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Fadak Affair

Only a few days after the establishment of Caliphate, Lady Fatima had to approach the court (Daarul Qaza) in the case related to Fadak. It should be understood that Fadak is a region in the Hijaz province, situated at a distance of three–days' travel from Medina. The author of Saraah says that Fadak is a village of Khaybar. It should be remembered that Khaybar is in Hijaz and so it is correct to say that Fadak is a village of Hijaz. Previously this village was a property of the disbelievers of Khaybar, but after a treaty with them, it came in possession of the Prophet and became his personal property.

A look at Pg. 292 of Sharh Abil Hadid (Vol. 2) shows that Abu Bakr did not believe that Fadak was the property of the Prophet. But all commentators agree that it belonged to the Holy Prophet (S) and it was indeed so. There must have been something, which made the commentators to become unanimous in this matter. Otherwise, how would have they have agreed on this point? Anyway, Fadak was a well–populated and fertile village with a number of orchards and springs. It used to give a considerable income to the Holy Prophet (S). It is well known that the Prophet was not living a luxurious life. Yet Fadak's income was of a considerable help to the poor and needy. In his lifetime, the Prophet had, in accordance with the divine verse:

"And give to the near of kin his due..."1

...given away this village to Lady Fatima (s.a.) and thus it was in her practical possession.

A look at Tafseer Durre Manthur of Suyuti shows that when, in accordance to a treaty, the village of Fadak came in the possession of the Prophet, Jibraeel descended with this verse and requested the Holy Prophet (S) to give away Fadak to his near and dear ones. The Prophet inquired who was that near and dear relative. Jibraeel (a.s.) said: "Lady Fatima, Hasan and Husayn (a.s.)." The Prophet complied with the divine command and gave Fadak in writing to Lady Fatima (s.a.),2 but when Abu Bakr became the Caliph, he confiscated it. A look at the above–mentioned books shows that at the time of the said confiscation, Fadak was in possession of Lady Fatima. Words of Jawaahirul Aqdain also make it clear that Fadak was taken away from Lady Fatima (s.a.).

Anyway, when in the court, Lady Fatima, gave a statement that: "My father had gifted this area to me,"

Abu Bakr said softly: "I had imagined that you have claimed it as a share of your inheritance, whereas the words of the Holy Prophet (S) are: There is no inheritance among we, prophets. Whatever we leave behind is charity. But when your late father had gifted this area to you during his lifetime it's being in your control cannot be called illegal." Saying this, Abu Bakr was about to issue a written order to restore Fadak to Lady Fatima when Umar came forward to prevent the Caliph from issuing such an order and said: "Fatima is no more than a woman and she is like all other women. Ask for a witness from her."

In response, Lady Fatima produced His Eminence, Ali (a.s.), Umme Aiman (r.a.), and Asma binte Umais (r.a.), whereafter the Caliph wrote an order returning Fadak. But Umar snatched the order from the Caliph and tore it down3 saying: "Fatima is wife of Ali. How can his testimony be accepted? Whatever Ali says will be in his own interest and as for the testimony of the other two ladies, it is unreliable." Upon this, Lady Fatima said:

"O gentlemen! You have heard the Prophet say that 'these two ladies are among the people of Paradise and hence they cannot lie'."

But this reply of Lady Fatima was not considered cognizable and Fadak was taken away from her. Then Fatima raised a complaint: "O my father! O Muhammad" and returned to her house. A few days thereafter, she fell ill due to a feeling of disappointment and tiredness and left this world with a deep disgust towards the people in power.

It is written in Sahih Bukhari, Vol. 5 and Sahih Muslim, Vol. 3 that after this affair of Fadak, Lady Fatima became very much displeased with Abu Bakr and broke off relations with the Caliphate totally and never talked with him till she breathed her last and when she died, Amirul Mo-mineen (a.s.), as per her will, buried her in the darkness of the night and did not even inform Abu Bakr and Umar.

- 1. Surah Bani Israel 17:26
- 2. Ref. Maarijun Nubuwwah, Chapter 40, Pg. 221; Habibus Sayr; Rauzatus Safa, Pg. 135, Vol. 2.

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