

Umar Ibn Abdul Aziz (r.a.) 62AH – 101AH

Umar bin Abdul Aziz was known as Abu Hafsa, Umar bin Abdul Aziz bin Marwan bin Hakam is considered the fifth Caliph among the Khulafa ar Rashideen (The Rightly guided Caliphs) although he was the 9th Caliph after the death of Walid and Suleiman bin Abdul Malik during the second phase of the Umayyad period. He is also known as Khalifa as Saleh (The capable or authentic caliph). He was born in 62AH and his mother was Umar bin Khattab's granddaughter.

Umar bin Abdul Aziz had a scar on his face because a horse had kicked him while he was a child. Umar bin Khattab (R.A.) used to say, "There will come a descendent of mine with a scar on his face. He will fill the earth with justice and righteousness." That was why when the horse kicked him and he began to bleed, his father continued to mop his face and say, "If you are the one spoken about with the scar, you are fortunate."

Ibn Sad says that Umar bin Khatab used to say, "I wish that I might have found the times of my scarred son who would fill the world with justice and righteousness after being full of tyranny."

His father Abdul Aziz bin Marwan sent him to Madinah when he was a child. He was trained there. His life was spent in the company of the learned legal scholars of Madinah. It is from that that he learned theology. He enjoyed such a high status in knowledge and virtue that had he not been the Caliph he would have been counted among the religious scholars and been recognized as a great Imam.

Zaid bin Aslam has narrated on the authority of Anas (r.a.). "After the Prophet (SAW) we have never performed our Salat (Obligatory prayers) in a way that resembled the Prophet's Salat except the Salat we made behind Umar bin Abdul Aziz (R.A.). Zaid says, "He used to do Rukou (bowing) and Sajda (prostration) fully, but did not make delay in Qiyam (standing) and Qaood (sitting). Someone asked Muhammad bin Ali bin Husain about Umar bin Abdul Aziz. He said, "He is Najbi (highborn) among Banu Umayyad and will rise as a single nation on the Day of Judgment."

Virtues and Habits:

Hakam bin Umar says that one day he was with Umar bin Abdul Aziz (R.A.) and the stable-keeper came and demanded the expenses for the stable. He said to him, "Take all these horses to the cities in Syria and sell them at any price and give the money in the path of Allah. For me my mule is enough."

Zukhri says that Umar bin Abdul Aziz (R.A.) asked Salim bin Abdullah through a letter as to Umar bin Khattab's (R.A.) way regarding Sadaqa (charity). He replied adding at the end, "If you follow Umar bin Khatab (R.A.) in treating people, you will get a greater status than he before Allah." When Umar bin Abdul Aziz was made Caliph and the people took the oath at his hands, he began to weep and said, "I have a great fear for myself." Hammad said, "Please declare how much love you have for Dirhams and Dinars?" Umar bin Abdul Aziz said, "Not a bit." Hammad said, "Then why are you worried? Allah will help you."

His wife states during his caliphate that when he used to come home from outside he would go into Sajda (prostration) and he would fall asleep weeping. When he awoke, he would start weeping again. Waleed bin Abi Sayeb says that he had not seen a man greater in fearing Allah than Umar bin Abdul Aziz (R.A.).

Sayed bin Saweed says that once when Umar bin Abdul Aziz came to lead the congregational prayer on Friday, he saw his shirt had patches both in front and in the back. A man said to him, "Amir Al Muminin, Allah has given you everything. Why don't you get new cloths tailored?" He continued to ponder for some time with his head bent and then said, "Moderation in prosperity and forgiveness in power are great things."

According to Auzayi (R.A.) it was his habit that whenever he wanted to punish anybody, he used to keep him in custody for three days as a precautionary measure so that he might not punish him in a state of anger or in haste. He said, "Whenever I gave to myself anything of its choice, it willed something better." Umar bin Muhajir says that his daily wages was fixed at 2 Dirhams and his lamp stand was made of three sticks with clay on them. Once he asked his slave to heat water for him. The slave went and brought it by heating it in the royal kitchen. When he came to know where it came from, he sent firewood worth a dirham to replace it. It was his custom that so long as people kept sitting by him and talking about affairs of the state, he kept the lamp of the treasury burning and when they left, he put it out and lit his own lamp.

Umar bin Muhajir says that once he wanted to eat pomegranate. A relative of his sent some to him. He praised very much and said to his slave, "Convey my greetings to the man who has sent it to me and then give them back to him and tell him that his gift reached the man concerned." The slave said to him, "Amir Al Muminin your close relative has sent it to you. What is the harm in accepting it? The Prophet (SAW) used to accept gifts." He said, "Those were gifts for him (SAW) but for me it is a bribe." He did not have anyone whipped except a man who had abused Amir Muawiya (R.A.).

When he reduced the expenditure of the family, the members complained. He said, "My wealth is not sufficient to continue your previous expenditures. As for baitul mal (the treasury), you have as much right to it as any other Muslim has."

Yahya Ghassani states that when Umar bin Abdul Aziz (R.A.) appointed him as Governor of Mosul, he saw that thefts were very common there. He informed him and wanted to know whether he should pass judgment on the basis of evidence or on that of his personal opinion or intuition. He ordered that in every case taking evidence was essential. If

truth did not reform, then, Allah would never reform them. He complied with the orders and consequently Mosul turned into the cleanest and safest place.

Raja bin Haiwa says that one day when he was sitting with Umar bin Abdul Aziz (R.A.), the lamp went out. His slave was sleeping there. He wanted to wake him up but Umar bin Abdul Aziz (r) prevented him from doing so. Then the narrator wanted to light the lamp himself but he said, "It is a discourtesy to give trouble to guest." Then he himself got up, put oil into the lamp, lighted it and resumed his seat, and said, "I am the same Umar bin Abdul Aziz as before, lighting the lap did not affect my status."

Ata, a companion during the time of Umar Abdul Aziz relates that Umar bin Abdul Aziz (R.A.) used to gather legal scholars at night and discussed death and doomsday with them causing them to weep so much as if there was a dead body in front of him. Abdullah bin Ghabra says that one day Umar bin Abdul Aziz (R.A.) urged the people in his khutba (sermon), "O people! Reform your internal affairs and your external affairs will automatically be reformed and corrected. Act for the world hereafter and attend to this world in proportion to its need and remember that death has eaten up your ancestors."

He used to say, "Follow the pious ancestors for they were superior to you both in character and knowledge." When his son Abdul Malik died, he began to eulogize him. Maslama said, "Why do you praise him?" He said. "It should be seen whether the deceased was praiseworthy in my eyes alone or in the eyes of others too, for in the eyes of a father the son is always commendable and so his act is unreliable."

Once his relatives said that, they would draw Amir Al Muminin's attention to them through wit and humor. So several persons assembled and went to him. One of them said something good humouredly and the other supported him. Umar bin Abdul Aziz (r.a.) said, "You have assembled over a very unworthy thing which will result in animosity. It is better to learn the Quran and the traditions of the Prophet (saw) and ponder over the meaning of them."

One day he said to his wife, "I want to eat grapes. If you have some money, lend it to me." She said, "I don't have a single dirham. You are the Amir al Muminin (Chief of the believers) and you haven't got enough money to purchase grapes?" He said, "It is better to carry away the longing for grapes buried in my heart than eating abrasions of chains in hell tomorrow."

He adopted the life style of a poor in his food and clothing. Maslama bin Abdul Malik says, "I visited Umar bin Abdul Aziz during his sickness. I saw that he was wearing a dirty shirt. I said to my sister that is, his wife, why don't you wash his shirt?" She said, "He has no other shirt to change into." His slave Abu Omayya says, "One day I said to my master's respectable wife, I am sick of eating lentils." She said, "Your master eats them daily."

He was murdered. Murdering him was not a tough job because he never kept bodyguards nor did he take precautions in matters of eating and drinking. Therefore he was poisoned. After he was poisoned he became aware of it. He called his slave who had poisoned him. When he came, he said to him, "Alas! You have poisoned me. What tempted you to do so?" He said that he was given one thousand dinars plus a promise of liberty. He (R.A.) asked him to bring those dinars to him. He brought them to him. He had then deposited it in baitul mal (the treasury) at once and ordered the slave to run away, so that he might not be seen any longer.

Obaid bin Hassan (r.a.) says that when his end came and the pain of death started, he asked the people to leave him alone and everybody went out. Maslama bin Abdul Malik and his wife Fatima bint Abdul Malik remained standing at the door. They heard him say, "Bismillah (In the name of Allah), please come. These faces are neither of men nor jinn," and then he recited the verses:

That House of the Hereafter We shall give to those who intend not high-headedness or mischief on the earth: and the End is (best for the righteous). (28:83).

He died on 25th Rajab 101 AH at Dairsaman in Hims after remaining a Caliph for two plus years. He left three wives and eleven sons.