



He Set Aside Food Stores for His Soldiers **He Fed the Townspeople** **“Plain Bread”**

After Fakhri Pasha lost contact with his headquarters in the Levant during his stay in Medina, he began his precautionary measures in food insurance for his military garrison and his soldiers excluding the people, and as a result of this policy, with time, an unprecedented famine in Medina occurred when it reached its peak, and the relationship between hunger and high prices tightened.

Fakhri became aware of the occurrence of such a scenario as soon as he took over the city, as one of the men of the Ottoman garrison (Feridun Kandemir) described that he had prepared a camp near the city in which water was available and palm gardens were spread throughout, and he was keen to harvest palm crops from dates and keep them in warehouses prepared for that reason, in order to maintain food security for his military garrison, from the early period of his rule. This procedure was also followed by a set of orders, including that palm crops should not be exported outside Medina or donated but rather remain in their warehouses.

Fakhri Pasha displaced the people of Medina in order to preserve the food security of his garrison. Thus, on December 1917) 30 AD), Fakhri Pasha issued a decision to confiscate foodstuffs and collect them to the castle in Medina in preparation for the siege. Accordingly, buying and selling came to a halt, and people neglected to cultivate the land, while Fakhri's army was busy collecting and storing supplies in the markets.

Fakhri then faced a food storage crisis as a result of the confiscation of large quantities of food from the markets, which was forcibly taken from the hands of merchants by purchasing it at cheap prices through his soldiers, as the quantities were larger than the stores. Therefore, he resorted to storing the food in military barracks, mosques, and abandoned homes, which became filled with wheat, flour, dates, sugar, and ghee. He was not satisfied with that; rather, he went over to the orchards near the city and tried to gain more from the nearby centers loyal to him.



He provided cats and animal and even human corpses as food for the hungry



He was not satisfied with starving people from the markets only, but he ordered his soldiers to take over the bread ovens in the city and set up a group of bakeries in a number of his military barracks. In addition, he imposed on the army a type of bread called Kunaytah, which is bread that is dried in the oven to resist rot for long periods, and when it is eaten it must be moistened with water in order to be ready for serving.

Fakhri insisted on his headquarters in the Levant to send large quantities of food, especially during the period when trains were arriving in the city, after having gone through the procedures of collecting food from the merchants and confiscating their goods, as well as harvesting crops from orchards. It is natural for this to be followed by a ban on buying and selling, as merchants were prevented from opening their shops, and this was aimed at deliberately starving the people in order to force the remaining residents to leave the city. In spite of that, secret sales were practiced between citizens and merchants. However, it was more likely for people to buy some food from the soldiers of the garrison, who were seeking financial gain and exploiting the needs of the people. Accordingly, prices rocketed up in an unprecedented and illogical manner, all in order to obtain food.

People became caught between the fires of hunger and high prices. Fakhri Pasha anticipated and prepared for a total siege, but he began torturing his people before the siege tormented them. This situation drove people to eat lean livestock, animal skins, cats, and dead birds and other dead animals, and they even ate human corpses after exhuming the graves; fresh burials were taken back out, and legs and hands were amputated, cooked, and sold as beef, while it was in fact human meat. Al-Turki Kashif Kagman mentioned in his book that some people were arrested who had exhumed the grave of a newly buried woman, and her thighs and arms had been cut off and sold in the market after being cooked. The exhumers of the graves were always arrested, and groups of corpses that were exhumed from the graves would be found chopped into pieces. Moreover, it was narrated that one of the city's residents buried his sister in Al-Baqi', and when he returned to visit her after a while, he found her grave exhumed and her flesh chopped off. A story also was narrated of someone who hunted a cat, and two of the townspeople bought it and took it to a Turkish butcher, who skinned it for them, and they ate it together with the butcher.

The stories of the city famine were not fiction or exaggeration, but rather a reality because of the frequency of their narration by the people of the city and being witnessed by the books of those who participated in the Ottoman garrison from among the Turks themselves. All of this was from the schemes of Fakhri and his arrangement. Indeed, he knew with certainty what the state of people would reach when they were put in tragic circumstances that no human can bear. Narrated from the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him: "O Allah, whoever does wrong to the people of Medina and frightens them, make him frightened, and whoever betrays a Muslim in this respect incurs the curse of Allah, the angels, and all the people, and none of his compulsory or optional good deeds of worship will be accepted." Fakhri Pasha oppressed the people of Medina, frightened them, and expelled them from their homeland. Fortunately, he left Medina after his defeat with a cold heart and a crime for which history will never forgive him



He prohibited merchants from selling and buying, in addition to confiscating food from the market.



References:

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