

Chapter – 03

Hazrat 'Umar Farooq

(581 - 644 AD)

His name is 'Umar and surname is Farooq. He belonged to Banu Adi tribe, a branch of Quraish. On the 8th generations back his lineage is found with Prophet Muhammad (*PBUH*). His father's name is Khattab bin Nafeel, and the mother's name is Hantamah bint Hisham. Although he and his parents were poor but all of them owned a prominent position in their tribe.

He was a blonde, strong-bodied and tall man. By temperament he was strict. Education was not common in his time, but he made himself distinguished as a learned person. He was more interested in oration and military training. The source of his income was trade. In this connection he had traveled far long distances. This journey made him a very firm minded and understanding person.

Before coming to Islam he was a tough enemy of this religion. But 'Umar Farooq in person was a very sensible and very intelligent man and having grand personality, so Allah's Prophet was keen to bring him to Islam. Therefore, he specially prayed Allah for 'Umar to join him.

A charisma of nature happened when his sister Fatima and her husband and cousin, Saeed bin 'Amr, reported being a Muslim, so he reached their house and beat them hard. Since they did not show any change in them by 'Umar's harsh attitude, he was forced to think what is so special about this religion. At that time Khabbab was teaching them Surah Taha. So he told

Khabbab to recite some of the Verses for him. After listening to those Verses he became a change man and at once said لا إله إلا الله (there is no god except Allah). According to another unfolding, for the second time in the Ka'bah, he had the opportunity to directly listen the recitation of Surah al-Haaqqah by the Holy Prophet. He then right away presented himself before the Holy Prophet and thus he became a Muslim.

When 'Umar realized that Islam not only has the power to govern the hearts of the people but can lead them to a collective life and its system, then according to the expectations of the Holy Prophet, he joined with the same conviction and zeal in this religion with which he had previously opposed.

Quraish could not persecute 'Umar as they had done to other Muslims, yet they did not refrain from harassing him. He endured a lot of these people so much so that the noble Prophet ordered him to emigrate to Madinah. However, before leaving Makkah, 'Umar performed Tawaf around Ka'bah and offered prayers and said to the polytheists openly that those who have the courage to come before me to fight, but nobody could dare.

After the emigration of Madinah, he participated in Badr, Uhad and all major war fronts. His courage and bravery made Islam stronger. Owing to his ability, clearness and special interest in national issues and Islamic system, he became closer to the Noble Prophet, and like Abu Bakr, he became a special adviser to the Prophet.

When the issue of succession arose after the passing away of the Noble Prophet, 'Umar Farooq did not delay in suggesting the name of Abu Bakr and pledging allegiance to him. His fast action for this pledge of allegiance had saved to a revolution at that time. 'Umar also supported him throughout the Caliphate of Abu Bakr.

'Umar took over the responsibility of his Caliphate in Jamadi uth-Thani, 13AH/634AD. He remained in power for almost 11 years. His real achievement is to establish the constitution of the government on Islamic grounds and establish a just system. The Quran emphasizes the importance of mutual consultation, that is why 'Umar established his Khilafat-Islamia on the basis of the Shura (*consultation*). He always remained as a supervisor and administrator in his place and have made it clear on numerous occasions. During his time, every Muslim had the right to freedom of opinion and to criticize the government. Common Muslims generally used to object 'Umar any time.

During his tenure he had established the country with a very comprehensive system. He did the distribution of provinces and appointed governors, chief ministers, collectors, treasurers and judges in each province. He had established a police system as well. Even the local army of each province was kept up with its corps commander. In the selection of the authorities, his eyes would have been so accurate, binoculars and farsighted that the task for which they were chosen would fit perfectly in their positions. That is why the department to which anyone belonged, had come to its perfection.

Initially, the administrative and judicial departments remained combined for some time due to the administrative difficulties. But when the whole system was established, the courts were separated and made permanent. Courts were formed in all provinces. Their judges were appointed, and essential principles and constitution were prepared for them. The judge was instructed that he should first consider the order of the Quran when making his decision. If no clear order is found in it, then should refer to the hadith. If still some more

details are needed, go with the اجماع (*consensus*), otherwise work with اجتهاد (*exercise of judgment in particular cases*).

'Umar was very careful in choosing judges. The basic requirement for this post was knowledge, piety, intelligence and the potential to make decisions. In addition, it was set a rule that a modest person could not be a judge, except a rich and honorable person. The reason he gave for this that the rich will not be attracted to bribery and he will not be influenced by a man of high status. He made practical efforts to bring about equality in justice. To teach this, he would often go to court as a party to the trial. In this regard, whipping his son into a crime of drinking alcohol is a great example of how he made himself a model in the history of this world.

'Umar established a comprehensive tax collection system. The sources of income were Zakat, Tax, 'Usher, Jizya and War booty. Zakat was exclusive to Muslims. 'Usher was the tenth part of the production, and it was a commercial tax. It was first introduced by 'Umar in Islam. Although in Abu Bakr's tenure, the sanctuary of Bait-ul-Mal (*Treasury*) was established but it was regularly organized by 'Umar.

There was no regular army until 15AH/637AD. On the advice of Walid bin Hisham, 'Umar established the department of most extensive and commanding Army. The soldiers and officers were given appropriate salaries. He had also established Cantonments for them.

He also focused on agriculture. In order to develop it, he made it a law that anyone who cultivates an unoccupied land will own it. But within three years of taking the land, it was considered necessary to develop it. It gave very good results. He worked a lot on the construction of canals, especially in Egypt, thorough canal system was prepared. The largest canal was the "نهر اميرالمومنين" (*Canal of the Caliphate*). When the famine

struck in Arabia in the year 18AH/640AD, 'Umar asked for food from Egypt, the grain was somewhat delayed because of the drought in Syria and Egypt. At that time 'Umar dug a 99 mile long canal and connected the river Nile with the Red Sea.

'Umar did many things for the development of religious education. The editing of the Quran had already begun in the period of Abu Bakr. He opened many schools at many places. Side by side the teaching of the Quran, he started the work on the manuscript of the Quran. He made compulsory for all the students to remember those Quranic Verses which contain the orders of Allah for the common life. Likewise, he had served a lot for the compilation of hadiths. It involved collecting them from different locations, taking care of their correctness and then publishing it. The art of jurisprudence is his invention. The basic lines on which it was established had constituted for the future a very broad highway for the extensive works on this subject.

During the tenure of 'Umar, many new things were introduced in different fields for which historians describe them as the invention of 'Umar. For example, in the call of Fajr prayer he added the following verse:

أَصَلُّوْهُ خَيْرٌ مِّنَ التَّوْمِ

He had established offering Tarawih prayer in congregation. He banned for the declaration of three divorces at one time. If given, it should be considered as one time divorce. For the wine addicts he set 80 lashes. He had established various prisons. In order to determine the status of the common people he began his "Night Patrolling". For the head of the state he gave the special nomenclature as امير المومنين. The census was arranged in the country. Zakat on the horses of trade was initiated. On the Christians of Banu Taghlib, instead of implementing tax, he fixed the system of Zakat. He invented

the method of وقف (*dedication*). He arranged a consensus on four Takbir at the funeral prayer. He began to give sermons in the mosque. He started giving salaries to Imam of the mosques.

'Umer banned to say abusive poetry. Those poets who do not follow these orders, punishments were also established to them. In the poetries addressing using women's name were forbidden. In addition to this, other important initiatives of 'Umar were to establish Islamic date and Hijri year, which continues to this day.

- *Wars and Victories*

When 'Umar took the position of his Caliphate, the war was already proceeding on two fronts, i.e. Syria and Iraq. So he first paid attention to this matter. He sent Abu 'Ubaid Thaqafi with a few thousand soldiers on an expedition to Iraq. The troops met with Jaban at the place of Namaraq and Abu 'Ubaid defeated them. As a result, the Iranian princes of the proximity of Suqatiah also accepted the obedience. But, Rustam of Iran immediately sent a fresh army under the leadership of Mardan Shah to fight Abu 'Ubaid. They landed on the banks of the Euphrates (*Furat*). Whereas, Muslims were staying on the other side of the Euphrates in an open ground, which was not fit for war. With the enthusiasm of Jihad, Abu 'Ubaid crossed the Euphrates, where his horses were confronted with elephants. Abu 'Ubaid was attacked by an elephant and he was martyred. After that the entire Muslim army was repulsed. As soon as 'Umar learned about this, he sent a fresh army under the command of Jarir bin Abdullah. In the meantime, Mathna who was already existing in Iraq assembled an army by collecting the Muslim tribes of the vicinity. Both the Muslim troops had set up their tents at the place of Boib. This time the Iranian troops crossed the Euphrates and fought. The two armies fought hard and eventually the Iranian army was defeated. This is the instance of 13AH/634AD.

Due to the failure of the Iranian army, King Puran Dukht was taken out from the throne and his 17 year old son, Yazdgard, was seated. Rustom, the commander of their army, started serious preparations for revenge against the Muslims. Upon receiving this information, 'Umar formed a new force of his army and chosen Sa'ad bin Abi Waqas as his commander to crush them. This time, the Muslim troops had established their camp at the place named Qadsiah. In Muharram, 14AH/635AD the Iranian army was on the battlefield. For complete three days there was an intense fight between the two troops. Eventually the Iranian troops had to leave the ground.

After the invasion of Qadsiah the Muslim troops managed to capture Babylonia, Kothi and Bhersir, and then they reached to Madain. For this, although the river of the Dajlah interrupted them, the Muslims crossed it too. Iranians gave resistance in Jallulah and Halwan, but Muslims succeeded to crush completely. Yazdgard ran away leaving his throne. Finally, the Muslims liberated the entire area of Iraq from the Iranian occupation.

'Umar did not want to move towards Iran. But the Iranians could not sit peacefully after they left Iraq. As a result, in 16AH/638AD, they had to face clashes in Tukrit, Khwazistan and Nihawand. Due to their constant insurgency and disturbances, only a few years after, the Muslim army decided to properly raid on Iran. In 21AH/642AD and 22AH/643AD, they were victorious on Isfahan, Hamdan and Ray, and finally Persia, Kerman, Sistan. and even Makran was also conquered.

On the other side, the siege of Abu Bakr Siddique's troops was continued in Damascus, and he passed away. Thus the victory was achieved in the tenure of 'Umar Farooq. In 13AH/634AD, Abu 'Ubaidah was the Commander in chief of this campaign. Khalid bin Walid was also sent for his help. Khalid broke the siege on his own and then entered into the city

with the army. With this attack the people of the city were so disturbed that they approached Abu 'Ubaidah and requested reconciliation, which he accepted immediately. Although Khalid had entered in the city with victory but Abu 'Ubaidah had already agreed with the ceasefire. As such the victory in Damascus was declared as a settlement, so neither war booty was achieved nor anybody was made as slave.

After this, the Romans began to mobilize their forces in the city of Besan in the province of Jordan with the intention of fighting with Muslims. So, sever fighting was done by the Muslim forces in 14AH/635AD and defeated them and conquered the whole of Jordan. Then Abu 'Ubaidah and Khalid bin Walid proceeded to Bait al-Maqdis, Homs and Antakya, and by 16AH/638AD, these three major cities were also conquered. Then after, Yarmuk became the deciding factor. The open field of Yarmuk was very suitable for Muslims with a war's perspective. That is why Abu 'Ubaidah and Khalid moved their entire forces from Damascus to deal with the Romans. The first contest took place in Rajab 15AH/637AD and Muslims were dominating. However, the war was postponed for sometimes and reconciliation efforts were undertaken, but diplomatic struggles failed. After some time, the two armies started fighting again. The victory was achieved to the Muslims after a major hostile war.

In the period of Abu Bakr, the campaign of Palestine was the responsibility of 'Amr bin al-A'as. Later, Khalid also reached out to help him. At that time Nablus, Ladd, Baith Jaberin, and Amuwas, etc., were conquered, but Palestine, the central city of Syria, and the Ka'bah of the Jews and Christians, i.e., Baith-ul-Maqdis, still remained. As soon as, Muslim troops were relieved from Yarmuk, 'Amr bin al-A'as, besieged Jerusalem. Abu 'Ubaidah also arrived. Christians had resisted for a few days, but soon the treaty was offered with the

condition that the Caliph should come personally here and write a peace treaty. When 'Umar was informed of this, he agreed to it. So he arrived at Baith-ul-Maqdis and wrote a treaty that protected the lives, property and religion of the surrendered. This agreement had reached in 17AH/639AD.

In these days there was an unusual occurrence of the abdication of Khalid bin Walid. This event was of the utmost importance as 'Umar disowned the sword of Khalid whose decisive actions gave the fate of Iraq and Syria. Khalid was stepped down by 'Umar when he was still busy fighting with the enemy. The story behind it was that Khalid never used to send the account of expenditures. Abu Bakr Siddique did not emphasize for this matter because of his services but 'Umar urged him on it. To which, he protested that since he had not done so from the beginning so he would still not do so. In response to this, 'Umar did not oust him but downcast and made him under Abu 'Ubaidah. Few days later, at one occasion, Khalid gave a large amount of money to a poet. When 'Umar was informed, he wrote that ... *"If Khalid gave this money out of his pocket, he made extravagance, and if he gave it from Bait-ul-Mal then he betrayed"*.... In both cases he is liable to be abdicate.

After Syria's occupancy Egypt was invaded. Its victory is attributed to 'Amr bin al-'Aas. The main reason for the action against Egypt was its rulers were working under the King Caesar of Rome, so it was imperative for Syria's security to be protected from Egypt. Consequently, in 21AH/642AD, most parts of the Egypt were conquered. These include the Arish, the Fostat and the Alexandria. After conquering Egypt, 'Amr bin al-'Aas went to North Africa. The people of the Burquah and the Zowelah very readily agreed to the reconciliation. Tripoli also won conveniently.

Thus, during the reign of 'Umar, the great empires of Iran and Rome were blown up. And from the Indian border to North

Africa, the flag of Islam was flown. All these have happened with such care that no victories had seen even a single incident of tyranny. Forget to the matter of destroying countries, not even a single drop of blood was found in the reign of 'Umar Farooq. The sword was never raised on elders, children and women, and no green fields or shady trees were destroyed. Instead, by virtue of his justice and goodness, he made himself so attractive to the people that they became his supporters against their own people. He subjugated nations and many conquered nations accepted his religion. As a result, the country which was conquered in the time of 'Umar Farooq are still in the hands of Muslims.

At the end of 23AH/643AD, the incident of the martyrdom of 'Umar occurred. The Persian slave of Mughira bin Sha'aba came to 'Umar with his master's complaint but 'Umar declared this complaint unacceptable. The slave was so enraged by the decision that the next morning when 'Umar was in the state of prayer, he attacked with a dagger on him. The wounds were so severe that he couldn't recover. He left the world on Monday, the 1st of Muharram 24AH/644AD. He was 63 years old at the time of his departure. The Companion Suhaib offered his funeral prayer. The place which Aisha had reserved for herself was given to when 'Umar requested to her. Thus he achieved his place near Allah's Prophet forever.

For his successor he suggested six names (*to whom the Messenger of Allah gave the good news of Paradise*). They are ; 'Usman, 'Ali, Zubair, Talha, Sa'ad and Abdul Rahman Bin Auf. For this issue, he said that whoever gets the majority of opinion he should be made the new Caliph. He also urged that the matter be resolved within three days of my burial. He ordered Suhaib to close these six persons in a house and do not open the door until one of them is selected. He also directed that my son may attend to the meeting but he had nothing to do with the office of the Caliphate.

Ten and a half years of the Caliphate of 'Umar Farooq are regarded as the golden and likely to impersonate period in the Islamic history. His ever God fearing heart and his unconditional love of the Noble Prophet gave him this high place. The essence of 'Umar is certainly one of the key to establishing and strengthening Islam. He is one of the important pillars, rather foundation pillars of Islam. His name will always be remembered.

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