

# HAZRAT 'UMAR IBN AL-KHATTAB

(may Allah Almighty be pleased with him)

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## PREFACE

In the spirit of remembering the lives and contributions of the great luminaries of the Islamic tradition, for the purpose of being inspired by them, and for sending *Isaal-e-Sawaab* to their blessed souls as a token of gratitude, IECRC has been producing brief documents such as the one below. The inspiration gained from such information is the impetus for rectifying our actions, insha Allah, and a catalyst for each one of us to attempt to follow in the footsteps of these shining stars. It is when we strengthen our connection with our past, that our hope for the future can be brightened, insha Allah.

The material for this document has been taken from the following sources:

1. *Al-Ghunya li-Taalibi Tareeq al-Haqq* by Hazrat Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani رحمته (1077/8-1166 CE) translated from Arabic into English as Sufficient Provision for Seekers of the Path of Truth published by Al-Baz Publishing, Inc. (Florida 1997)
2. *Kashf-ul-Mahjoob* by Hazrat Abul Hasan Syed Ali bin Uthman Hujwari رحمته famous as Hazrat Daata Ganj Baksh رحمته
3. *Kitab-ur-Rooh* by Allama Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawzi رحمته (1292 - 1356 CE) translated from Arabic into English as The Soul published by Adam Publishers & Distributors (India 2001)
4. *Tarikh al-Khulafa* by Imam Jalal ad-Din as-Suyuti رحمته (1445 - 1505 CE) translated from Arabic into English as The History of the Khalifas Who Took the Right Way published by Ta-Ha Publishers Ltd. (London 1998)
5. <http://ourislamonline.tripod.com/umer.htm>

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Thank You.

IECRC Staff

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In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful  
Prayers and Peace upon His Noble Messenger ﷺ

Hazrat 'Umar ibn al-Khattab رضى الله عنه (583 - 643 CE), was the second of the Rightly Guided Khalifas in Islamic history. He was a Companion of the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and was one of the 'Ashratun-Mubashshirah, i.e. those ten Companions who had been given the glad tidings of belonging to Paradise.

It is narrated from Hazrat Jabir رضى الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

*"Allah chose my Companions over everything else in existence except for the Prophets and the Messengers. He subhaanahu wa ta'ala chose four of them for me: Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman, 'Ali. He made them my best Companions, and all of my Companions are good."*

[Al-Bazzar and Ad-Daylami]

The Holy Prophet ﷺ also said:

*"Whoever loves 'Umar has loved me. Whoever hates 'Umar hates me."*

[At-Tabarani]

Hazrat Ibn Abbas رضى الله عنه narrates that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

*"There is no angel in the heaven that does not respect 'Umar رضى الله عنه and no shaytan on the earth but that he is afraid of 'Umar رضى الله عنه."*

Hazrat Daata Ganj Baksh رضى الله عنه, an 11<sup>th</sup> century scholar and Sufi saint writes in his famous *Kashful-Mahjoob* that:

Hazrat 'Umar ibn al-Khattab رضى الله عنه was the Commander of the Faithful (*Ahl-e-imna*), leader of those having the status of *ihsan*, the *imam* (leader) of those who have realized the Truth (*Ahl-e-tahqiq*) and the guide of lovers gone deep into the ocean of Divine love. He is famous for his *karamat* (spiritual eminence) and *farasat* (spiritual insight), and had a large number of mystical truths to his credit. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

*"Al Haqqu yantiqu 'alaa lisaanil 'Umar"*  
*"God speaks through the tongue of 'Umar."*

He has expressed such a great number of mystical truths that it is not possible to exhaust them in this book. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

*"Al 'uzlatu raahatun min khaltai-su"  
"Solitude is safety from bad company"*

'Uzlah (solitude) is of two kinds:

- 1) disregard of mankind, and
- 2) total boycott

Disregard of mankind is a sort of retirement from public life to avoid bad company and scrutinizing one's own faults for protecting oneself from others and from oneself. But total boycott is something spiritual and involves mental rather than physical detachment from the world. In that state although one is living with people physically, one is alone spiritually. This is an extremely high state and the person of this status follows exactly on the footsteps of Hazrat Umar رضي الله عنه who found pleasure in solitude, although outwardly he was the Commander of the Faithful and lived among them. Hazrat Umar رضي الله عنه said, *"It is not possible for a house found on corruption to be free from corruption."*

The Sufi community follows the example of Hazrat Umar رضي الله عنه, in wearing wool and undergoing hardships of Islamic Life since he is the *Imam* of mankind. May Allah be pleased with him.

Before the advent of Islam there was no tradition in Arabia of reading or writing. There were only seventeen people among the Quraish who could read or write at the time when the Holy Prophet ﷺ started to receive Divine revelations. Hazrat 'Umar رضي الله عنه was one of those seventeen people.

However, he رضي الله عنه was an arch-enemy of the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and Islam in its early days, until the Holy Prophet ﷺ prayed:

*"O Allah, strengthen Islam with either 'Umar ibn al-Khattab or 'Amr ibn Hisham (Abu Jahal) whomsoever Thou pleaseth."*

The next day Hazrat 'Umar رضي الله عنه was guided to accept Islam. It happened as follows: It was the sixth year of Holy Prophet's ﷺ mission when Quraish leaders called a meeting and asked a volunteer for the assassination of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Hazrat 'Umar رضي الله عنه offered himself for this task and everybody in the meeting exclaimed that he was the right person for it. While he was on his way with a sword in his hand he met Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas who enquired of him about his destination. Hazrat 'Umar رضي الله عنه told him that he was going to murder the Holy Prophet ﷺ. After some discussion Sa'd said, "You had better take care of your own family first. Your sister

and brother-in-law both have accepted Islam.” Hearing this Hazrat ‘Umar رضي الله عنه changed his direction and went straight to his sister's house. When Hazrat ‘Umar رضي الله عنه knocked at the door, they were studying the Holy Qur'an from Hazrat Khabbab رضي الله عنه. His sister Fatimah was frightened on hearing Hazrat ‘Umar's رضي الله عنه voice and tried to hide the portion of the Holy Qur'an she was reciting. When Hazrat ‘Umar رضي الله عنه entered the house he enquired about their Islam and on finding that they had accepted Islam, he first fell upon his brother-in-law and beat him severely. When his sister intervened he smote her so violently on her face that it bled profusely. On this, his sister burst out: “Do whatever you like, we are determined to die as Muslims.” When Hazrat ‘Umar رضي الله عنه saw his sister bleeding, he calmed down and felt ashamed. He loved Fatimah very much but could not tolerate her conversion to Islam. However, deeply moved, Hazrat ‘Umar رضي الله عنه asked her to show the pages on which the Holy Qur'an was written. But she was, after all, Hazrat ‘Umar's رضي الله عنه sister and told him, “You can not touch it unless you take a bath and make yourself clean.” He رضي الله عنه washed his body and then read the leaves. That was the beginning of Surah Ta-Ha (Chapter 20 of the Holy Qur'an). When he came to the verse:

**"Indeed it is Me, Allah - there is no God except I - therefore worship Me and keep the prayer established for My remembrance."**

[Al Ta-Ha, 20:14]

Hazrat ‘Umar exclaimed, “Surely this is the Word of Allah. Take me to Muhammad ﷺ”. This is why it is said that the rest of the Companions were *mureed* (one who seeks) of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, whereas **Hazrat ‘Umar رضي الله عنه was His ﷺ *muraad* (one who is sought)**. Hazrat ‘Umar's رضي الله عنه conversion to Islam was a terrible blow to the morale of the disbelievers. Hazrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud رضي الله عنه, a great Companion, says, “*Hazrat ‘Umar's رضي الله عنه conversion to Islam was a great triumph, his emigration to Medina a tremendous reinforcement and his accession to Caliphate a great blessing for the Muslims.*” And Hazrat Daata Ganj Baksh رحمته الله said that Hazrat Umar رضي الله عنه is one of the select admitted to the Divine Presence, so much so that angel Jibril عليه السلام, came and said to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, “*O Muhammad ﷺ, all the angels send you greetings on the conversion of ‘Umar to Islam.*” [*Kashf-ul-Mahjoob*]

**Conversion of Hazrat ‘Umar رضي الله عنه strengthened Islam.** Hitherto, Muslims had lived in constant fear of disbelievers, and most of them were concealing their faith. The Muslims were now able to offer their *Salat* (ritual prayers) publicly. When Hazrat ‘Umar رضي الله عنه became a Muslim he declared his faith openly before the Quraish chiefs. No one dared harm him. Then he requested the Holy Prophet ﷺ to offer *Salat* in the Ka'bah. On getting the consent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, Hazrat ‘Umar رضي الله عنه led a party of the Muslims to it. Hazrat Hamzah رضي الله عنه, who had accepted Islam a few days before Hazrat ‘Umar رضي الله عنه carried another party of the Muslims to the Ka'bah. When all the Muslims gathered in the Ka'bah they offered their *Salat* in congregation. The Holy Prophet ﷺ led this first public *Salat* in the history of Islam. **For this courageous and bold action of Hazrat ‘Umar رضي الله عنه the Holy Prophet ﷺ gave him the title of “*al-Faruq*” i.e., the one who makes a distinction between *Haqq* (Right) and *Batil* (Wrong).**

When the Muslims were ordered to migrate to Medina, most of them left Mecca quietly and secretly, but Hazrat 'Umar رضي الله عنه declared it openly. He put on his arms and first went to the Ka'bah. After performing the *Salat* he announced loudly: *"I am migrating to Medina. If anyone wants to check me, let him come out. I am sure that his mother would cry for his life."* There was no man in Mecca to accept the challenge of Hazrat 'Umar رضي الله عنه. Then he migrated to Medina boldly.

For the first time in the history of Islam, **the Islamic calendar was introduced in the present form by Hazrat 'Umar رضي الله عنه** as advised by Hazrat Ali (may Allah ennoble his face). The date of the start of this calendar was fixed as the date of the *Hijrah* (Migration) of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Thus the calendar is known as the Hijri Calendar.

Hazrat 'Umar رضي الله عنه had great love for Allah ﷻ and the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The Holy Prophet ﷺ also had a deep love for him. Once He ﷺ remarked:

*"Were a prophet to come after me, he would have been 'Umar رضي الله عنه".*  
(Tirmidhi)

In another Hadith mentioned in Bukhari, Hazrat Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه narrated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

*"In Bani Isra'il (Israelites) there were people who were not prophets but talked to Allah ﷻ. Were anyone in my Ummah (people) like those persons, he would be 'Umar رضي الله عنه."*

The passing away of the Holy Prophet ﷺ into the Divine Realm was a great shock to him, and he could not believe it until Hazrat Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه reminded him of a clear verse of the Holy Qur'an on the subject. He then went to the Council Hall along with Hazrat Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه where the people of Medina had assembled to select the First Caliph. Hazrat 'Umar رضي الله عنه was the first person to give *Bai'ah* (pledge allegiance) at the hand of Hazrat Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه, and then helped him throughout the duration of his rule.

There were hundreds of *Huffaz* (i.e., those who committed the whole Holy Qur'an to memory) among the Companions during the life-time of the Holy Prophet ﷺ but it had not been compiled in the form of a book. The memorization of the Holy Quran continued even after the passing away of the Holy Prophet ﷺ into the Divine Realm. In various battles, which took place against rebels and false prophets, a number of *Huffaz* Companions were martyred. In the battle against Musailimah al-Khad-dhab about seventy *Huffaz* had died. It then occurred to Hazrat 'Umar رضي الله عنه that necessary steps should be taken to preserve the Holy Qur'an intact in its original form against every kind of danger and it was not wise to depend exclusively upon those who

had learnt it by heart. Therefore, he urged Hazrat Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه to put it in the form of a book. Other Companions also agreed with Hazrat 'Umar's رضي الله عنه opinion but Hazrat Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه hesitated in the beginning because it was not done by the Holy Prophet ﷺ. However after some discussion he agreed to it and appointed Hazrat Zaid bin Thabit رضي الله عنه for this work who was hesitant at first but later, he too agreed and began the work. **Hazrat Umar's رضي الله عنه initiation of the idea of compiling the Holy Quran in the form of a "mus-haf" as we see it today is a great contribution to Islam and a great sign that not all new acts in Islam are blameworthy as some schools of thought allege.**

The *Salat-ut-Tarawih* (special superogatory daily prayers performed in the Holy month of Ramadan), which was conducted occasionally during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, was eventually established as a regular congregational practice throughout the month of Ramadan during the days of Khalifa Umar ibn al-Khattab رضي الله عنه. This accounts for the fact that it is often attributed to Khalifa Umar رضي الله عنه, on the grounds that he was the first to organize its performance along these lines. Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah ennoble his face) is reported as having said:

*"Umar ibn al-Khattab رضي الله عنه would never have taken such a serious interest in these Tarawih prayers, if it had not been for a certain saying of the Prophet ﷺ:*

*'Around the Heavenly Throne, Allah (Exalted is He) maintains an area called the Enclosure of Sanctity, which consists of radiant light. So many are the angels within its confines, that none but Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) could ever add up their total number. These angels are utterly devoted to the worshipful service of Allah (Exalted is He) and they never take a moment to relax. When the nights of the month of Ramadan come around, they ask their Lord for permission to descend by turns to the earth below, where they perform the ritual prayers together with the children of Adam. Whenever any member of the Community of Muhammad (prayers and peace of Allah be upon Him) is touched by them, or touches them, that person will experience such blissful happiness and good fortune that he will never again feel miserable or suffer distress.'*

*As soon as Umar ibn al-Khattab رضي الله عنه heard me repeat these words, he exclaimed: 'Since we are specially entitled to receive this blessing, we must be better prepared!' He then proceeded to organize the congregational observance of the tarawih prayers, and it was he who established the practice of performing them (throughout the month of Ramadan) as a regular traditional custom."* As we know from another traditional report, Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah ennoble his face) went out in the first part of a certain night in the month of Ramadan. Then when he heard the Quran being recited in the mosques he exclaimed: *"May Allah fill the tomb of 'Umar رضي الله عنه with light, as Allah's mosques are illuminated by the recitation of the Quran!"* (*Al-Ghunya*, pp. 126-128)

**The period of Hazrat 'Umar's ؓ caliphate undoubtedly is the "Golden Age" of Islam in every respect.** He was a man of extraordinary genius who not only molded the destiny of the nation but made history of his own. He followed the footsteps of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to the fullest extent. He was an exemplary administrator who originated an efficient system of administration. He implemented *Shari'ah* (Divine Islamic Law) as the code of a newly formed International Islamic State; he safeguarded the internal safety by introducing the police force: he gave stipends to the poor; he founded new cities for the growth of Islamic culture and civilization; he improved agriculture & economics, and founded the educational system; in brief he was the founder of a great Islamic State.

**He was a very pious Muslim.** His success lay in two things: his fear of Allah and his love for the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He never used even oil from the *Bait-ul-Maal* (Public Treasury) to burn a lamp at night for his personal needs. Whenever he finished his official work he put off the lamp. He used to patrol the city at night to find out the needs, requirements, and conditions of the people. He did not hesitate to take his wife to work as a midwife for a poor woman. The salary he got from the *Bait-ul-Mal* was so low that it was hardly enough for him and his family's needs. When some of the eminent Muslims requested him to increase the amount, he said, "The Holy Prophet ﷺ has left a standard by his personal example. I must follow him."

**He was a great jurist and theologian of Islam.** Because of the fear of making any mistake he did not quote many *Ahaadeeth* (Sayings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ) even though he was fully conversant with them. He was an expert in deriving laws from the Holy Qur'an and the Hadeeth. Hazrat Ibn Umar ؓ narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, said:

*"While I was asleep I drank - meaning milk - until I saw satiation flowing in my nails, and then I passed it to 'Umar. They said: How did you interpret it, Messenger of Allah y? He y said, 'Knowledge.'"*

Hazrat Ibn Masud ؓ said: *"Even if the knowledge of 'Umar ؓ were to be put in one scale of a balance and the knowledge of every living being on the earth were put in the other scale, the knowledge of 'Umar ؓ would outweigh their knowledge."*

When the Holy Prophet ﷺ, sought the advice of the Companions with respect to the story of the slander of Hazrat Aisha ؓ (only as a way to teach his Ummah that consultation or *shura* is the way to deal with all matters in life, as He ﷺ does not need the advice of anyone except Allah Almighty), Hazrat 'Umar ؓ said: *"Who married you to her Messenger of Allah ﷺ?"* He ﷺ said: *"Allah."* He ؓ said: *"Do you think that your Lord would conceal a defect of hers from you? Glory be to You, this is a huge slander!"* Then the revelation from Allah Almighty came down just like that in the form of Surah Al-Noor, 24:16. (*Tarikh al-Khulafa*, pp. 113-121)

He ﷺ was the father of Umm-ul-Mu'minin Hazrat Hafsaah رضي الله عنها the chaste wife of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

The glorious rule of Hazrat 'Umar رضي الله عنه came to an end with his passing away into the Divine Realm on Wednesday, the 26th of Dhul Hijjah, the year 23 Hijri (643 CE) when he was 61 years old. He was stabbed several times by a Persian slave in the Masjid at Fajr. The injuries he sustained were so serious that the Khalifa died the next morning. He requested Hazrat Aisha's رضي الله عنها permission for his burial by the side of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Though she had reserved that place for herself, upon Hazrat 'Umar's رضي الله عنه request she رضي الله عنها gave it to him (may Allah be pleased with them both).

## CONCLUSION

It behooves Muslims to remember such a great personality and take lessons from his life; and as a small way of saying "thank you" for all his sacrifices and contributions to the Deen of Islam, and humanity at large, send *Isaal-e-Sawab* to his blessed soul.

*Isaal-e-Sawab* is the act of sending the reward of one's good deeds to the souls of those who have passed away from this world and are experiencing a life in the *Aalam-e-Barzakh* (the realm in which the soul resides between its separation from the body and the Day of Judgment). Allama Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawzi رحمه الله (1292 – 1356 CE) says in his famous *Kitab-ur-Rooh* that:

*"Worship is of two kinds, one monetary and the other physical. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has indicated by affirming the transfer of the rewards of charity, that all monetary worships are transferable to dead persons. And by allowing the transfer of the rewards of fast, He ﷺ has indicated that the rewards of all physical worship can also be transferred. And by affirming the transfer of rewards for Hajj, which is a unique combination of physical and monetary worships, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has informed His Ummah that the rewards of all kinds of worship may be dedicated to a dead person."*<sup>1</sup>

The righteous people have taught that at a minimum, one should recite Surah Al-Fatiha once and Surah Al-Ikhlaas 3 times and pray to Allah Almighty to send the reward of this reading to the departed soul. There is no maximum limit as to how many good deeds one can or should dedicate.

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<sup>1</sup> Allama Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawzi رحمه الله (1292 – 1356 CE). *Kitab-ur-Rooh*, translated by Matloob Ahmed. Adam Publishers, Delhi, 2001. pp. 130-131.

May Allah Almighty on the occasion of the *Urs* (the day a Friend of Allah is united with His Lord) of Hazrat 'Umar al-Farooq ؓ by the waseela of His Habeeb ؓ give us the *tawfeeq* to remember his life and services to Islam and follow in his footsteps; as our Beloved Prophet Muhammad ؐ advised us that all of His Companions are like stars and that we would be guided if we followed any one of them. (Aamin).

