimah Zahra (s.a.) and the “Night of Divine Decrees”

Fatimah Zahra (s.a.) and the “Night of Divine Decrees”[6](#)

After the completion of this booklet I was thinking of writing a preface for it that would be both an articulation of the magnificence of this great lady of the world of humanity, and also be closely related to the books’ contents. Nothing occurred to me than the traditions of the Pure Imams (a.s.), which were related to their mother Zahra (s.a.). I opened Volume forty-three of the book “Bihar-al-Anwar” and my eyes fell upon this sentence, in which Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said in a tradition recorded in the commentary of “Forat-bin-Ibrahim” speaking of the meaning of the Quranic verse:

« ... من عرف فاطمة حق معرفتها فقد ادرك ليلة القدر وانما سميت فاطمة لأن الخلق فطموا عن معرفتها »

English Interpretation:

“The night of (Qadr), i.e. Divine Decrees is Fatimah (s.a.), therefore whoever knows Fatimah (s.a.) well has understood the Night of Divine Decrees, and the reason for Fatimah being named Fatimah⁷ is that mankind has been “Prevented from obtaining” her acquaintance!”⁸

I saw that this was a very unusual interpretation! Fatimah (s.a.) is the very Night of Divine Decrees. Anyone who really knows Fatimah (s.a.) as she is has understood the Night of Divine Decrees. Very few persons have known Fatimah (s.a.) as she is and was.

We know that Quranic verses have a literal meaning and a figurative meaning, and many interpretations. Without a doubt the literal interpretation of the chapter “Qadr” tells of the night in which the Holy Quran was descended upon the pure heart of the Prophet (S), and in which the divine decrees (destinies) of human beings are ascertained for a year, according to Divine Wisdom. As such, what was said in the tradition above is a figurative interpretation of this chapter’s meaning, or the second meaning of the chapter “Qadr”.

And what a close relationship there is between the existence of “The lady of Islam” and the “Night of Divine Decrees”.

1. The Night of Divine Decrees is (the disguised or unknown of “Qadr”), undoubtedly this great Lady, who the Prophet (S) would call a part of his flesh and reckoned her pleasure to cause God’s pleasure, and her anger God’s anger, is also the disguised or unknown of Qadr.
2. The Night of “Qadr” is hidden among the nights of the year⁹. The grave of the Lady of Islam is unknown among the graves of the great Personages of Islam, and when those who wish to pay pilgrimage to her enter Medina and visit the shrines of all the other great ones but seek her grave not to find it, will well understand the heavy load of this sorrow.
3. The Night of “Qadr” is better than one thousand night worship **لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ** and the virtue of it’s worship is greater than that of a long life of eighty years. The virtue of this great Lady is also greater than thousands upon thousands of virtuous persons and her rank is more superior.¹⁰
4. The “Night of Qadr” was the time in which the Quran was descended upon the pure heart of the Prophet of Islam, a sudden, all together revelation, even though its gradual descent took over twenty three years.

The “Night of Qadr” may also therefore be named as the Night of the descent of virtue and perfection, knowledge and wisdom. The being of Fatimah (s.a.) is also the source for the luminosity of the guardianship and Imamah and also divine knowledge and wisdom.

5. The “Night of Qadr” is the night in which by command of God, the Angels ascertain the destinies of all human beings and present them to “Waly-al-Amr” (the guardian of his command. It is a night of which in its entirety is peace and good.

سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّى مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ

The brief life of this Lady of Islam was also from beginning to end, goodness, soundness and blessing and was given the attention and interest of the Angels.

The close relationship between the “Night of Qadr” and the being of Fatimah (s.a.) deems it necessary for all of us to strive harder in knowing her, and obtaining greater benefit from the blessings of her radiance.

* * *

Indeed how painful are the encounters that spiteful enemies and uninformed persons had with this “Night of Qadr” and friends of God. One example of the most curious of these encounters is their encounter with that Hazrat in the matter of Fadak. By studying it, many mysteries and questions enshrouding the issue of “Fadak” will be resolved.

What you will be reading in this booklet is a condensed explanation and analysis of this matter. In this discussion of the naked historical facts related to Fadak, any interpretations that could cause a misunderstanding or excite sentiments have been avoided. Especially the majority of its sources are taken from the very well known Sunni sources.

God willing, this is an effective step for a re-evaluation of the history of Islam and a greater understanding of Fatimah (s.a.) the great Lady of Islam.

Qum – Howza 'Imiah,

Nasir Makarim Shirazi

1407, 20th Jamadi Ath-Thani.

“The happy Birth date of Fatimah Zahra (s.a)”

The Story of Fadak

The story of Fadak is one of the most heart-rending and tumultuous stories in the life of Fatimah the Lady of Islam (s.a.) in particular, and the family of the Prophet (s.a.w) in general, and in the history of Islam in a widespread and disseminating way. It is mingled with political conspiracies and many ups and downs and is a hatchway for the unravelling of a part of the important mysteries surrounding the early

scene of Islam's history.

However, first, before beginning this discussion, it is necessary to know what Fadak was and where it was located?

“Fadak”, as many of the historians and writers have written, was a flourishing, fertile village in the land of “Hejaz” near Khaibar, being two or three days journey from Medina, Some have reported this distance as 140 Kilometers, and in which there was a bubbling spring and many date palms¹¹ and after Khaibar it was known as the stronghold of the Jews in Hejaz.

As to how Fadak, this pleasant, prosperous village, was transferred to the Holy Prophet (S), it is well known that after the messenger of God (S) returned from the conquest of Khaibar God placed fear and panic in the hearts of the inhabitants of Fadak who were of the headstrong Jews. They sent a representative to the Prophet (S) and made to him a proposition of peace. In return for their transferral of half of Fadak to the Holy Prophet (S), he accepted and signed the peace treaty.

As such, Fadak became the public domain of the Prophet (s.a.w) because according to an explicit Quranic verse, something that is obtained by the Muslims without war is the exclusive right of the Prophet (S) and unlike spoils of war is not divided.¹² In this way the Prophet (S) took Fadak and spent its earnings on the fatigued wayfarers «أبناء السبيل» and the like.

This has been mentioned by Tabri «الطبري» in his book of history and Ibn Alathir «ابن الأثير» in his book Alkamil «الكامل» and others in their own books.

Also, Tabari in his book and Ibn Alathir in the book “Kamel” made a reference to this.¹³ It was also mentioned by many historians confirming that the Prophet (S) during his own lifetime granted Fadak to the Lady of Islam Fatimah Zahra (s.a.).¹⁴

Strong evidence of this transferral is that many commentators, including the famous Sunni commentator Jalal-Al-Din Suyyuti in the commentary book (Dar-Al-Mansour) under the Quranic Verse; «وآت ذا القربى حقه» (give the near of kin their due), has quoted from “Abu Sa’id Khadri” that, because this verse was descended, the Apostle of God (S) asked for Fatimah and granted Fadak to her. The words of this tradition are as follows:

عن أبي سعيد الخدري رضي الله عنه قال: لما نزلت على النبي صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم الآية (فآت ذا القربى حقه) دعا النبي صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم فاطمة عليها السلام فأعطاهما فدك فقال: هذا لك ولعقبك من بعدك.

When the word of God was revealed saying that; “O’ Prophet! Give your near of kin their due”, the Apostle of God (S) granted Fadak to Fatimah (s.a.).

Under that same verse another tradition is narrated from “Ibn Abbas” which contains the same

information.

Another eye – witness to this claim is the remark of Amir al Mum'inin (a.s.) in “Nahjul Balaghah” in relation to Fadak, in which he says:

« بلى كانت في ايدينا فذك من كل ما اظلمت السماء فشحت بها نفوس قوم وسخت عنها نفوس آخرين، ونعم الحكم ... الله »

“Of course, all that we had in our possession under this sky was Fadak, but a group of people felt greedy for it and the other party withheld themselves from it. Allah, is after all the best arbitrator.”¹⁵

This remark clearly shows that in the Prophets (S) time Fadak was under the control of Ali (a.s) and Fatimah Zahra (s.a.). However, later a group of the Hakims jealous men feasted their eyes upon it and Ali (a.s.) and his wife–the Lady of Islam–were forced to overlook it, and of course this over looking did not occur of their own free will. If other than this was true then the calling of God as arbitrator i.e. to say « ونعم الحكم الله » would have been meaningless.

Among the great Shia scholars, a large group have also mentioned traditions related to this section in their own creditable books. Among them the following scholars may be mentioned;

The late Kulany «الكليني» in Kafy «الكافي», and the late Saduq «الصدوق» and the late Muhammad Ibn Masud Alayyashy «محمد ابن مسعود العياشي» in their commentary and Ali Ibn Issa AlArbali «علي ابن عيسى» in Kashf Alghamma «كشف الغمة», and also another large group in books of commentary, history and traditions, of which mentioning all of them would be too lengthy.

Now let us see why and for what reason they took Fadak away from Fatimah (s.a.).

The political factors for the usurpation of Fadak

The seizing of Fadak from the lady of Islam Fatimah Zahra (s.a.) was not a simple matter only of an economic nature. On the contrary, its economic aspect was outshone by the political matters governing the Islamic community after the death of the Prophet (S). Indeed, Fadak cannot be separated from the other events of that era. On the contrary, it is a link from a lengthy chain and a phenomenon from a total, enveloping current!

The following factors may be cited for this serious historical Usurpation:

1. The possession of Fadak in the hands of the prophet’s family was calculated as a great meaningful distinction for them. This was in itself proof of their elevated position and superiority in the presence of God and the earmarking of their intense closeness to the Prophet (S). This is especially because, according to the shia and sunni narratives mentioned above, when the Quranic verse «وآت ذا القربى حقه»

was descended the Prophet (S) sent for Fatimah (s.a.) and granted to her the land of Fadak.

It is clear that the possession of Fadak in the hands of the Prophets family in view of this historical background would cause the people to search for the Prophet's (S) other vestiges in this family especially the matter of caliphate or the successor of that Hazrat (S). This was not a situation, which could be tolerated by those who supported the transferral of the caliphate to other persons.

2. This matter was also important from an economic stand–point, and it affected its political aspect. This was due to the fact that if Ali (a.s.) and his supporters were placed under severely straightened economic circumstances, their political power would be reduced proportionately According to another interpretation, the existence of Fadak. in their hands made resources available to them that could have been supportive of them in the matter of the guardianship (leadership). This was just as the wealth of Khadija (s.a.) was backing for the progress of Islam at the beginning of the Prophet's (S) mission.

All the world over it is customary that whenever they wish to shut – out an important person or country they place him under economic embargo.

In the history of Islam this has come to us in the Story of “Abu–Talib's camp”, and the severe economic siege inflicted on the Muslims by the infidels of Quraish.

In the interpretation of the Quranic chapter “The Hypocrites” under the verse;

يَقُولُونَ لَئِن رَّجَعْنَا إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ لَيُخْرِجَنَّ الْأَعَزُّ مِنْهَا

“If we return to Medina, surely the mighty will drive out the meaner there from.” (Sura Munafiqin, 63:8)

Here is a reference to a plot similar to this plot, by the hypocrites, which, by the mercy of God was nipped in the bud. As such it is not surprising that the enemies should try to take this investment from the Prophet's family, secluding them and emptying their hands of wealth.

3. If they had been willing to give Fadak to Fatimah Zahra (s.a.) as her inheritance, or a gift of the Prophet (S) to her; the way would have been made clear for her to also request the matter of the caliphate from them.

This point has been subtly reverberated by “Ibn Abil–Hadid Motazaly” in his account of the “Nahjul Balagha” He says:

I asked my professor Ali–bin–Fareghie – teacher of theology in Baghdad school: “Was Fatimah (s.a.) truthful in her claim of the ownership of Fadak?”

He replied: “Yes.”

I then said: “Then why didn’t the first caliph give her Fadak when she was truthful to him?”

He then smiled and spoke a beautiful, subtle and joke-like utterance, even though he was not in the habit of joking, saying:

لو أعطاهها اليوم فذك بمجرد دعواها لجات إليه غداً و ادعت لزوجها الخلافة، و زحزحته عن مقامه، و لم يكن يمكنه الاعتذار و المدافعة بشيء، لأنه يكون قد سجل على نفسه أنها صادقة فيما تدعيه كائناً ما كان من غير حاجة إلى بيّنة و لا شهود

“If at that time, Abi Bakr on hearing Fatimah’s claim would have given Fadak to her, the next day she would have come to him and claimed the caliphate for her husband! She Would have set him aside from his position, and he would have set him aside from his position, and he would have had no defense or justification for himself, because by giving “Fadak” he would have accepted that whatever Fatimah (s.a.) claimed was the truth, needing no proof or evidence. [16](#)

Then Ibn Abil Hadid adds:

“This was a fact, even though my teacher related it as a joke.”

This obvious confession by two Sunni scholars is a living witness for the Fadak story’s, “Political essence”.

If we look at this village’s fate in the first few decades of Islam’s history how it constantly changed hands and how each of the caliphs held a particular position in relation to it, this matter is better clarified. God willing in the following discussion we will refer to this.

[Fadak throughout History](#)

[How Fadak was returned to the Prophets descendents](#)

The historical journey of Fadak is one of the mysteries of Islamic history. Each of the caliphs had a position regarding it. One would take it and the other gave it back, and this situation continued to the point where this land was laid waste and was ruined. In order to discover the ebbs and summits that occurred in this flourishing village we have only to study the sections listed below:

1. Just as we know, Fadak, in the beginning after the fall of Khaibar was transferred to the prophet (S) by way of compromise by the Jews. By command of the verse:

مَا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْقُرَى فَلِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ

Its complete ownership becoming that of the prophet (S) and by order of this verse it became his right.

2. According to reliable historical records. During his lifetime, by command of the Quranic verse; «وَأْتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ» the Holy Prophet (S) gave it to Fatimah Zahra (s.a.) In this way it came under the authority of the respectable daughter of the Prophet (s.a.w).

3. During the rule of the first caliph, this village was usurped and came under the control at the ruling government, and they showed strange stubbornness in the preservation of this situation.

4. This situation continued as such until the time of “Omar Bin Abdul Aziz” the Umayya caliph, who had a more moderate stance in relation to the family of the Prophet (S). He wrote to his governor in Medina «وَأْتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ» telling him to return Fadak to the children of Fatimah (s.a.).

The governor of Medina wrote to him in reply:

“The children of Fatimah are numerous and have married into many different tribes. Which group should I return it to”.

Omar bin Abdul Aziz became enraged and wrote a harsh letter with these contents to the governor of Medina in reply:

أما بعد: فإني لو كتبت إليك أمرك أن تذبح شاةً لكتبت إليّ: أجماء أم قرناء؟ أو كتبت إليك أن تذبح بقرةً لسألتني: ما لونها؟ فإذا ورد عليك كتابي هذا فاقسمها في ولد فاطمة من عليّ (عليه السلام) والسلام

“Every time I order you in a letter to sacrifice a sheep, will you immediately write in reply, should it be horned or without horns? And if I should write sacrifice a cow, will you ask what color should it be? As soon as this letter reaches you, immediately divide Fadak among the children (offspring) of Fatimah (s.a.)!”¹⁷

In this way, with one great rotation, after many long years, Fadak was returned to the hands of Fatimah’s offspring.

5. It wasn’t long before the Umayya caliph “Yazid bin Abdul Malik” once again usurped it.

6. Eventually, Bani Umayya was overthrown and bin Abbas came into power. The famous Abbasid caliph Abu Al Abbas AsSaffah «أبو العباس السفاح» returned it to “Abdullah bin Hasan bin Ali (a.s.)” as a representative of Bani Fatimah (s.a.).

7. Barely no time had passed when “Abu Jaffar Abbasi” took it from the family of Hasan (a.s.). (because they had revolted against Bani Abbas)

8. “Mahdi Abbasi” the son of “Abu Jaffar” returned it to the offspring of Fatimah (s.a.).

9. “Musa Al-Hady” another Abbasid caliph once again usurped it, and “Harun Al-Rashid” continued in this.

10. Ma'mun, in order to make a show of great affection for the Prophets descendents and the children of Ali (a.s.) and Fatimah (s.a.), returned it to the offspring of Fatimah with much pomp and circumstance.

It has been recorded in History that Ma'mun wrote as such to his governor in Medina Qatham Bin Jaffar «**قثم بن جعفر**».

إنّه كان رسول الله أعطى ابنته فاطمة فدكاً و تصديق عليها بها، و إنّ ذلك كان أمراً ظاهراً معروفاً عند آله عليهم السلام ثم لم تزل فاطمة تدعي منه بما هي أولى من صدق عليه، و إنه قد رأى ردها إلى وريثها و تسليمها إلى «محمد بن يحيى بن الحسين بن زيد بن علي»... و «محمد بن عبدالله بن الحسين»... ليقوما بها لأهلها

“The messenger of God (S.) granted “Fadak” to his daughter “Fatimah” (s.a.) and this was a well know open matter among the Prophets family. After that Fatimah was its consistent claimant and her word is more worthy than any ones of confirmation and acceptance, and I see it fit that it be given to the representative of that at Hazrat (s.a.). Return it to Muhammad ben Yahya and Muhammad bin Abdullah (the grand-children or Imam Zain Al-Abedeen) so that they may distribute it among her descendents.”

“Ibn Abi al-Hadid” says:

Ma'mun was sitting in attendance to the people's complaints. The first complaint, which came to him and was regarded by him, dealt with Fadak. As soon as he read the complaint he began to cry and said to one of his officers, “call and see where Fatimah's (a.s.) lawyer is”. An old man came forward and spoke for a long while with Ma'mun. Ma'mun gave an order. A decree was written and Fadak was handed over to him as a representative of the Prophets Family (a.s.).

When Ma'mun signed this decree De'bel rose and recited a poem of which the first verse is as follows:

أصبح وجه الزمان قد ضحكا برّد مأموناً هاشمياً فدكا

English Interpretation:

The face of time took on a smile

Because Ma'mun returned Fadak to Bani Hashim. [18](#)

The author of the book “Fadak” writes that on authority of the single tradition of Abu Said Khidri which says: “The Prophet (S) granted Fadak to Fatimah.” Ma'mun gave orders that Fadak be returned to Fatimah's (s.a.) offspring. [19](#)

11. But Motawakkil Abbasi because of his intense hatred of the Prophet's family once again usurped Fadak from them.

12. The son of Motawakkil Mansour, ordered that it be once again returned to the children of Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Husayn (a.s.).

Evidently, a village that rotates as such from hand to hand, everyday being the plaything in the hands of spiteful politicians will quickly be laid waste. Eventually this very fate encompassed Fadak and all of its inhabited places became ruined arid its trees withered and dried up.

However, at any rate, these quotations explain this reality that the caliphs were especially sensitive in relation to Fadak, and according to his political policies, each showed a special position and reaction regarding it.

This is all proof of what was said previously that the usurping of Fadak from Fatimah (s.a.) and her descendents had more of a political nature than an economic one. Its aim was to exclude them from the Islamic society and weaken their position. It was also a declaration of enmity towards the family of the Prophet (S). This was just as the return of Fadak to them, an act repeated several times in the length of Islamic history, was a "Political Maneuver" meant to be a show of sympathy and affection for the Prophet's family (a.s.).

Fadak's importance in Muslim public opinion was such that in some historical reports it is related; that in the time of "Motawakkel Abassi" before Fadak was taken from Bani Fatimah (s.a.) the dates of its produce were brought among the pilgrims at the time of Hajj and were bought by them at exorbitant prices as good luck gifts!²⁰

Fadak and the Imams of the Prophets Family

One of the matters very worthy of attention is that after the primary usurpation, not even one of the Imams ever interfered in the matter of Fadak. Nor did Ali (a.s.) in the inner workings of his government interfere, nor did the other Imams. This was while persons like "Omar Ibn Abdul-Aziz" and even "Ma'mun" suggested that it be returned to one of the Imams. This is really question provoking. What was the reason for this position with regard to the matter of Fadak?

Why didn't Ali (a.s.), at a time when the whole Islamic realm was under his subservience, give back this right to its original owners? Or for an example, why didn't Ma'mun give Fadak back to Imam Musa al-Reda (a.s.), despite all of his show of devotion regarding the Prophets family? On the contrary, turning it over to some of "Zaid ben Ali bin al-Husayn" grandchildren as representatives of Bani Hashem.

Amir al Mum'inin Ali (a.s.) has said all there is to say in a short discourse, where he says:

"Of course, all that we had in our possession under this sky was Fadak, but a group of people felt

greedy for it and the other party withheld themselves from it. Allah is after all the best Arbiter.

In practice, that great man showed that he didn't want Fadak as a means for income or an economic source, and at the time when the matter of Fadak was propounded by himself and his wife it was for the stabilization of the matter of the guardianship, and to prevent diversive ways in the groundwork of the Prophets caliphate. Now that the dye had been cast and Fadak had taken on a material countenance, what benefit was there in obtaining it.

Sayyid Mortada, the great Shia scholar and researcher has a meaningful word on this matter, saying:

“When the post of the caliphate came to Ali (a.s.) they spoke to him about the return of Fadak, he said;

إِنِّي لَأَسْتَحْي أَن أَرُدَّ شَيْئاً مِّنْهُ أَبُوبَكْرٍ وَ أَمْضَاهُ عَمْر

English Interpretation:

“I'm ashamed before God, to return it to it's original owners, that which Abu Baker prohibited and Omar agreed with.”[21](#)

In reality, he shows with this remark both his greatness, and his little regard for Fadak as a material investment and source of income, and also introduces the principle thwarters of this right!

As to why some of the caliphs, who apparently wished to show devotion to the Prophets family (a.s.), turned over Fadak to the grand children of Zaid ibn Ali, for example, or other unknown persons as representatives of Bani Hashem instead of the Imams themselves, there are two probable reasons:

1. The guardian Imams (a.s.) were never willing to accept Fadak because at that time this had more of a material nature than a meaningful one, and maybe gave the impression of attachment to the world instead of spiritual distinctions. By another interpretation, accepting it under those conditions was unworthy of the guardian Imams (a.s.). In addition to that, it would also tie their hands in their struggle against the oppressing caliphs. This was because each time they wished to rise up against them, they had to give up Fadak. (Just like in the affair of the repossession of Fadak by “Abu jaa'far” Caliph Abbasi from “Bani al-Hasan”. It has been reported that after the uprising of some of them against the caliph's government, he took Fadak from all of them.)

2. The oppressive Caliphs also preferred that the material resources of the Imams not be increased.

Just as it is well known in the celebrated story of Harun that when he came to Medina he showed unusual respect for Imam Moosa ben Ja'far (a.s.), in a way that was surprising to his son Ma'mun. However, when it came time for gift giving, the gift that he sent to the Imam (a.s.) was unusually meager. Ma'mun was mystified by this matter and upon questioning his father for the reason behind it, his father gave an answer which was in brief something like; “We must not do something to help them gain power

and tomorrow rise up against us!”

One Historical Trial

Just as we have said, during the Prophet’s life time, Fadak was turned over to Fatimah Zahra (s.a.) after the revelation of the verse: «وَأْتِذَا الْقَرِيبَىٰ حَقَّهُ»

This is a matter not only reported by shi’ite commentators, but also reported by a group of sunni scholars from the words of the famous companion of the Prophet (S) Abu Said Alkhedri «أَبُو سَعِيدِ الْخَدْرِيِّ» of which its documents have been previously spoken of.

After the Prophet’s death the government of that time laid hands on it and threw out Fatimah’s representatives. This is a matter which has been reported by the famous sunni scholar “Ibn Hujr” in the book «الصَّوَاعِقُ الْمَحْرَقَةُ» , and by “Samhoody” in «وَفَاءُ الْوَفَاءِ» and also Ibn Abil Hadid in «شَرْحُ نَهْجِ الْبَلَاغَةِ».

For the attainment of what was rightly hers, the lady of Islam (s.a.) brought up two points; First by declaring it as the prophet’s gift to her, and the other was as her inheritance (when the matter of it being the Prophet’s gift was seen an unacceptable).

First of all, the lady of Islam invited the commander of the faithful, Ali (a.s.) and Umm Ayman to go to the first caliph as witnesses. But the caliph did not accept these witnesses using the excuse that witnesses for the proof of a litigation must be two men.

Then by claiming a tradition of the Prophet (S) in which was supposed to have said:

“We prophets leave no inheritance and everything that remains after us will be for alms”;

نحن معاشر الانبياء لانورث ما تركناه صدقة

He also refrained from accepting the proposal of it being inheritance.

This even though in a brief study becomes evident that in this action of theirs, the ruling usurping government is guilty of ten big mistakes. These are brought up as a list below, even though their explanations need much more discussion.

1. Fatimah’s (s.a.) was (وريث); meaning that the laud of Fadak was in her possession, and according to the views of all Islamic laws and the existent laws among the intelligent people of the world; witnesses are never required of a (وريث).

This is of course unless reasons are adduced that the property, or his/her possession of it, is void.

For example, if someone lives in a particular house and claims ownership of it, so long as no reasons are adduced that deny his ownership, it cannot be taken from him. There is no necessity for him to

produce witnesses for his ownership, because possession itself (either by himself or his representatives) is his best proof for ownership.

2. The witness of the lady of Islam (s.a.) was in this instance enough in itself, this being because as the honoured verse states, she was:

انما يريد الله ليذهب عنكم الرجس اهل البيت ويطهركم تطهيراً

“Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the house! And to purify you a (thorough) purifying. (Sura AlaHzab 33:33)

And the well-known tradition “Kasa”, which is reported in many of the creditable books of the sunni, and their books of integrity, speaks of the innocent ones. God kept all forms of uncleanness and undesirable acts away from the Prophet (S), Ali (a.s.), Fatimah (s.a.), Hasan and Husayn (a.s.) and made them free of sin. How could it be possible for the testimony or claim of such a person to be put to doubt and questioned?!

3. The witness given by Ali (a.s.) was also by itself enough, because he was also possessed of the degree of purity. In addition to the purification verse and other verses and narrations attesting to this fact, there is this famous tradition:

الحق على وعلى مع الحق لن يفترقا حتى يردا على الحوض

“Ali is just, and justice is with Ali, and wherever he is, justice is with him”[22](#)

Which is itself enough; how is it that justice revolves around the axis of Ali’s being but his testimony is not accepted?!

Who has the nerve to refute his witness in the face of this saying of the Prophet (S), which has been reported by both shia and sunni?

4. The testimony of Umm Ayman was also enough in itself, just as ibn Abi al-Hadid reported:

Umm Emen said to them, don’t you swear to the fact that the prophet said:

أم أيمن امرأة من أهل الجنة

“I am of the dwellers of Heaven”, (If you accept this then how can you refute my testimony?[23](#)

5. Even not to mention the previous; the ruling knowledge, when obtained from different proofs (sense –,

or similar to sense, proofs), is sufficient for judgment. The possession and “in hand”, on the one side, the testimony of these witnesses, each of whose testimonies should be enough proof, on the other side, don't they form knowledge and certainty?

6. The tradition about the lack of inheritance being left by Prophets is actually in another form and having a different meaning, not the way that the usurpers of Fadak reported or interpreted. In other sources this tradition is reported as such:

إن الأنبياء لم يُورثوا ديناراً و لا درهماً ولكن ورثوا العلم فمن أخذ منه أخذ بحظٍّ وافر

English Interpretation:

“The prophets have not left dirhams and dinars as a memorial, but rather the inheritance of the Prophets was knowledge and learning, whoever obtains a greater portion of their knowledge and learning has received a greater inheritance from them.”[24](#)

This is an observance of the prophet's spiritual intellectual inheritance and has nothing to do with the inheritance of their property. This is exactly what is meant in another narration that has come to us.

العلماء ورثه الانبياء

English Interpretation:

“Scholars are the Prophet's heirs.”

In particular, the sentence (العلماء ورثه الانبياء) was certainly not included at the bottom of this tradition. Is it possible for a tradition to be issued from the prophet, which goes against categorical Quranic verses? This because there are several verses in the Holy Quran which testify to the fact that the Prophets left inheritance, and in these verses there exist clear indications that this not only means spiritual inheritance but also consists of material inheritance.

Therefore, in her famous sermon, which she delivered in the Prophet's mosque, before the “Muhajereen” and “Ansar” the lady of Islam (s.a.) resorted to these verses, and none of them could disagree with her. This is all proof of the falseness of this tradition.

7. If this tradition was valid, then why hadn't any of the Prophet's wives heard of it; since they came to the caliph requesting their portion of the Prophet's inheritance.[25](#)

8. If this tradition was valid, then why eventually did the first caliph give orders in a letter to return Fadak to Fatimah (s.a.); a letter which the second caliph took and tore up[26](#).

9. Furthermore, if this tradition had any reality and Fadak should have been divided among the poor as

alms; then why did the second caliph in his own time (after everything was over), send for Ali (a.s.) and Abbas and told of willingness to give Fadak to them. This being a very well – known event in Islamic History²⁷.

10. In creditable books of both shia and sunni it has been reported that after the incident of the prohibition of Fadak, the lady of Islam (s.a.) became angry at these two and said:

“I will never speak as much as one word to you.”²⁸

And this situation continued until with great sorrow she closed her eyes to this world.

This was even though this Prophetic tradition is well known in Islamic sources:

من أحب ابنتي فاطمة فقد أحبني، و من أرضى فاطمة فقد أرضاني، و من أسخط فاطمة فقد أسخطني

“Whoever likes my daughter Fatimah, likes me; whoever makes her happy has made me happy: and whoever angers her, has angered me.”²⁹

According to this, can the right which Fatimah (s.a.) requested be prohibited, and can excuses be found in a tradition, which shows no traces of truthfulness? And this, in contrast to Quranic text that says that the Prophets heirs receive inheritance from them.

At any rate, no justification can be found for the usurpation of Fadak, and no acceptable reason exists for this deed.

On one side we have the possession of the property by Fatimah Zahra (s.a.).

On another, reliable reputable witnesses, on the third side, the testimony of the “Book of God” (the Holy Quran).

And, on the fourth side, the various Islamic narrations which all attest to the validity of the lady of Islam’s argument for her indisputable right in Fadak.

Besides, the general verses in the Quran related to inheritance which gives all people the right to inherit from their parents, (which cannot be denied unless creditable reasons are found to its nullification), is counted as another proof.

The Extent and Boundaries of Fadak

Fadak just as we have said was apparently a village near Khaibar that was flourishing and fertile, and its extents were not of that which would have been concealed from someone; but how strange when Harun al-Rashid says to Imam Musa ibn Ja’far (a.s.):

روي أنّ الرشيد كان يقول لموسى بن جعفر (عليه السلام): يا أبا الحسن خذ فداك حتى أردّها إليك فيأبى، حتى ألحّ عليه!

!فقال (عليه السلام): لا أخذها إلّا بحدودها

قال: وما حدودها؟

.قال (عليه السلام): يا أمير المؤمنين إن حدّتها لم تردّها

.قال: بحق جدك إلّا فعلت

قال (عليه السلام): أمّا الحدّ الأوّل فعدن، فتغيّر وجه الرشيد، وقال: هيه! قال (عليه السلام): والحدّ الثاني سمرقند، فأربدّ وجهه، قال: والحدّ الثالث أفريقية، فاسودّ وجهه وقال: هيه! قال: والرابع سيف البحر ممّا يلي الخزر وأرمينية

.قال الرشيد: فلم تبق لنا شيئاً! فتحول من مجلسي

!!قال موسى (عليه السلام): قد أعلمتك أنّي إن حدّتها لم تردّها

“Clarify Fadak’s boundaries so that I may return it to you”

Imam (a.s.) refrained from giving a reply and Harun continually insisted on an answer;

Imam (a.s.) said:

“I will not say so unless by its true extent” Harun said;

“What are its true boundaries?”

The Imam (a.s.) replied;

“If I tell its boundaries, surely you will not agree.” Harun said;

“By the right of your grand–father (the Prophet (S)) I swear, so speak of its boundaries (I will give it!)

Imam (a.s.) said:

“But the first boundary of that land is Aden!”

When Harun heard this his countenance changed and said; “You don’t say, you don’t say!...”

The Imam (a.s.) said:

“And its second boundary is Samarqand!”

The traces of uneasiness became more apparent in Harun’s face.

Imam (a.s.) then said:

“And the third boundary is Africa!”

Here! Harun’s face grew black with rage while he said;

“You don’t say...!”

Then the Imam (a.s.) said:

“And the fourth boundary is the shores of the Caspian sea and Armenia!!”

Harun said:

“Then nothing remains for us, get up and come sit in my place and rule over the people, (what you have said is the entire extent of the Islamic world.)”

Imam (a.s.) said:

“I told you that if I determined its boundaries you would never give it.”

It was at this time that Harun decided to murder Moosa ibn Ja’far (a.s.).[30](#)

This meaningful tradition is clear proof of the intermingling of the matter of Fadak with that of the caliphate. It shows of the Prophet’s (S) Caliph. If Harun wished to turn over Fadak he would have been forced to give up the Caliphate. This very matter made him realize it possible that whenever Imam Musa ibn Ja’far (a.s.) attained power he could pull him down from the throne of the Caliphate. Therefore he decided to murder that Hazrat.

A summing up and Conclusion

The sorrowful saga of Fadak, and the storms which encompassed this apparently small village throughout history, well show that a great plot was under way to set aside the prophet’s family (a.s.) from the scene of the government and caliphate, and to ignore the position of the Imam and guardianship.

From the beginning and especially during the time of Bani Umayya and Bani Abbas, the players in the political scene tried to exclude the Ahl al-Bait (a.s.) in every way. They tried to take from them every privilege, which could have possibly resulted in their victory. Where conditions required it of them they used their names and titles but refrained from returning what was their due right!

We know that during the rule of Bani Abbas and Bani Umayya the extent of the Islamic world and the wealth and treasures of the public treasury were so great, as to be previously unknown of, or less known of, in the history of Islam. In view of this, the village of Fadak was very insignificant, but still devilish considerations would not permit them to return this right to its owners and put an end to this playing with Fadak.

The saga of Fadak in reality is a page in the history of Islam which shows, on one side, the rank and esteem of the Prophet's descendants, on another side, their innocence and, on yet another, the plots which were formed by their enemies against them.

1. From, "Translation of the Quran-al-Majid" by M. H. Shakir
2. From, "Furat Alkufi Translation of Quran"
3. Addur Almanthoor vol. 4 pg. 177 177 ص 4، الدُر المنثور، مجلد 4، ص 177 177
4. Nahjul Balaghah letter 45 to Osman Bin Hunaif, from English translation of 'Nahjul Balagha' by: Ali Naqi – Al – Naqawi
5. الطبقات At-tabaqat pg. 44
6. Night of Divine Decrees or Night of Power = Night of Qadr (ليلة القدر)
7. (فطم) is from the root word (فطم) originally meaning "weaning from milk" and in the appropriate choice of this name for the lady Islam, reasons have been mentioned, including the above meaning..
8. Bihar-al-Anwar; vol. 43 pg. 65; tradition 58
9. According to the reports of the religions great ones, it is bidden among three nights (the 19th, 21st, and 23rd of Ramadhan).
10. Because her satisfaction and pleasure causes God's pleasure; and His pleasure is greater than the world and everything in it.
11. Mojam-Al-Boldan: The word Fadak.
12. Quran; chapter 54, Vs 6 & 7.
13. Refer to the book "Fadak" by Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Hasan Qazwini Haery
14. Because it was a possession of the Prophet (S).
15. "Nahjul Balaghah", letter 45, translation into English by: "Ali Naqi-un-Naqvi"
16. Explanation of Nahj Albalagha by Ibn Abi al-Hadid, vol. 4, pg. 78
17. Translation by translator from the Farsi, فتوح البلدان ص38، البلاذري، Albalrethy in Fotoohul Buldan pg.38
18. Ibn Abi al-Hadid, vol. 16 pg. 217
19. "Fadak", pg. 6
20. Ibn Abi al-Hadid, vol. 16 pg. 217
21. Ibn Abi al-Hadid vol. 16 pg. 252
22. Ibn Abi al-Hadid, vol. 16 pg. 219
23. Ibn Abi al-Hadid, translation by translator.
24. Alkafi vol. 1 pg. 34
25. Ibn Abi al-Hadid; vol. 16 pg. 228. This tradition has also been narrated by ص239، مادة فذك، ج4، معجم البلدان الحموى، ج4، مادة فذك، ص239
26. السيرة الحلبية في سيرة الأئمة و الأئمة المعصومين و الأئمة المعصومين Assyra Alhalabiya Fi Alameen and AlMa'mun vol. 3 pg. 391
27. chapter on the merit of Ibn Hajar pg. 9
28. Imama and Siyasa by Ibn Qutaiba pg. 14

الإمامة و السياسة، ابن قتيبة، ص14

29. صحيح البخاري، باب فضل الخمس Sahih Bukhari, chapter on khums

30. Bihar Al Anwar, بحار الانوار vol. 8 pg. 106

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