Wills of Fatimah

Fatimah's political and personal advices before her martyrdom

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Vasiyat (will) is from the root " v-s-y" which means connection. Also it means promise, because a person who wills promise to give his things to another person or to do something. God in Quran talks about Ibrahim's will and Yaqub's will to their children which was accepting Unity of God (2: 132-133) and in some verses God orders human beings to will their possessions to father, mother and other relatives properly; also He says acting according to a will is obligatory and making a change in it is a sin.(2: 180-182) In Islamic teachings, it is advised to prepare a will.[1]

In more than twenty traditions, the wills of Hazrat Zahra (a.s.) have been included. Her wills are divided into two groups of oral and written.

[1] *Hur 'Amili, 13/352, 357*

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In several traditions, her oral wills have been narrated. When she was informed of her death, she willed Ali.[1] According to some traditions, she had a dream of her father and heard about her death time, then she willed to Ali.[2]

When she was willing orally, in addition to Ali, Ume Ayman and Asma bint Umays and Salmi , the wife of Abu-Rafe' were present.[3] She willed just a few number of people of close companions be informed of her death and no one else.[4]

Regarding her written will, there are different narrations. Kulayni [5] and Tusi[6] quoted her written will from Abu Basir from Imam Sadiq. In this narration, it is said, Miqdad ibn Asvad and Zubayr ibn 'Awam were present at the time of writing this will.[7]

In a tradition from ibn Abbas, it is narrated that Hasan and Husayn informed Ali that her mother's sickness deteriorated. Ali rushed into Zahra's bed and put the cloth over her face aside and found her will in her bed.[8] This will started with confessing to the Unity of God, Prophethood of Muhammad, confessing to the rightness of heaven and hell and resurrection day. Starting a will like this is what Prophet taught people. In oral and written wills of her, different subjects have been mentioned including complaining of present political and social situation of that time, recommendation about children, financial will and performing some religious practices. These wills based on their contents can be divided into two groups of personal and political.

Personal wills: these wills included several points; for example:

1. Children: in several traditions, she advised Ali about her children. She willed, after me, marry Zeynab, daughter of my sister, because she will be like me for my children.[9] In another tradition, she said I advise you to be kind with my children.[10]

2. House ware

She willed curtains of her home be given to one of her daughters. In another tradition, it is said she willed when Umme-Kulthum reached puberty, house ware should be hers.

3. Making a coffin: in several traditions, it is said that she was very sad because at the time of carrying the body of a corpse to bury her, the shape of her body was clear to all. So, she asked a coffin be made for her. It is said, she learnt it from angels and explained it to Ali and some said Asma bint 'Umays told her in Ethiopia she saw it. So she asked Asma to make one for her and she made it when Zahra (a.s.) was alive. Zahra (a.s.) – who was not seen smiling after the demise of Prophet – smiled upon seeing that coffin and prayed for Asma that God save her from hell.[11] In some sunitte traditions, this is narrated from imam

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Sajjad. In another tradition, it is narrated when ‘Aishah heard the news of her death, she went to her home, but Asma’ did not let her enter. ‘Aishah complained to her and said to make a covered place like the one made for brides. Abu-Bakr, when went to Zahra’s home, asked Asma’ about it, she answered Fatimah willed no one attend her funeral and this covered place was made by her order.[12] In some sources, it is said Zahra (a.s.) was buried in the coffin she ordered to be made.[13] This is the first coffin made in Islam. Some doubted it was Asma’ bin Umays who was present at the death time of Zahra (a.s.). Or they guessed it was Salmi, wife of Abu-Rafe, or Asma , daughter of Yazid ibn Sakan Ansari.

Of course , it could be Asma, she was the wife of Jafar ibn Abu-Talib, brother of Ali, who might keep her relationship with her even after her marriage to Abu-Bakr. Even in a report, it is said, after demise of Prophet, a group plotted to kill Ali. Asma who was at the home of caliph understood it and informed Ali.[14]

2. Giving her ablution while she was wearing her clothes

In some traditions, it is said, before her demise, she took ablution, wore new clothes, and told Salmi, wife of Aburafe, I took ablution, no one take my clothes off.[15] Majlisi said describing this issue, she did not mean she is needless of ablution but she meant she cleaned her body; because ablution for a dead body is obligatory which should be done for each Muslim. Even Prophet willed to be given ablution. In some traditions, Zahra (a.s.) willed Ali and Asma gave her ablution. In a tradition, it is said, Ali washed her body from over her clothes.[16] According to a tradition from imam Sadiq , Ali gave Zahra (a.s.) ablution, because she was Seddiqqeh and only a Seddiq can give ablution to another Seddiq. As Mary was given ablution by Isa.[17]

5. Reciting Quran on her grave :

Zahra (a.s.) asked Ali, when she was put in the grave and was buried, Ali sat beside her grave and recited Quran and supplication for her. Because at this very moment a dead person needs attention of alive people.[18]

6. Gardens and seven states and financial affair

From her wills, she dedicated her gardens and the other seven states belonged to her to be used for charities.

a.Abu-Basir narrated that I came to imam Baqir and he said, did you see my mother’s will? I said, no. Then I asked him to read it to me. Imam Baqir took it out and recited it to me.
In this will after the name of God it is said, Fatimah, the daughter of Prophet, wills the income of the seven walled gardens (Awaf, dalal, Burgha, Mithab, Hosna, Safiyah, and Masharabe Omme Ibrahim) be spent in the

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path of God to help Islam. She chose Ali to take care of her will. If he passes away, my son, Hasan should take care of it and if he passes away, my other son, Husayn should take care of it and if he passes, the oldest remained son of me should take care of my will. I set God, Mighdad ibn Aswad, and Zubayr ibn Awam as witness of this will. Imam Baqir said, my mother Fatimah willed like this and Ali ibn Abu-Talib wrote it down.[19]

b.In another tradition, her written will has been included which says income of gardens should be spent for what she mentioned including alms, and yearly charity, paying expenditure of Prophet's wives and daughter of Abudhar, poor of Bani hashem and bani motalleb. In this will Ali and after him her two sons are responsible to take care of this will and finally Mighdad, Zubayr and Ali are witnesses of this will.[20]

These gardens and states belonged to a Jewish man named Mokhairigh who fought in Uhud battle along side Prophet and was killed. He willed if he was killed, all his properties should have been given to Prophet.[21] Therefore these gardens which were in Bani-Nazir district were given to Prophet. He used them to solve Muslims' problems.[22] Kulayni [23] and Tusi [24] narrated that Prophet bequeathed them. This is the first bequeathing in Islam; according to a tradition, these gardens were not public bequeathing but they bequeathed to Zahra (a.s.).

According to a tradition from imam Sadiq, Fatimah allocated an amount of Alm for Bani Hashim and Bani Motallib in her will.[25] Of course, in Zahra's will the word Sadaqah has been used.

From some traditions, it is inferred that all that Prophet left for Zahra (a.s.) and even seven gardens were confiscated by Abu-Bakr at his caliphate. Therefore, her will at the time of her death had another meaning which was to prove her right over the gardens and other properties.

Political wills:

In a tradition, it is said that Zahra was angry with those who violated her right and did not like them to attend her funeral.[26] And she willed Ali those who oppressed her should not attend her funeral service, and should not pray at her body. And her body should be buried during night.[27]

In a tradition, imam Sadiq was asked, "Why was her body buried during night?" he answered, " because not some men (Abu-Bakr and 'Umar) could pray at her body."[28] Also it is said Fatimah took this promise from Ali that he would not reveal her grave.[29] Imam Ali in replying caliph who complained about secret funeral service said, this is what she liked and he could not decline it. Ibn Sa'd,[30] Bilazuri[31],

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Tabari [32] from Sunnite historians, wrote about her burial night. Bukhari[33] and Muslim[34] asserted that Abu-Bakr did not give anything from Prophet's heir to his daughter Zahra.

[1] Fital Neyshaburi, 151; Majlisi, 43/191, 205, 218; 78/253, 256, 305, 390-391; 79/27

[2] Tabari imami, 131-133; Fital Neyshaburi, 151

[3] Arabli, 2/126-127; Majlisi, 43/172; 181, 184

[4] Tabari imami, 133

[5] 7/49

[6] Tahdhib al –Ahkam, 9/144-145

[7] Majlisi, 17/184; 43/185, 235

[8] Majlisi, 43/214

[9] Hilali 'Namiri, 392; Kulayni, 5/555

[10] Majlisi, 79/27

[11] Tusi, Tahdhib al –Ahkam, 1/469

[12] ibn Abdul ber, 4/1897; ibn Athir Jazri, 5/524; Tabari, zakhaer al-Ughba, 53

[13] ibn Sa'd, 8/28

[14] Qumi, 2/158; Saduq, 'Ilal al-Sharayah, 1/191-192

[15] ibn Sa'd, 8/27; ibn Athir Jazri, 5/524

[16] Biladhuri, 1/405; ibn Athir Jazri, 5/524

[17] Kulayni, 3/159; Tusi, al-Istebsar, 1/199-200

[18] Majlisi, 79/27

[19] Kulayni, 7/48; Tusi, Tahdhib al –Ahkam, 9/144-145

[20] Majlisi, 100/184-185

[21] ibn Sa'd, 1/501-503

[22] ibn Sa'd, 1/501-502

[23] 7/47-48

[24] Tahdhib al –Ahkam, 9/145

[25] Kulayni, 7/48

[26] Saduq, Al-Amali, 755-756

[27] Fital Neyshaburi, 151; Majlisi, 43/192

[28] Saduq, 'Ilal al-Sharayah, 1/185

[29] Mufid, Al-Ikhtisas, 185

[30] 8/29-30

[31] 1/405

[32] Tarikh, 2/448

[33] 5/82

[34] 5/154

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