

H A D H R A T

U M A R F A R O O Q

May Allah be pleased with him.

By
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GLOSSARY

HADHRAT UMAR FAROOQ

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In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Ever Merciful.

INTRODUCTION

‘Hadhrat Umar Farooq’ is one of the booklets in the series, prepared by the Children’s Book Committee. It contains the life history of Hadhrat Umar, Khalifat -ul-Rasool the second, may God be pleased with him. It also contains a brief account of the system of his government, his reforms and the battles Muslims had to fight during his Khalifat.

The aim of this publication is to tell our young readers how the Companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and early Muslims underwent various trials and how their firm belief in Allah helped them overcome the enemies.

We hope that children and parents will welcome this publication, as it will inspire the children to model themselves along the footsteps of their famous heroes. The present generation has a tremendous lot to learn from the past. Indeed this is a most useful book to have in any library.

The Children’s Book Committee has been working under the supervision and guidance of Hadhrat Khalifat-ul-Masih IV. Mr. Rashid Ahmad Chaudhry, Chairman of the Children’s Book Committee and the members of his team, namely Masroor Ahmad, Kaleem Mirza, Mohammad Farooq Chowdhry and Mansoor Saqi deserve our thanks for producing this booklet. May God bless them.

We would also welcome any suggestions and comments for improvement.

The Muslim readers are urged to say, “May Allah be pleased with him”, whenever the name of Hadhrat Umar or any other Companion of the Holy Prophet appear in the text and “Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him,” whenever the name of the Holy Prophet Muhammad appears in the text.

Muneer-ud-din Shams,
Additional Vakil-ut-Tasneef
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CHAPTER 1

HADHRAT UMAR BEFORE ISLAM

Hadhrat Umar Farooq, may God be pleased with him, was born in Makkah, an ancient town in Arabia. It is not known exactly when he was born, as people did not record their date of birth in those days. It is known however, that he was about eleven years younger than the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

Hadhrat Umar's father Khattaab was one of the leaders of the Quraish tribe. His mother Hantma was the daughter of Hishaam bin Al-Mugheerah. Hishaam was a person of such high rank that whenever the tribe of Quraish declared war on any other tribe, he was always called upon for the duty of raising an army and leading it to the battlefield.

Hadhrat Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, learned to read and write in his childhood. It was considered to be a great achievement as very few people could read or write in those days. He loved poetry and like other Arabs could recite the poems of a large number of Arab poets from memory.

He grew up into a responsible young man. His father entrusted him with the job of grazing camels in the fields on the outskirts of Makkah. He learned the art of wrestling, horse riding and was a skilled swordsman.

Later Umar showed interest in commerce and became a very successful and wealthy trader. He travelled to distant lands such as Syria, Iraq and Persia for this purpose. In those days Makkah was situated on a trade route where camel caravans, carrying merchandise, used to come and go.

UKKAAZ FAIR

In those days a fair was held every year in the town of Ukkaaz, a few miles from Makkah. People used to come from all over Arabia to attend the fair and display their skills. Wrestling matches, athletics and archery competitions were held. Another attraction was the poetry sessions. Poetry was one of the favourite hobbies of the Arabs. They could recite thousands of verses from memory. In these poetry competitions poets used to recite verses in praise of their own tribe and mocking the enemy tribes. Sometimes people were greatly offended by these verses and such sessions often ended in bloodshed.

Hadhrat Umar used to attend the Ukkaaz fair regularly. He was an excellent horse rider and a very good wrestler. Many a time he would participate in a wrestling bout and beat his opponent easily.

On one occasion as Umar was wandering around with his friends, someone pointed to a young man in the crowd and praised his wrestling skill. Umar could not remain silent. "He can't be better than me", he said. Then he swiftly walked up to the young man and invited him to a wrestling bout, which was accepted gladly. The wrestling match began and in no time Umar defeated his opponent.

UMAR WAS A BITTER ENEMY OF ISLAM

When Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, declared that God had appointed him as His Messenger to the whole of mankind, Umar, like many other Makkans, opposed him. He used to persecute Muslims. It is said that when one of Umar's slave girls, Labeenah, accepted Islam he was so annoyed that he caught hold of her and started beating her. He kept on hitting her until he was exhausted. Then he told her, "I have stopped only to get my breath back". Hadhrat Abu Bakr, who had accepted Islam already, was passing by. He stepped forward and bought the slave girl from Umar and then set her free.

UMAR DID NOT OBJECT TO

THE MIGRATION OF MUSLIMS

When persecution at the hands of Makkans reached its extreme, the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, assembled his followers and pointing to the West told them of a land across the sea where people were not tortured because of their faith and where they could worship God freely. He told his followers to migrate to Abyssinia, now known as Ethiopia, where, in those days, a noble Christian king ruled. On his instructions a few Muslims including women and children decided to go there. The plan was kept secret for fear of Makkan opposition. The Makkans would not let Muslims escape in order to live elsewhere peacefully.

On the day when the party was ready to depart from Makkah, Umar came there by chance and saw the household effects packed on camels. He realised that these people were moving out of Makkah to take refuge elsewhere.

"Are you leaving Makkah?" he inquired from Umm-e-Abdullah, a Muslim woman.

She replied, "Yes, God is our witness, we are leaving for another land because you treat us most cruelly here. We will not return until God makes it easy for us."

Perhaps influenced by her reply Umar did nothing to prevent their migration even though he was a bitter enemy of Islam.

CHAPTER 2

UMAR ACCEPTS ISLAM

One hot afternoon the leaders of the Quraish tribe got together and decided to kill the Holy Prophet. Umar was amongst them and readily offered himself for the task. The Makkan leaders accepted his offer. Brandishing his sword Umar went in search of the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet was staying in the house of Arqam who had already accepted Islam.

As Umar was walking towards the house, another Makkan Naeem bin Abdullah met him on the way and asked him where he was going in such haste. "To kill Muhammad," replied Umar. Naeem said to him, "You will repent for this. The followers of Muhammad will not leave you alive. They would rather kill you than let you reach Muhammad."

Umar said, "It seems that you too have changed your religion. Had I known that before I would have killed you first."

Naeem retorted, "What if I tell you that your sister and her husband have become Muslims?"

Hearing this Umar was outraged and went straight to his sister's house. He knocked at the door. He could hear someone reciting something inside. His sister opened the door. Umar demanded to know whether they had become Muslims. His brother-in-law acknowledged this and tried to explain but Umar was in no mood to listen to any explanation. He drew his sword and advanced towards his brother-in-law but his sister stepped in his way and was injured. She looked at Umar and said boldly, "Do what you may. We are Muslims and will remain so." Then she recited Kalima Tayyaba, 'La ilaha illallahu Muhammad-ur-Rasool-ullah', the declaration of Islamic faith. It means, 'There is none worthy of worship except Allah; Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.' Noticing the blood on his sister's face and hearing her bold reply, Umar was deeply touched and came to his senses. He asked them what they were reading. His sister replied, "Wash your hands and face and then I will allow you to read the verses of the Holy Quran, which we were reading." These were some verses from the Chapter TAHA of the Holy Quran.

"Verily, I am Allah; there is no god beside Me; so worship Me alone, and observe Prayer for My remembrance. Surely, the Hour is coming and I am going to manifest it, so that every one may be recompensed according to his endeavour." (Ch 20: 15,16).

As soon as Umar recited these verses of the Holy Quran, he was deeply impressed and decided to become a Muslim.

He went to the house where the Holy Prophet was staying and knocked at the door. Seeing him armed caused concern among the Companions but the Holy Prophet said, "Let him come in."

When Umar entered the room the Holy Prophet calmly asked him the purpose of his visit.

"To become a Muslim," was the prompt reply. Thereupon the Holy Prophet praised God and shouted Allah-o-Akbar. All his Companions followed in a loud chorus of Allah-o-Akbar, which echoed far and wide.

It should be noted that only the previous day the Holy Prophet of Islam had expressed his wish that either Umar bin Khattaab or Umar bin Hishaam, who was later known as Abu Jahl, may become Muslim. Both of them were influential and powerful persons in Makkah. God accepted his prayers and so ordained that the very person chosen by the enemy to kill the Holy Prophet became a humble servant of Islam. Before Hadhrat Umar accepted Islam, Muslims used to offer their Prayers in secret.

With Umar's acceptance of Islam their courage was boosted and they felt that they could worship God openly.

The Holy Prophet gave Hadhrat Umar the title 'Farooq', so he was known by the name 'Umar Farooq'. Farooq means, "the one who distinguishes between right and wrong."

HADHRAT UMAR WAS PERSECUTED IN THE NAME OF ISLAM

As the number of Muslims grew larger, the Makkans stepped up the persecution, thinking that they could prevent the further spread of Islam through the use of force. The Holy Prophet told the Muslims to be patient and pray to God Almighty. He told them that to remain steadfast in the wake of persecution is a good quality by which a person can win the pleasure of God Almighty.

The slaves who had accepted Islam were treated most cruelly. Makkans spared Hadhrat Umar, being an influential person in Makkah, from the ill treatment by the Makkans. Hadhrat Umar did not like this. He wanted everybody to know that he had become a Muslim and was ready to lay down his life for Islam like any other Muslim.

Once he knocked at the door of a very bitter enemy of Islam, Abu Jahl, and recited the Kalima, the Declaration of Faith, in his presence. Abu Jahl judged Umar's mood, listened to him and then shut the door of his house in order to avoid a fight. Hadhrat Umar then went to the house of another Quraish chief but he too avoided him.

Someone suggested that he should go to the Ka'bah and announce his acceptance of Islam face to face to a person called Jameel. Hadhrat Umar went to the Ka'bah and saw Jameel sitting along with his friends. Hadhrat Umar stepped forward and announced his acceptance of Islam. Jameel shouted, "O people, listen to what Umar is saying. He says that he had relinquished the religion of his forefathers." At this they started beating Umar. By chance Hadhrat Umar's uncle passed that way. He rescued Umar by announcing that Umar was under his protection. On hearing this people left him alone.

It was an Arab custom that whenever an influential person declared that someone was under his protection they would not harm that person. Hadhrat Umar was not at all pleased at this. He did not want the Makkans to persecute his fellow Muslims and leave him alone. He requested his uncle not to take him under his protection. Reluctantly his uncle agreed. Not long after Hadhrat Umar was again subjected to persecution. Hadhrat Umar used to say afterwards that he did not mind being beaten in the cause of Allah.

HADHRAT UMAR MIGRATES TO MADINAH

When God commanded Muslims to migrate from Makkah to Madinah, Hadhrat Umar was the only one who didn't leave Makkah secretly. He hung his sword by his side, took his bow and arrows and went on horseback to the Ka'bah. He performed seven circuits of the Ka'bah, went to Maqam-i-Ibrahim, the Place of Abraham and offered Prayer. Then he addressed the Arab chiefs who were present there and said, "I am leaving Makkah for Madinah. Does anyone dare stop me?" No one had the courage to stop him.

It is said that he migrated with a party of twenty people and stayed at Qaba situated at a distance of about two miles from Madinah. Later on the Holy Prophet also migrated from Makkah to Madinah and stayed for a while in Qaba.

HADHRAT UMAR HEARD THE WORDS OF ADHAN IN A DREAM

A short while after his arrival in Madinah, the Holy Prophet instructed his followers to build a mosque so that the Prayer Services can be held in it. Although Five Daily Prayers had been established and the part of the day they were required to be offered were known, yet the worshippers were unaware of the exact time of their commencement. They used to come to the mosque for each Prayer according to their own estimate of the time of the Service. This was not a satisfactory arrangement and it was felt that a suitable means should be adopted for calling Muslims to the Prayers. A consultation meeting was held and various suggestions were made.

As the Jews use a horn and the Christians use bells for the purpose of calling worshippers to Prayer, some Companions gave their opinion that one of these means should be adopted. Hadhrat Umar, however suggested that someone should be appointed to announce that the Prayer was about to begin. The Holy Prophet approved of this suggestion and directed Bilal, a freed slave who had accepted Islam, to carry out this duty.

One day a Companion of the Holy Prophet Hadhrat Abdullah bin Zaid Ansaari came to the Holy Prophet and told him that the words of Adhan, the Call to Prayer, were taught to him in a dream. The Holy Prophet told him to teach those words to Bilal. Hadhrat Bilal learnt those phrases, stood up and with a loud voice recited the Adhan for the first time. Hadhrat Umar listened to these words and hastened to the Holy Prophet and told him that he, too, had heard the same words in a dream. The Holy Prophet was convinced that this was a Divine scheme and thus the Call to Prayer was established in Islam.

HADHRAT UMAR IN THE BATTLE OF BADR

Hadhrat Umar remained close to the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, throughout his life. He took part in all the battles forced upon the Muslims by the non-believers. He was involved in all the treaties and covenants entered into and the measures adopted for the propagation of Islam by the Holy Prophet.

The first battle, forced upon Muslims by the Makkans, was the Battle of Badr. It was the month of Ramadhan. A well armed and well equipped force of more than a thousand warriors set out to Madinah to attack the Muslims. The Holy Prophet set forth from Madinah to meet them with a volunteer force of three hundred and thirteen ill equipped Muslims. The battle was fought at a place called Badr. Hadhrat Umar was the right hand of the Holy Prophet in this battle and showed acts of extraordinary bravery and skill. Fourteen Muslims were martyred in this battle while seventy Makkans were killed. Moreover, the Muslims took about the same number of Makkan nobles as prisoners.

A few days after the battle, two Makkans, Umair bin Wahb and Safwaan bin Umayya were mourning those killed at Badr in the courtyard of the Ka'bah. Suddenly Safwaan said to Umair, "Life is no longer worth living." Umair said, "I feel the same way. I am ready to risk my own life but the thought of my children and my unpaid debts restrains me. Were it not for that, I could have gone to Madinah secretly and kill Muhammad. I have an excuse for my journey to Madinah as my son is held prisoner there."

Safwaan assured him, “I shall be responsible for your debts and your children. You must go and carry out your plans.”

Having agreed to this, Umair went home, dipped his sword in poison, and set out to Madinah. When he arrived in Madinah, Hadhrat Umar saw him and became worried. He went to the Holy Prophet and informed him about Umair’s arrival in Madinah and expressed his concern. The Holy Prophet asked Umar to bring Umair to him. Hadhrat Umar went to find Umair. On his way he met some of the Companions of the Holy Prophet whom he told to go and sit with the Holy Prophet and be on the alert.

When Umair came, the Holy Prophet asked him to sit next to him and inquired about his visit.

Umair said, “You are holding my son as a prisoner and I have come to obtain his release.”

“Then why this sword?” asked the Holy Prophet.

Umair said, “The sword is of no use. What did the swords do for us at Badr?”

The Holy Prophet asked, “Tell me the true purpose of your visit.”

Umair gave the same reply.

The Holy Prophet inquired, “Haven’t you conspired with Safwaan in the courtyard of the Ka’bah to kill me?”

Umair was astounded, but insisted that he had not conspired with anyone.

The Holy Prophet said to him, “If you have come to kill me, God will frustrate your design.”

Umair remained quiet for a while and then said, “You are right. We did conspire against you, but it seems that God is with you, as there was no other person present when Safwaan and I spoke to each other, and yet you have come to know of our intentions. Perhaps God had designed it so that I can become a believer.”

The Holy Prophet was pleased and addressing the Companions he said, “Umair is now your brother. Instruct him in the teachings of Islam and release his son.”

Umair remained in Madinah for some time until he became fully instructed in the teachings of Islam and became so devoted that he requested the Holy Prophet to allow him to go to Makkah and preach Islam to the Makkans. The Holy Prophet granted him the permission. He went to Makkah and persuaded several people to embrace Islam.

HADHRAT UMAR IN THE BATTLE OF UHUD

To take revenge of the defeat of Badr the Makkans attacked Muslims again. This time the Makkans raised an army of three thousand warriors. They reached the outskirts of Madinah and stopped near the mountain of Uhud. The Holy Prophet confronted this army with seven hundred of his followers. Hadhrat Umar was also with him.

The Holy Prophet posted fifty of his men to guard a strategic narrow hilly pass so as to prevent the enemy’s attack from behind and faced the enemy with the rest of the force. Soon after the battle began the enemy was driven away. The Muslims ran after them, even some of the guards at the pass left their post and went in pursuit of the enemy in spite of Holy Prophet’s specific instructions to remain there. Two enemy Commanders Khalid bin Waleed and Amr bin Al-Aas, saw the poorly guarded pass, gathered their fleeing soldiers and attacked the Muslims from behind. The Muslim soldiers were scattered all over the battlefield and therefore could not assemble to repel the enemy’s attack. There were only twenty Muslims left around the Holy Prophet who made a protective ring in order to save him from the enemy. But the attack was so severe that the Holy Prophet fell injured and became

unconscious. The rumour spread that the Holy Prophet was dead. Hadhrat Umar, who was also among those who tried to repel the attack, heard the news. It is said that he was so devastated that he sat on a stone and cried. The enemy too was under the impression that Muhammad was killed so they withdrew. The Muslims lifted the Holy Prophet's body from among the dead.

After a while the Holy Prophet returned to consciousness. The Muslims were overjoyed to see him alive and gathered around him. They escorted him to the foot of the hill. Abu Sufyaan, the leader of the Makkans, was sure that they had killed not only the Holy Prophet but also Abu Bakr and Umar. He therefore shouted:

“We have killed Muhammad”

The Holy Prophet told Muslims to remain quiet.

Then Abu Sufyaan exclaimed, “We have killed Abu Bakr.”

The Holy Prophet forbade Hadhrat Abu Bakr to make a reply.

Then he shouted again, “We have also killed Umar.”

The Holy Prophet told Hadhrat Umar to remain quiet.

Upon this the leader of Makkans shouted, “We have killed all three. Then he raised the national cry praising their chief idol, “Glory be to Hubal, because Hubal has put an end to Islam.”

The Muslims were still quiet when the Holy Prophet asked them “Why don't you reply?”

“What shall we say?”, the Muslims asked.

The Holy Prophet told them to respond and say, “Allah alone is Great and Mighty. He alone is High and Honoured.”

Hearing this reply the enemy was disappointed to learn that the Holy Prophet, Hadhrat Abu Bakr and Hadhrat Umar were all alive. In spite of the fact that many Muslims were badly wounded and totally exhausted, the enemy left the battlefield totally dejected.

THE HOLY PROPHET MARRIES

HADHRAT UMAR'S DAUGHTER

Later in the same year the Holy Prophet married Hadhrat Umar's daughter Hafsa. Hadhrat Hafsa was a widow. She was married to Hadhrat Khunais, who laid down his life in the battle of Badr. After the death of his son in law, Hadhrat Umar was looking for a suitable match for her. When the Holy Prophet showed his intentions to marry her, Hadhrat Umar was greatly pleased and readily offered the hand of his daughter in marriage to the Holy Prophet.

Hadhrot Hafsa died at the age of sixty and was buried in the holy graveyard in Madinah called “Jannat-ul-Baqee”.

THE TREATY OF HUDAIBIYAH

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, saw in a vision that he was performing the circuits of the Ka'bah in the company of his followers. He related this vision to his Companions and asked them to make preparations for the pilgrimage. It was the month of February in

the year 628 A.D (6 A.H), when fifteen hundred Muslims, headed by the Holy Prophet, set out on their journey towards Makkah. A mounted guard of twenty men went some distance ahead to warn the Muslims in case of an enemy attack. The Holy Prophet stayed at a place called Dhul Haleefah, six miles from Madinah. This was the first stage on the road to Makkah. The news of the Holy Prophet's approach soon reached Makkah. The Makkans were greatly perturbed. They took up arms and were soon on the road to Madinah to take on the Muslims in battle, in order to stop them from entering Makkah.

The Muslims had nearly reached Osfan, the second stage, when the Holy Prophet was informed that further advance on the high road was impossible without confronting the enemy as the enemy were camping at a place called Dhu Towa. In order to avoid confrontation the Holy Prophet took an alternative route and reached a place called Hudaibiyah, only nine miles from Makkah and camped there.

When the Makkans learnt that the Muslims had reached Hudaibiyah and were camping there, they quickly drew back and headed towards that direction to defend the city of Makkah. They sent delegates to find out the real intentions of the Muslims. Budail bin Warqa, a chief of the Khuza'ah tribe, was the first to arrive. The Holy Prophet explained to Budail that they had come with the intention to perform the circuits of the Ka'bah and had no intention of fighting. Budail went back to Makkah and gave his report to Makkans. But the Makkans were not prepared to allow them to enter Makkah. Then came Urwah, another chief and the Holy Prophet told him exactly what he told Budail. He went back. The Makkans listened to him but were firm in their resolve not to let the Muslims to do the pilgrimage.

They said, "The Muslims must go back this year. Next year they may come and perform the circuits of the Ka'bah."

The Makkans then sent Halees, a chief of Bani Kananah. Thus the negotiations went on between the Makkans and the Muslims.

In the meantime the Holy Prophet felt that some intelligent person from among the respectable family of Quraish, should be sent to the Makkans in order to put forward the Muslim point of view to them. He desired Umar to go but Hadhrat Umar excused himself on account of the personal enmity of the Quraish tribe towards him and also on the ground that he had no influential relative in the city, who could protect him from danger. Hadhrat Umar very respectfully suggested to the Holy Prophet that Hadhrat Usmaan should be sent instead because he belonged to one of the most powerful families in Makkah.

Hadhrat Usmaan agreed to this proposal. The Holy Prophet, therefore, provided him with a written statement addressed to the leaders of the Quraish in which he explained the purpose of his visit and assured the Quraish that Muslims only intended to perform the pilgrimage and having offered their sacrifices, would return to Madinah.

Hadhrat Usmaan's talks with the chiefs of Makkah became prolonged. A rumour spread that the Makkans have murdered him. Hearing this the Holy Prophet assembled his Companions and said, "I have heard that the Makkans have murdered Usmaan. If this is true we have to enter Makkah whatever the consequences."

He continued, "Those who promise solemnly that if they have to go further, they will not turn back except as victors, should come forward and take an oath on my hand."

Everyone rushed forward to take the pledge. This is called the 'Covenant of the Pleasure of God.' The Holy Prophet sat in the shade of an acacia tree, and all his followers declared their resolve to fight to the bitter end for the cause of Islam.

When the Quraish learnt of this pledge, they became apprehensive and let Hadhrat Usmaan go. They were however determined to avoid confrontation with the Muslims and wanted to secure an agreement with the condition that the Muslims would return to Madinah on this occasion and come for pilgrimage next year.

To draw a treaty of peace, the Makkans sent Suhail, a Makkan leader, to the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet, then, summoned Hadhrat Ali to act as the scribe of the treaty.

The Holy Prophet started dictating the terms of the treaty. As soon as he said, "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful," Suhail objected by saying, "Allah we know and believe in, but what is this 'The Gracious and the Merciful'?"

This agreement is between two parties therefore the religious beliefs of both parties should be respected.

The Holy Prophet agreed and said to Hadhrat Ali, "Only write, 'In the name of Allah'."

The Prophet then started dictating, "These are the terms of peace between the people of Makkah and Muhammad the Prophet of God."

Again Suhail objected and said, "If we believed you as a Prophet of God, we would not have fought you."

The Prophet accepted his objection again. Instead of 'Muhammad, the Prophet of God', he proposed 'Muhammad, son of Abdullah'.

The treaty contained the following conditions:

"There will be no fighting for ten years. Anyone who wishes to join Muhammad and to enter into any agreement with him is free to do so. Similarly anyone wishes to join the Quraish and to enter into any agreement with them is also free to do so. A young man, or one whose father is alive, if he goes to Muhammad without permission from his father or guardian, will be returned to his father or guardian. But should anyone go to the Quraish, he will not be returned. This year Muhammad will go back without entering Makkah. But next year he and his followers may enter Makkah, spend three days and perform the circuits. During these three days the Quraish will withdraw to the surrounding hills. When Muhammad and his followers enter Makkah, they will be unarmed except for the sheathed swords which wayfarers of Arabia always have with them."

While the treaty was being inscribed, Suhail's son Abu Jandal, wearing handcuffs and chains and bearing marks of injuries all over his body, staggered in the Muslim camp. He told Muslims that because he had embraced Islam he was tortured. He begged that he should not be returned to Makkah as he might not survive further cruelty. Suhail demanded that he should be handed over into his custody. The Holy Prophet was greatly moved by the condition of Abu Jandal and pleaded with Suhail to let him remain with the Muslims, but Suhail was adamant that according to the treaty just signed, he would take his son back to Makkah. The Holy Prophet then addressed Abu Jandal and said, "Have patience, and put your trust in Allah. He will certainly provide for your freedom and provide for the freedom of other persons like you. We are unable to help you, as we have entered into an agreement with the Makkans, we cannot go against our word."

The Muslims were very upset and felt that the terms of the treaty were not in their favour. Though Hadhrat Abu Bakr and other Companions remained quiet, yet Hadhrat Umar could not contain himself and went to the Holy Prophet and said, "O Prophet of Allah: Are we not in the right?"

"Yes," said the Holy Prophet, "We are in the right."

"Then why this agreement and why these humiliating terms?" asked Umar.

The Holy Prophet said, "I am the Messenger of Allah, and know what He desires. I cannot go against it and He alone is my Helper."

Hadhrat Umar was still not satisfied and asked, "Did you not tell us that we would perform the circuit of the Ka'bah?"

"Indeed I did" said the Holy Prophet, "but did I also say that it would happen this very year? God did foretell that we would perform the circuit in peace, so wait. You will, God willing, certainly enter Makkah and perform the circuits of the Ka'bah."

Hadhrat Umar realised his mistake and sought forgiveness from God Almighty for his momentary weakness.

Some other Companions asked why they had agreed to send a person, who had accepted Islam and reached Madinah, back to his guardian in Makkah without obtaining the same condition for a Muslim who had relinquished his faith and went to Makkah.

The Holy Prophet explained, "Everybody who becomes a Muslim is bound to propagate Islam wherever he happens to be. On the other hand a person who gives up Islam is of no use to us. It is better he should go elsewhere."

This reply of the Holy Prophet satisfied all those who doubted the wisdom of the course adopted by the Holy Prophet.

Moreover the agreement also tells us that the punishment for apostasy is not death, as some Muslim scholars believe. Had death been prescribed, as the punishment for apostasy, the Holy Prophet should have insisted that those who have abdicated Islam should be returned so that they could be punished accordingly.

During the course of the journey back from Hudaibiyah the chapter of the Holy Quran called AL FATH was revealed to the Holy Prophet. AL FATH means 'The Victory'. This chapter comprised the glad tidings:

"Surely We have granted thee a clear victory so that Allah may cover up for thee, thy shortcomings, past and future and that He may complete His Favour upon thee, and may guide thee on a right path. And that Allah may help thee with a mighty help."

(Ch 48: 2-4)

"Surely Allah has indeed fulfilled for His Messenger the vision. You will certainly enter the Sacred Mosque, if Allah so wills, in security, some having their heads shaven, and others having their hair cut short and you will have no fear." (Ch: 48: 28)

Hadhrat Umar asked the Holy Prophet, "Messenger of Allah! is this treaty truly the victory of Islam?"

The Holy Prophet responded, "Most certainly this is a victory for us."

It was indeed a great victory as there was a pact between Muslims and Makkans not to engage in a battle for ten years. The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and the Muslims devoted their full attention towards conveying the message of Islam as widely as possible. Thus Islam began to spread rapidly in the greater part of Arabia. The rate of progress can be estimated from the fact that while the number of Muslims present with the Holy Prophet were fifteen hundred at the time of the Treaty of Hudaibiyah, the number had risen to ten thousand two years later, on the occasion of the Fall of Makkah.

FALL OF MAKKAH

Two years after signing the Treaty of Hudaibyah, the Makkans broke the treaty. The Holy Prophet therefore mobilised a force of ten thousand men from Madinah and marched to Makkah. It was the month of Ramadhan in the year 630 A.D (8 AH).

As the city was approached, it was evident that there would be no opposition. No Makkan warrior appeared in sight. In token of his gratitude the Holy Prophet bowed his head low upon his camel and praised God Almighty and thanked Him for this great victory. He proceeded to the Ka'bah and performed the circuits of the House seven times. There were three hundred and sixty idols placed inside as well as outside the Ka'bah. The Holy Prophet hit them with his stick. As each idol fell, he recited the verse, 'Truth has come and falsehood has vanished away. Falsehood does indeed vanish fast'. (17:82).

This verse was revealed to the Holy Prophet before he migrated from Makkah to Madinah. The Holy Prophet then directed that the Ka'bah be cleared of the idols. There were some pictures drawn on the walls of the Ka'bah. The Holy Prophet called Hadhrat Umar and entrusted him the duty of wiping out these drawings. Thus the Ka'bah was restored to its true purpose, the worship of the One God, for which it was originally designed.

He then asked Hadhrat Bilal to recite the Adhan and the Holy Prophet led the Prayer.

Later on the Holy Prophet addressed the Makkans and said, "What punishment should you have for the cruelties you committed against those whose only fault was that they invited you to the worship of one God?"

They replied, "We expect you to treat us as Joseph treated his erring brothers."

Hearing the plea of the Makkans the Holy Prophet said, "No blame shall lie on you this day." He told them that they were free as he has forgiven them.

HADHRAT UMAR'S FINANCIAL SACRIFICE IN THE BATTLE OF TABOK

Hadhrat Umar was not only willing to make sacrifice in the cause of Allah on each occasion but also wanted to excel others. At the time of the battle of Tabok, when the Holy Prophet asked for contributions, Hadhrat Umar brought half of what he owned. The Holy Prophet was much pleased and asked him, "Umar! Did you leave anything at home for your family?"

"Yes, Messenger of Allah, I have left at home exactly half of what I possess."

In the meantime Hadhrat Abu Bakr also arrived with his contributions. The Holy Prophet asked him, "Abu Bakr, what have you left at home?" He answered, "The name of Allah and His Messenger."

Hadhrat Umar, who was looking for a chance to excel Hadhrat Abu Bakr that day with his contributions, realised that Hadhrat Abu Bakr had excelled him on this occasion too.

HADHRAT UMAR'S GRIEF AT THE DEATH OF THE HOLY PROPHET

The Companions loved the Holy Prophet very much and when he died, they were very grieved. Hadhrat Umar was full of grief too. He could not believe that the Prophet had died. He, therefore, took out his sword and said, "I will kill anyone who says that the Holy Prophet has died."

After a while Hadhrat Abu Bakr arrived in the mosque and addressing the people he recited the verse:

"Muhammad is only a Messenger. Verily, all Messengers before him have passed away. If then he dies or be slain, will you turn back on your heels?" (3:145)

He said, "One who worshipped Muhammad should know that he has died and one who worships Allah should know that He is alive and will never die." Hadhrat Umar heard this, realised his mistake and wept bitterly.

HADHRAT UMAR'S CLOSENESS TO THE HOLY PROPHET

The Holy Prophet used to consult his Companions in various matters and the Companions used to give their opinion whenever they thought that their advice would be beneficial to the community.

Once Hadhrat Umar suggested to the Holy Prophet that in order to make the Muslim community purer, the system of Purdah should be introduced. On another occasion he suggested that Muslims should be told to refrain from drinking alcohol.

It so happened that after a while the verses of the Holy Quran, relating to Purdah and the verses forbidding the consumption of alcohol, were revealed to the Holy Prophet and the Muslims acted upon these commandments.

Hadhrat Umar, once, suggested to the Holy Prophet that as he receives many dignitaries, he should have a special cloak made of fine material for himself to wear on these ceremonial occasions. The Holy Prophet did not approve of the suggestion and said, "God would not be pleased if I adopt such ways. I would like to meet those people in the clothes which I normally wear."

Later when someone presented silk garments to the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet sent one of them to Hadhrat Umar. He approached the Holy Prophet and said respectfully, "How can I wear this garment when you yourself have disapproved of wearing silk for men."

The Holy Prophet replied, "Every present is not meant for personal use."

The Holy Prophet meant that since wearing of silk is not forbidden for women, he could have presented this garment to his wife or to his daughter or should have put it to some other use.

Once the Holy Prophet related a dream that he drank some milk and that it was so delicious that he felt that the flavour had gone right through to the tips of his fingers. He gave the rest of the milk to Hadhrat Umar. The Companions asked the Holy Prophet what this dream meant. The Holy Prophet replied, milk in a dream means knowledge.

On another occasion the Holy Prophet said that Satan would avoid the path on which Umar would tread.

These examples show the greatness of Hadhrat Umar.

CHAPTER 3

CONQUESTS DURING HADHRAT UMAR'S KHILAFAT:

It was during the Khilafat of Hadhrat Umar that the Muslims conquered the two great empires of the time, Rome and Persia, and the flag of Islam was hoisted in Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Egypt and Persia. By following the principles of Islam, the Muslims ensured fair dealings and justice among the people of the occupied territories and Islam soon spread throughout those countries.

THE CONQUEST OF IRAQ

When Hadhrat Umar became Khalifah, the Muslim forces were already engaged in war with Iraq and Syria. In those days the Persians governed Iraq while the Romans ruled over Syria. After becoming the leader of the Muslims, Hadhrat Umar devoted his attention first of all to Iraq. Hadhrat Khalid bin Waleed, who had made spectacular conquests in Iraq, was called back and posted in Syria by Hadhrat Abu Bakr because of the great threat by the Syrian Christians, who were making preparations for war on an unusually large scale. After the withdrawal of Hadhrat Khalid bin Waleed there was not much progress on the Iraqi front. Meanwhile the Persians gathered a large force in order to drive the Muslims out of Iraq. In the fighting that followed the Muslims had to abandon parts of Iraq. Hadhrat Musanna, the Commander of the Muslim force in Iraq, asked Hadhrat Umar for help. As a result, a Muslim force numbering four thousand soldiers was sent under the command of Hadhrat Abu Obaidah Saqafi to Iraq. Some Muslim soldiers joined the force on the way. Hadhrat Abu Obaidah Saqafi was the chief of Saqef tribe. He was well versed in matters of warfare. It should be noted that he was not a Companion of the Holy Prophet.

THE BATTLE OF NAMARAQ

The Muslim force reached Namaraq where Hadhrat Musanna and his men were waiting for them and thus the total number of Muslims reached eleven thousand approximately. They faced the huge army of non-believers. After fierce fighting, the Muslims won the battle. An interesting incident happened during the battle that demonstrated that a Muslim is always true to his word. An enemy soldier called Japan was overpowered by a Muslim soldier and was about to be killed when he pleaded, "Don't kill me. I'll give you two slaves if you spare my life." The Muslim soldier agreed. Japan said, "Take me to your Commander so that we can make the deal official." The Muslim soldier took him to Hadhrat Abu Obaidah and the agreement was made. Immediately after the agreement someone recognised Japan and shouted, "Kill him because he is Japan, the enemy commander."

Hadhrat Abu Obaidah replied, "We have promised to spare his life, so no harm can come to him now, even if he is the commander of the enemy forces."

THE BATTLE OF SAQATIAH

From Namaaraq, the Muslim Force marched to Kaskar, which lies between the Euphrates and the Tigris. The Muslim force met the Persian army at a place called Saqatiah. The Muslims destroyed the

powerful Persian army, which was commanded by General Narsi. Narsi tried to escape but was pursued by the Muslims and killed.

THE BATTLE OF JASR (BRIDGE)

To take revenge of the defeat, the Persian Commander-in-Chief Rustam gathered even larger force and sent it under the command of General Bahman.

Hadhrat Abu Obaidah stayed in a fort on the western bank of the river Euphrates and the Persians pitched their tents on the eastern side of the river.

General Bahman sent a message to the Muslim Commander, “Either cross the river and meet us on this side of the river or allow us to cross the river so as to face your force.”

The Companions of the Holy Prophet who were in the Muslim force, fearing treachery from the enemy, advised their Commander not to cross the river but to allow the enemy to cross and meet them on the western side. However Hadhrat Abu Obaidah ignored their advice and sent a message back to the enemy that they were ready to cross the river and fight them on their side. A bridge of boats was prepared and the Muslims began to cross. They had hardly crossed the river and had no chance to arrange for the battle when the Persians began to attack. A large number of huge elephants surged forward. To the Arab horses these animals looked fierce and unfamiliar and they became frightened. When the elephants charged they caused destruction and left a large number of Muslims crushed and maimed. On seeing this, Hadhrat Abu Obaidah jumped from his horse and rushed to the elephant that was heading towards him. He struck a mighty blow to its trunk cutting it from its forehead. The angry beast hurled him to the ground and crushed him under its feet, he died instantly. The Muslim soldiers continued to attack the elephants but to no effect. Seven other leaders who took up the flag one after the other were killed. Finally Hadhrat Musanna took the flag in his hand and tried his best to hold the enemy at bay. At the same time he ordered his soldiers to cross back, but in the meantime the enemy had cut the planks of the bridge so there was no escape for the Muslim soldiers. Some of them jumped into the river to escape but drowned. The Muslims managed to build the bridge once again. While Hadhrat Musanna, the brave soldier of Islam with a handful of men, blocked the advance of the enemy, the rest of the Muslim force crossed back. This battle is known as the Battle of the Bridge. The Muslim Force suffered heavy losses in this battle.

It is related that when Hadhrat Umar said farewell to the Muslim army, he advised Hadhrat Abu Obaidah Thaqafi, the Commander, to consult the Companions of the Holy Prophet in matters of importance and heed their advice. It appears that the Commander of the Muslim army ignored his advice. As a result, the Muslims suffered great loss.

Hadhrat Musanna informed Hadhrat Umar of what had happened in the battle. Hadhrat Umar was worried at this temporary defeat but knew that in the end the Muslims would be victorious. Allah would surely keep His promise. He therefore raised another Force and sent it to join Musanna’s army.

THE BATTLE OF BUWAIB

The Muslim force were camped on the bank of Euphrates at Buwaib, a place where the modern city of Koofah stands today, when the help arrived. The Persian force under the command of Mehran set up their camp on the other side of the river. The enemy commander again sent a similar message. The Muslims could not be deceived again. This time Hadhrat Musanna told the enemy to cross the river and meet the Muslim force on their side. The enemy crossed the river and arranged themselves for the battle. The Muslim soldiers waited until the enemy was ready for the battle and the fighting began.

Hadhrat Musanna encouraged the Muslim soldiers to fight bravely for the cause of Islam. Mehran, the enemy commander, was killed in the battle. Seeing this, the Persians panicked and fled from the battlefield. Many ran back to the bridge to cross the river but the Muslims blocked their way. The enemy could not escape and in confusion jumped into the river to save their lives but most of them drowned. The Muslims won the battle with Allah's grace, and the enemy suffered a huge loss in this battle. The Muslims thus occupied a large part of Iraq. Seeing their fairness and justice, the local population accepted Islam in large numbers.

The Commander Hadhrat Musanna was fatally wounded during the battle but he knew that the Persians would attack yet again. So he made preparations for the next battle. He also asked Hadhrat Umar for help, who sent an army under the command of Hadhrat Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqaas. But Hadhrat Musanna's condition got worse and soon after the battle this brave soldier of Islam passed away. Hadhrat Umar was informed of his death and he was very grieved. He appointed Hadhrat Sa'ad as the Commander of Muslim army and directed him to proceed to a place called Qaadsia to hold the advances of the Persians.

THE BATTLE OF QAADSIA

Hadhrat Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqaas was a close Companion of the Holy Prophet and was also the Prophet's maternal uncle. Hadhrat Umar instructed him, "Do not be afraid of Persia's might. Beware of the enemy's trickery and be steadfast. Insha-Allah you will win the battle and the Muslim Force will march into the city of Madaain. The whole of Iraq will then fall to Muslims." Madaain was the Capital of Iraq at that time and was the seat of the Persian government. The Persian Emperor Yezdgird, a sixteen-year-old youth, lived there.

Hadhrat Sa'ad sent a party of fourteen Arab nobles to the Royal court for negotiations and to introduce to them the salient features of the religion of Islam in order to invite them to Islam. Yezdgird arrayed his court in great pomp and splendour and sent for the Muslim Ambassadors who were ushered into his court in their flowing Arabian robes. The negotiations began but soon the emperor became very angry and remarked, "None of you would have left this place alive if it were legitimate to put Ambassadors to death." He was so angry that instead of exchanging gifts as a gesture of goodwill he ordered that a basket full of soil be handed over to them to show his contempt for Muslims. The Muslims, instead of being offended, took it as a good omen and hurried back to their Commander. Pointing to the basket of soil, they said to their Commander, "Accept our congratulations for the victory as the enemy has voluntarily surrendered his territory to us."

The Persians gathered together a very large army under the Persian Commander-in-Chief Rustam. Rustam was determined to defeat the Muslims and drive them into the desert.

The two armies met at Qaadsia. The enemy had a large armoury and a large number of elephants but the Muslims were not afraid of their number or their weapons. Fully confident of Allah's help, they went into the battlefield. While the enemy had a large number of elephants, the Muslims had camels. In order to confront the elephants they thought of a brilliant plan. They covered their camels with black cloth, which gave them a frightful appearance. The enemy elephants were thus tricked and some of them refused to surge forward. The battle lasted for several days. The enemy Commander-in-Chief Rustam was killed in the battle. Seeing this the Persian soldiers fled from the battlefield and by the grace of God the Muslims won this battle as well.

An interesting incident happened during the battle. Abu Mahjan, a renowned warrior and a famous poet was imprisoned and kept in chains by Hadhrat Sa'ad for some offence. He requested Hadhrat Sa'ad to allow him to take part in the battle against the Persians but Hadhrat Sa'ad declined the offer. He was extremely disappointed at not taking part in the battle. Later on he made a similar request to Sa'ad's wife Hadhrat Salma and begged her to release him so that he could show acts of bravery in the battle.

He promised that if he survived he would come back and she could chain him again but she also refused. Totally dejected, Abu Mahjan composed some verses and began to sing aloud. In these verses he cursed himself for being unlucky. He regretted that he was tied up in prison while his comrades were fighting outside. He repented at what he had done and longed for his release so that he could do something for the sake of Islam.

Moved by these verses Hadhrat Salma set him free on the condition that he would return after the battle each day. Abu Mahjan rushed to the stable and saddling one of Hadhrat Sa`ad's horses went straight into the thick of the battle and fought very bravely. He covered his face with a piece of cloth so that no one could recognise him. As evening fell Abu Mahjan came back to his prison unnoticed and Hadhrat Salma chained him again. Everyone in the battlefield, including Hadhrat Sa`ad, was amazed at the bravery of this stranger. "He could not be my prisoner," Sa`ad said to himself "because he is kept in chains."

After the battle his wife told him the whole story. Seeing his devotion to Islam, Hadhrat Sa`ad set him free.

Hadhrat Umar was anxiously waiting for the outcome of the battle. He used to go outside Madinah to see if there was any messenger with the news from the battlefield. One day he saw a camel rider coming from that direction. Hadhrat Umar asked him, "Where are you coming from?"

"I am coming from Qaadsia," replied the rider.

Hadhrat Umar asked, "What is the news?"

The rider not knowing that he was talking to the Khalifah replied, "Alhamdu Lillah! Muslims won," and then carried on hastily towards the city on his camel while Hadhrat Umar kept running by his side trying to get more information from him about the battle. By the time they reached the streets of Madinah and people began to address Hadhrat Umar as 'Ameer-ul-Momineen'. The rider realised his mistake and apologised to Hadhrat Umar saying, as the message was for the Khalifah only, he did not want to stop on the way.

"I wish I had known your identity earlier," he said. Hadhrat Umar replied, "Never mind," and then he read out Hadhrat Sa`ad's letter to the people giving the good news of the victory and that the Muslims had reached the outskirts of Madaain.

Madaain, the capital of the Persian Empire, was a beautiful city on the bank of river Tigris. The Muslim force camped on the riverbank. They could see the mighty palace of the Emperor of Persia and the beautiful city of Madaain across the river. As the Persians destroyed all the bridges the Muslims could not go further.

Hadhrat Sa`ad gathered his army and told them that the only way for them to cross the river was by riding their horses through the water. He asked, "Who among you wants to confront the enemy first?" A young soldier Aasim replied that he was ready. Six hundred soldiers also volunteered. Aasim with sixty of the volunteers was the first to go. They rode their horses and jumped into the river to cross. The Persians were watching them keenly from the other bank. They were overawed at seeing these brave and daring soldiers. In no time the whole Muslim Force crossed the river. The enemy soldiers tried to resist the attack but were soon overpowered and surrounded. Many of them fled for their lives. Hearing the news of the defeat, Emperor Yezdgird also fled from the city. Muslim soldiers entered into the palace and thanked God Almighty for the victory. They had the wealth of the Emperor of Persia. A party was sent back with the booty to Madinah. Hadhrat Umar saw the valuables and remarked how honest these people were who brought the wealth to him. Hadhrat Ali, who was present on that occasion remarked, "It is because you are honest, sir. Had you been dishonest, they would have been dishonest too."

Hadhrat Umar distributed the booty among the Muslims. While he was doing so he remarked, "O Allah, the Dearest! You did not grant these bounties to us at the time when the Holy Prophet

Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was alive amongst us, though he was dearer to you than us. You did not grant these riches to us during the time of Hadhrat Abu Bakr, though he was dearer to you than this humble servant. Is it a sort of test for me?" He was so full of emotions that he cried before his Lord and asked for His forgiveness.

THE BATTLE OF JALOOLA

After the fall of Madaain the Persian army gathered at Jaloola. Jaloola was a small town in the neighbourhood of Baghdad. The Muslim force advanced towards Jaloola and besieged the town. The siege dragged for some months but ultimately Jaloola also fell to Muslims. With the fall of Jaloola the conquest was complete and the Muslims had captured the whole of Iraq. More wealth and valuables were gathered and sent back to Madinah. Next morning when Hadhrat Umar was distributing these riches, tears came into his eyes. A Companion of the Holy Prophet asked for the reason. Hadhrat Umar said, "We should fear Allah, as when Allah blesses a nation with such bounties, the seed of jealousy is sometimes sown in their hearts and then they are disgraced."

THE CONQUEST OF SYRIA

FALL OF DAMASCUS

When news reached Madinah that the Emperor of Rome was gathering all available forces from various parts of his empire against the Muslims, the Khalifah of the time Hadhrat Abu Bakr directed Hadhrat Khalid bin Waleed, who was in Iraq at that time, to proceed to Syria. The Muslim force advanced rapidly and besieged the city of Damascus. In the meantime Hadhrat Abu Bakr died. When Hadhrat Umar became the Khalifah he appointed Hadhrat Abu Obaidah bin Al-Jarrah, as the Commander of the Muslim force. Damascus was one of the most important centres of Syria where the Arab merchants used to buy, sell or exchange their goods.

The people of the city of Damascus thought that either the emperor Heraclius would send an army to their aid or the Muslims would leave because of harsh weather. But when six months had passed and neither the army sent by the emperor reached Damascus nor the intense cold climate hampered the activities of the Muslims, they lost hope and handed over the city to the Muslims peacefully.

FALL OF FAHL

In those days Syrian territory was divided into six provinces, of which Damascus, Hims (Emessa), Jordan and Palestine were more important.

The chief town of Jordan was Tibriyah. On the eastern side of Tibriyah there was a lake, which was twelve miles long. The city of Baisan was situated towards the south of Tibriyah at a distance of about eighteen miles.

After the fall of Damascus the Romans gathered a large force at Baisaan. The force despatched by the Emperor Heraclius to help the besieged city of Damascus could not reach Damascus, so it joined the enemy army stationed at Baisaan. In the meantime the Muslims marched from Damascus to Fahl, a town situated opposite Baisaan.

The Romans, fearing the Muslims should make a surprise attack, demolished the barriers of the dam and flooded the countryside. When the battle began the initial advantage lay with the Romans but the courage and steadfastness of the Muslims turned the course of the battle and in the end the Muslims won. The flooded countryside became a trap for the Romans and they could not find any means of

escape from the battlefield. They were therefore defeated and many of them were killed. Hadhrrat Abu Obaidah communicated the news of the victory to Hadhrrat Umar and sought his advice as to how they should treat the people. Hadhrrat Umar wrote in reply that the subjects should be treated kindly and that the land should be left in the possession of the original owners.

THE BATTLE OF YARMOK

From Fahl the main Muslim army marched towards north, and captured the city of Emessa. The Romans, once again, gathered a large force in the southern sector. They made formidable preparations for confrontation with the Muslims and mobilised all available resources in order to drive the Muslims out of Syria.

The Muslim army, in the meantime, reached Yarmok. It is stated that the total number of Muslim soldiers was forty thousand as opposed to two hundred thousand Roman soldiers.

The battle went on for several days. In spite of the heavy odds the Muslims won and the Romans suffered a crushing defeat. It is said that seventy thousand Roman soldiers lost their lives as opposed to three thousand Muslim soldiers.

When the Roman emperor Heraclius heard the news of the defeat of Romans at Yarmok, he left for Constantinople and said with a heavy heart, "Farewell Syria! No Roman will be able to return to you now." With the victory at Yarmok the whole of Syria lay at the feet of the Muslims.

FALL OF JERUSALEM

The Commander of the Muslim army in Palestine was Hadhrrat Amr bin Al-Aas. He was very brave and an intelligent soldier. He was appointed by Hadhrrat Abu Bakr and was successful in capturing many cities. During Hadhrrat Umar's Khilafat the Muslim army advanced further and surrounded the city of Jerusalem.

Being a holy town, the Christians wanted to save it at all costs. When the siege grew long, the Christians agreed to enter into a treaty with the Muslims. One of the conditions put forward by the Christians was that Umar should come himself for the treaty. Hadhrrat Umar agreed and after appointing Hadhrrat Ali as acting Ameer in Madinah, he proceeded to Jerusalem.

The other Commanders who were waiting for Hadhrrat Umar to sign the treaty were Hadhrrat Abu Obaidah bin Al-Jarrah, Hadhrrat Khalid bin Waleed and Hadhrrat Yazeed bin Abu Sufyaan. All these commanders were dressed in very fine long flowing robes and it appeared as if they had come unarmed. Hadhrrat Umar told them off by saying, "How could you afford to be unarmed at such a critical time?" They apologised and said, "Amir-ul-Momineen, we are dressed in these clothes to impress the Non-believers. We are not unarmed. We have our arms under our clothes." Hadhrrat Umar was satisfied and accepted their apology.

Hadhrrat Umar met the delegation that had been sent by the Chief Priest of the city for the peace treaty. They also brought the news that Atraboon, the commander of the enemy force, had fled. Hadhrrat Umar wrote to the Chief Priest that Muslims promise to protect the life, property and honour of each citizen and that there would be no compulsion in matters of religion. The people of Jerusalem were full of joy at the news since they were unhappy about the cruelty and injustices of their own rulers. After the treaty was signed Hadhrrat Umar entered the city of Jerusalem where he was warmly welcomed by Christians and Jews alike.

CONQUEST OF PERSIA

THE BATTLE OF TUSTAR

After conquering Iraq and Syria Hadhrat Umar did not want to proceed any further, but the Persians were creating trouble for Muslims at the borders. They attacked them occasionally and sometimes persuaded people to rebel against the Muslims. The Emperor of Persia was also waiting for the opportunity to reclaim his territory. He therefore sent messages to his people to engage the Muslims in battles.

Observing the situation Hadhrat Umar instructed Muslim Commanders to carry on fighting until the rebellion comes to an end. The Muslims pushed the Persians back to a stronghold called Tustar and besieged the castle in which they had gathered. As the Persians were large in number, the Muslims were frustrated in their attempts to drive them away. They asked Hadhrat Umar for help. Hadhrat Umar sent Hadhrat Abu Musa Ash`ari with an army. The battle went on for many days with both sides unwilling to admit defeat. One day a Persian showed Hadhrat Abu Musa Ash`ari a secret entrance to the castle through the water. The Muslim soldiers entered the castle secretly at night and opened the doors of the castle. The Persians put up some resistance but were defeated. Their leader Hurmazaan was arrested.

Hurmazaan requested to meet Hadhrat Umar, so the Muslims brought him to Madinah. When he approached the city of Madinah, he put on his precious silk robe. With a gold crown on his head and a gold walking stick in his hand, he went to see Hadhrat Umar to show off his grandeur and richness. Hadhrat Umar was resting in the mosque at the time. Hurmazaan went to the mosque and saw a person lying on the ground, resting his head on a cloak. There were some Muslims present in the mosque who were sitting quietly as they did not want to disturb Ameer-ul-Momineen in his sleep. Hurmazaan wondered where Umar was! "The person who was sleeping could not be Umar," he thought, "As Umar, the leader of Muslims must be living in a grand palace with thousands of bodyguards protecting him."

In order to remove his curiosity he asked the people, "Where is Umar?" They replied, "That one who is sleeping there. He is our Amir-ul-Momineen."

Hurmazaan was astonished. He said, "This person has the qualities of a Prophet."

Hadhrat Umar woke up and immediately recognised Hurmazaan by his expensive clothes and said to him, "Have you seen the outcome of your turning away from God?"

Hurmazaan replied, "Umar, we always won against you before you accepted Islam because God was neither on your side nor on our side. But after you became Muslim, God has been on your side therefore you always win." After saying this he gladly accepted Islam.

THE BATTLE OF NIHAWAND

After the battle of Tustar another battle was fought at a place called Nihawand where the Emperor of Persia had sent an army of two hundred thousand to face thirty thousand Muslims. Hadhrat Nu'maan, an Iraqi, was the Muslim Commander. Hadhrat Umar, out of love for the Muslim soldiers, instructed Hadhrat Nu'maan to take great care of the Muslim soldiers. He directed Hadhrat Nu'maan not to take a dangerous route to meet the enemy but to go through a relatively safe route so that there was no loss of life on the way to the battle.

The Persians were camped in the castle and the Muslim army surrounded the castle. One day the enemy soldiers came out of the castle to fight the Muslims. The battle was very fierce but eventually the enemy was defeated. Muslims took control of the fort but Nu'maan, the Muslim Commander, was

killed during the battle. When the news of his death reached Hadhrat Umar, he wept at this loss. The Muslim army advanced and captured city after city until the whole of Persia came under their control. The emperor fled and went into hiding.

A VOICE FROM THE SKY

In one of the battles against the Persians Hadhrat Saaria bin Zaneem was commanding the Muslim army. The Muslims were winning the battle but when fresh reinforcements came to the aid of the enemy, they attacked the Muslims fiercely. The attack was so sudden and intense that it looked as if the Muslims were on the verge of defeat.

Hadhrat Umar, who was delivering the Friday sermon in Madinah, saw the events of the battleground in a vision. He shouted aloud during the sermon, "Saaria, retire to the mountain; to the mountain." Everyone who was listening to his sermon was greatly surprised at these remarks. Hadhrat Saaria and the Muslim soldiers heard Hadhrat Umar's voice hundreds of miles away as if the voice was coming from the sky. The Muslim Commander immediately led his soldiers into the mountain to safety. Eventually, the Muslims won the battle.

In a letter, which reached Madinah a few days later, Hadhrat Saaria gave the full account of the events. He wrote that the battle with the Persians started early on Friday and continued until Friday Prayer time. Suddenly they heard Hadhrat Umar's command ' Saaria, retire to the mountain.' He acted immediately and told his soldiers to go towards the mountain.

The imminent defeat was thus avoided and the Muslims gained victory.

It should be noted that God, Who is in full control of the physical world, shows such signs in order to convince His favourite people that He is with them. Numerous such examples can be found in Islamic history.

THE PROPHECY OF GOLD BANGLES FULFILLED

It is related that when the treasures of Persia came to Madinah, it included the gold bangles of the king of Persia, which he used to wear on State functions. Hadhrat Umar sent for Suraqa and made him wear the bangles in order to fulfil a prophecy of the Holy Prophet, which he had made while fleeing from Makkah to Madinah.

It so happened that when God commanded the Holy Prophet to leave Makkah, he managed to leave his house without being seen, in spite of the siege by the Makkans who wanted to kill him. The Makkans sent parties in every direction to capture him and had announced a reward of one hundred camels for any one who would bring him back, dead or alive. Suraqa bin Maalik, who had heard of the reward, was on the lookout too. One day he saw from a distance that the Holy Prophet was heading towards Madinah along with Hadhrat Abu Bakr. Suraqa, sure of the reward, spurred his horse in that direction. When he came close, the legs of his horse sank in the sand and he fell down. He got up, consulted his arrows in an old Arab fashion. The arrows predicted that it wasn't a good omen for him to go further, but the temptation of the reward was so great that he got on his horse again and set out after the Holy Prophet. As he came closer, the legs of his horse sank in the sand and he fell down from the horse once again. Suraqa consulted his arrows for the second time, and they gave the same message of bad luck. Suraqa changed his mind. He realised that the Holy Prophet was under Divine protection. So he called out to the Holy Prophet and told him of his evil intention and that he was giving up the pursuit and

going back. As he was returning the Holy Prophet said to him, “Suraqa! How would you feel with the gold bangles of the king of Persia on your wrists?”

Suraqa was amazed to hear those prophetic words. Later on he accepted Islam and lived in Madinah. He wore those gold bangles in order to provide the visible proof of the great prophecy.

THE CONQUEST OF EGYPT

THE BATTLE OF FUSTAT

Hadhrat Amr bin Al-Aas was the Commander of Muslim army in Egypt. After capturing city after city the Muslim army reached Fustat. In those days Fustat was a plain, which lay between river Nile and a hill called Maqtam and was covered with green fields and pastures. There was a royal fort where the Roman officials stationed in Egypt, used to live. Hadhrat Amr bin Al-Aas besieged the fort. The siege dragged on for some months. Hadhrat Umar sent some reinforcement from Madinah. As a result the whole town fell to Muslims.

FALL OF ALEXANDRIA

After the conquest of Fustat the Muslim army took the road to Alexandria. Alexandria was a walled city. The Muslims besieged the city, which lasted for several months. When the Muslims increased the pressure the Roman soldiers left the city and fled to Constantinople and the city was left to the care of the Egyptians. The Egyptians opened the gates of the city to the Muslims and made a treaty with them. From Alexandria the Muslims marched to Memphis, the then capital of Egypt where they won the battle after some resistance. Thus the whole of Egypt came into the hands of Muslims.

THE RIVER NILE BEGINS TO FLOW AGAIN

When Hadhrat Amr bin Al-Aas conquered Egypt, the River Nile was completely dry and this worried the Egyptians. River water was essential for the irrigation of their land. According to their pagan custom they believed that River Nile was demanding a human sacrifice. They told the Muslims, “Whenever it dries up, we take a virgin, dress her in beautiful clothes and with the consent of her parents, throw her into the water as a sacrifice to please the river Nile.” When Hadhrat Umar came to know about this, he said, “Muslims are not superstitious, and won’t do any such thing.” He then wrote something on a piece of paper and sent it to the Muslim Commander Hadhrat Amr bin Al-Aas, instructing him to throw it into the river. Hadhrat Amr bin Al-Aas found the following writing on the paper:

“From Umar to the River Nile. If you flow according to your own will, then do as you please, and go dry if you please, but if you flow according to God’s will and command, then I pray to my God that you begin flowing again.”

Hadhrat Amr bin Al-Aas gathered some people, showed them the letter and then threw it into the river. Shortly afterwards, to everyone’s surprise, the river began to flow again. When the people saw this sign, they were very impressed by the Muslims and gradually superstition was eradicated from Egyptian society.

THE TEACHINGS OF ISLAM ABOUT WAR

Islam promotes peace and forbids aggression. It regards war as an abnormal and destructive activity, to which recourse can be had only in the last resort. According to the teachings of Islam when war becomes inevitable it should be so waged as to cause the least possible amount of damage to life and property.

The Prophet suffered continuously and consistently at the hands of the Makkans but he did not fight. When he escaped to Madinah, and Islam began to spread fast in Arabia, the enemy attacked in order to wipe off Islam from the surface of the earth. Permission to fight was therefore granted to Muslims. The Holy Quran says:

“Permission to fight is given to those against whom war is made, because they have been wronged, and Allah indeed has power to help them.

Those who have been driven out from their homes unjustly only because they said, ‘ Our Lord is Allah.’ (Ch: 22: 40,41)

And “Fight in the cause of Allah against those who fight against you, but do not transgress. Surely, Allah loves not the transgressors.” (Ch: 2: 191)

After the revelation of these verses, the Muslims took up arms to defend themselves and to defend their faith..

RULES TO BE OBSERVED DURING WAR

- 1) The Muslims are asked to raise the arms only against those who attack Muslims first.
- 2) To attack religious places and to destroy them is strictly forbidden.
- 3) War is resorted to only for the sake of God and to establish peace, and not for the advancement for any other motive.
- 4) The old, women and children are not to be killed.
- 5) Public buildings, fruit bearing trees and crops are not to be destroyed.
- 6) Ambassadors and delegates from other countries should be held in great respect.
- 7) Prisoners of war should be well looked after. They should not be treated harshly.
- 8) If in the course of a battle the enemy shows an inclination to truce, the Muslims are asked to stop fighting as well.

CHAPTER 4

GOLDEN DEEDS OF HADHRAT UMAR

Not only did Hadhrat Umar conquer the mighty Persian and Roman Empires, but also he made them into one nation and established a strong administration. Every person, whether he is a Muslim, Christian or Jew lived in peace. There was no compulsion in religious matters as everyone had freedom to practice his faith.

Hadhrat Umar won battles, not to spread Islam by sword, but to establish peace in the land and to bring to an end the mischief of the opponents. Therefore it is not correct to say that Islam was spread by force. In fact when the people belonging to other faiths saw the beauty of the teachings of Islam and the character of the people who followed it, they accepted Islam. The people of those countries, which were conquered, were unhappy because of the atrocities committed against them by their own rulers. Hadhrat Umar, after occupying those lands, carried through many reforms. He divided the land into Regions, Provinces and Districts and appointed Governors to each province who ruled according to the teachings of Islam.

APPOINTMENT OF GOVERNORS

Whenever Hadhrat Umar appointed someone as a Governor, he would choose the most suitable and the righteous person for the post. It is related that once while he was writing an appointment order for a person, a child came running to him and sat in his lap. Hadhrat Umar began to caress the child with one hand while kept on writing with the other. Seeing this, the person remarked, “Ameer-ul-Momineen, the child seems to be enjoying your company. I have ten children and none of them dare come close to me while I am working.”

Hadhrat Umar heard this and cancelled the orders of appointment saying, “How can a person, who can’t love his own children, love the people who are put under his care?”

Hadhrat Umar always advised his Governors:

- 1) Do not be discourteous to anyone whether he is a Muslim or a non- Muslim.
- 2) Do not misuse your office for your own benefit or for the benefit of your friends and relatives.

He used to say, “I have not appointed you to treat people harshly. You should do justice to them at all times. You are appointed to lead the people, under your care, to the right path. You are their Imam and guide and not a cruel ruler. You should always keep your doors open to the public so that those in need can come to you for help without any hesitation. You should lead a simple life and avoid luxuries of life otherwise you will create a feeling of jealousy among the less fortunate ones.”

He had issued orders that the complaints against any of his Governors should be addressed to him personally. Whenever any complaint was received, Hadhrat Umar would make a thorough enquiry and would not hesitate to punish the guilty official.

Once a person complained to him that he was whipped one hundred times by a Governor for no reason. The investigation showed that the person was innocent. Hadhrat Umar therefore authorised the person to take revenge by whipping the Governor with one hundred lashes. When the Governor came to know of Hadhrat Umar’s orders, he approached Ameer-ul-Momineen and requested him to allow him to come to a settlement with the person wronged. Hadhrat Umar gave permission at which the Governor

offered the person two hundred Dinars in exchange of the punishment, to which the person happily agreed. Thus the matter was resolved amicably.

In another incident, Hadhrat Amr bin Al-Aas's son hit a poor Egyptian for no apparent reason. He thought that being a Governor's son; no harm would come to him. When Hadhrat Amr bin Al-Aas came to know of this incident, he arrested the Egyptian and put him into prison so that he could not go to Hadhrat Umar and complain. Shortly afterwards when the poor person was released, he went straight to Hadhrat Umar and told him the whole story. Hadhrat Umar called Amr bin Al-Aas and his son to Madinah. When they arrived, he told the Egyptian to take his revenge from Amr's son. The Egyptian hit the boy so hard that he was injured. When he finished, Hadhrat Umar gave him permission to hit the Governor as well saying, "Had he not been the son of a Governor, he would not have hit you."

Hadhrat Amr bin Al-Aas pleaded, "Sir, the offender has been duly punished."

"What do you say?" asked Hadhrat Umar to the Egyptian. The Egyptian said that he had already taken revenge from the person who had hit him and that he was satisfied that the justice was done. Hadhrat Umar accepted the plea of the Egyptian and then admonished his Governor saying, "Every person is born free, you should not treat him like a slave."

Hadhrat Amr bin Al-Aas was so ashamed at his conduct and that of his son that he sought forgiveness from Hadhrat Umar, which was duly granted.

MAJLIS-SHOORA

According to the example set by the Holy Prophet and by Hadhrat Abu Bakr, Hadhrat Umar always consulted people before appointing government officials. He had set up a committee of people who would advise him on such important matters. This was known as 'Majlis-e-Shoora' or Consultative Body. However on matters of utmost importance he would gather all Muslims of Madinah for consultation.

When Iraq and Syria fell to Muslims, the Muslims were divided in their opinion as to what should be done to the conquered lands. Some were of the view that the estates should be returned to their original owners while others thought that those lands should be distributed amongst Muslims. The matter was put before Majlis-e-Shoora. After a few days discussion, Hadhrat Umar agreed with the majority that such lands should be returned to their owners and that a tax be imposed on them.

COURTS OF JUSTICE

Hadhrat Umar established courts of justice in every town and appointed judges from amongst righteous people. He advised the judges to decide the cases impartially. He told them not to be influenced by the status or riches of the parties. "Absolute justice should be done in all cases," he emphasised.

The judges acted so justly that even those historians, who are generally critical of Muslims, praise the system of justice administered by the courts during that period.

ALL ARE EQUAL BEFORE LAW

Once a dispute arose between Hadhrat Umar and a Muslim called Ubayy bin Ka`ab over some money. The case came before Qadhi Zaid for hearing. Qadhi Zaid ordered Hadhrat Umar to appear before him to plead his case. As the parties arrived in court, Zaid, out of respect for the Khalifah, invited Hadhrat Umar to sit with him, but Hadhrat Umar declined by saying, “This is your first injustice. All are equal before the court of law.” He then went and sat along side Ubayy bin Ka`ab.

During the hearing Ubayy was asked to produce any evidence for his claim but he failed to do so. Hadhrat Umar totally denied that Obayy had any claim over him. At this Obayy requested the court to get a statement on oath from Hadhrat Umar. Qadhi Zaid hesitated by saying that it was not proper for the Khalifah to sign such a statement but Hadhrat Umar reprimanded the judge by saying, “You can administer justice only if you remain impartial”.

When Jablah, chief of a tribe, became Muslim, his followers numbering five hundred also joined the fold of Islam. Soon after Jablah decided to visit Madinah, Hadhrat Umar greeted him with great honour and respect. When Hadhrat Umar went for Hajj, Jablah went with him too. During the Tawaaf, a poor person who was also performing the circuits of the Ka`bah stepped accidentally on the sheet of cloth, Jablah was wearing. Jablah was very annoyed. He turned round and punched the person. Someone reported the whole incident to Hadhrat Umar. Hadhrat Umar called Jablah and asked him what had happened. Jablah admitted his mistake.

Hadhrat Umar told him to seek an apology from the man. Jablah said, Ameer-ul-Momineen! I am the chief of my tribe. How can I apologise to an ordinary person?”

Hadhrat Umar explained to him, “All are equal before Law. There is no distinction between rich and poor in Islam.”

Jablah retorted, “This is very strange. I thought that by accepting Islam I will earn more respect, instead I am being humiliated.”

Hadhrat Umar said, “In Islam the most honoured person is he who is the most righteous. Allah demands from us that we should do justice on earth.”

Once Hadhrat Umar decided to buy a horse. Before bargaining, Hadhrat Umar rode it to try it. During the trial the horse fell down and was injured. Hadhrat Umar returned the horse to its owner, but he refused to take it back saying that the horse got injured because of Umar’s mistake and demanded money. The matter was referred to an arbiter, who decided in favour of the owner of the horse and against Hadhrat Umar. Hadhrat Umar acknowledged the decision and paid money to the owner of the horse. Hadhrat Umar was very impressed by the arbiter’s decision and later made him the Qadhi of the town of Koofah.

THE SYSTEM OF HADHRAT UMAR’S GOVERNMENT

Hadhrat Umar set up different departments for the smooth running of the country. He established the Police Department, Tax and Revenue Department, Accounts Department, a Department to look after the mail, and the Department of Justice. The Government officials were paid high salaries so that they were not tempted to accept bribes.

Hadhrat Umar was very particular about the finances of the community. He always made sure that the officials misappropriated no money.

When Hadhrat Abu Hurairah, the Governor of Bahrain, returned to Madinah, he brought a lot of wealth with him. Hadhrat Umar came to know of this. He called Hadhrat Abu Hurairah and asked him to

explain how he had accumulated that wealth. He replied, “Ameer-ul-Momineen, part of the wealth came from the sale of my horses. Moreover I received presents. I haven’t applied any illegal means to collect the money.”

Hearing this explanation Hadhrat Umar was satisfied.

On another occasion when the Governor of Yemen Province came to Madinah, he was dressed in expensive clothes. Hadhrat Umar disliked it. He called him and said that the officials of the government should wear simple clothes so as not to alienate themselves from the common people.

BAIT-UL-MAAL OR TREASURY.

During the lifetime of the Holy Prophet there was no need of setting up a treasury, as the wealth which came from outside was distributed amongst Muslims by the Holy Prophet straightaway.

Hadhrat Abu Bakr, too, did not find any need to set up a treasury as he also distributed whatever was received from outside.

During the time of Hadhrat Umar, however, when large sums of money and other valuables started coming to Madinah, Hadhrat Usmaan approached Hadhrat Umar and suggested that a treasury be set up to store the wealth and valuables which were left over after giving the allowances. Hadhrat Umar agreed to this proposal and thus the first treasury was set up in Madinah and afterwards in other cities as well. Wealth was coming in Madinah from four different sources:

- 1) Booty from war when a land was conquered.
- 2) Jizyah- a tax from Non-Muslims as they were exempt from military service.
- 3) Land tax
- 4) Zakat- a kind of levy for Muslims only.

Strong buildings were built for the treasury and they were well guarded. Honest and pious people were employed to deal with the accounts.

In Madinah, Hadhrat Abdullah bin Arqam, a famous Companion of the Holy Prophet, who was known for his honesty and piety, was appointed in charge of the treasury. A number of capable men were also appointed to assist him in his work.

Hadhrat Umar took all the necessary precautions to guard the wealth and livestock kept in the Bait-ul-Maal.

Once someone reported to Hadhrat Umar that a camel belonging to the Bait-ul-Maal went missing. It was an extremely hot afternoon. Hadhrat Umar went in search of the camel. Hadhrat Usmaan met him on the way and suggested that Ameer-ul-Momineen should have sent someone else to look for the camel.

Hadhrat Umar replied, “I am answerable to God Almighty for that camel on the Day of Judgement, therefore I should go myself and find that camel.”

SYSTEM OF STATE ALLOWANCES

After setting up the treasury Hadhrat Umar started various programmes for the welfare and progress of the community. He allowed stipends to Muslims. For this purpose a committee of three persons was appointed, which enlisted the names of all the people in a register in such a way that on top of the list were the names of the family of the Holy Prophet, then the names of the family of Hadhrat Abu Bakr, followed by the names of the family of Hadhrat Umar and finally the names of the rest of the Muslims. When Hadhrat Umar inspected the register, he instructed that after recording the names of the family of the Holy Prophet and the family of Hadhrat Abu Bakr, the names of the rest of the Muslims should be recorded in such a manner that the names of the long standing Companions should come first followed by the names of other Companions and finally the names of the new converts to Islam be written. He told them to record the names of his family wherever they fit according to merit.

When the registration was completed, he fixed their allowances. Hadhrat Abbas, an uncle of the Holy Prophet, was awarded more than anyone else. Each of the wives of the Holy Prophet was paid twelve thousand Dirhams per year. Those Companions who took part in the Battle of Badr were awarded five thousand Dirhams each annually, while those who took part in the Battle of Uhud were given four thousand Dirhams annually. Those who fought in the Battles of Qaadsia and Yarmok were awarded two thousand Dirhams and those who joined the fold of Islam after the Fall of Makkah got two thousand Dirhams each annually. Allowances were also fixed for soldiers who took part in other battles.

He also fixed the allowances for women and the old people. Someone suggested that soldiers who participated in the Battle of Qaadsia should also be given the same amount as was given to the soldiers who fought in the Battle of Badr or in the Battle of Uhud. Hadhrat Umar did not approve of the idea and said; "I do not consider that those people who fought in the battles along with the Holy Prophet are equal to those who came into the fold of Islam afterwards."

It should also be noted that everyone was entitled to allowances regardless of their religion. For example a Muslim who became an invalid or was too old to earn his living was given maintenance allowance from the State treasury. Similarly a non-Muslim who was unfit for work because of old age or due to some other calamity or misfortune, was given maintenance allowance from the treasury and was also exempted from paying Jizyah.

It is related that once Hadhrat Umar saw an old man begging for money. He asked the old man, "What have compelled you to beg?" He replied that Jizyah had been imposed on him and as he was weak and old he could not earn enough money to pay it. Hadhrat Umar took him home, gave him some money and issued orders that such people should be exempted from taxes.

During the days when the whole country was stricken with famine, Hadhrat Umar instructed the tax authorities not to collect any tax from the people.

CHILD ALLOWANCE

Hadhrat Umar also introduced the child allowance. He had given the orders that as soon as a mother stops breast-feeding her child, she could receive the child allowance.

One day when a caravan arrived in Madinah, Hadhrat Umar went to see if they needed anything. He heard a baby crying. He approached the mother and told her, "Your baby seems to be hungry. You should therefore feed the baby first." A little later when he was passing by her tent again he found that the baby was still crying. Hadhrat Umar asked the woman, "Why are you not breast-feeding the baby?" She replied that she was trying to wean the baby. Hadhrat Umar remarked that the baby was still very

young and ought to be fed on mother's milk. The woman, not knowing that she was addressing the Khalifah, said that the Khalifah had ordered that mothers would become eligible for child allowance only after their children were weaned. She was therefore trying to wean the baby so that she could get the child allowance.

Hadhrat Umar was greatly moved. He said to himself; "God knows how many children suffered because of my orders."

Next morning he issued orders that the mothers would get allowances as soon as the babies were born.

CONSTRUCTION OF STATE BUILDINGS, ROADS AND BRIDGES

Apart from treasury buildings the following were built during Hadhrat Umar's Khilafat:

- a) Mosques- New mosques were built in many parts of the Muslim Empire. Because of the rapid spread of Islam some mosques were extended so as to accommodate the worshippers. The Prophet's mosque at Madinah was one of them. It was not big enough for the worshippers, so in the year 17 A.H Hadhrat Umar ordered that it should be extended.
- b) Schools- Schools were opened throughout the Empire and paid teachers were appointed. In these schools the Holy Quran and Hadith were taught along with other subjects.
- c) Military Buildings like forts, cantonments and barracks were constructed throughout the empire.
- d) Official buildings called Darul Amaaraat were built. These were the offices as well as residential quarters for the provincial and district officials.
- e) Diwan- Buildings were built, where official records were kept.
- f) Prison Houses were established in the Empire.
- g) Guest Houses were built in most of the cities in order to accommodate the visitors who came from outside to stay for a few days in the city. Food was provided free in these guesthouses.

In addition to these, many new roads were built and Inns were constructed at different stages along the route for the travellers to rest and stay for the night. Arrangements were also made to provide light on the main roads. A large number of bridges were constructed to facilitate the journey.

DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agriculture was also developed during Hadhrat Umar's Khilafat. He encouraged people to make use of the barren land. An order was passed that anyone who prepared new lands and made it fit for cultivation would be given rights in those lands. If however, a person took possession of barren land but failed to cultivate it within three years, the land would be confiscated. As a result of this order many new lands were cultivated. In order to facilitate agriculture Hadhrat Umar also ordered that canals should be dug to irrigate the lands. It is said that at one time in Egypt alone, one hundred and twenty thousand labourers worked daily throughout the year to dig canals and were paid out of the State treasury.

He also created facilities for the poor farmers to graze their cattle in the government owned grazing fields. The main purpose of such grazing fields was to rear horses and camels belonging to Bait-ul-Maal or treasury.

NEW CITIES FOUNDED

Many cities like Koofah, Basrah and Fustat came into existence during Hadhrat Umar's Khilafat. The site where Basrah City stands today was a desert at that time. Originally the houses were made of mud and straw. Later permission to build brick houses was sought from Hadhrat Umar. It was also decided that no house should contain more than three rooms. As the River Tigris was flowing at a distance of about ten miles from this town, a canal was dug from the river to the town.

When Madaain was conquered, the Muslim Commander Hadhrat Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqaas reported to Hadhrat Umar that the climate of the city was not suitable for Muslim soldiers, and that their health was deteriorating rapidly. Hadhrat Umar instructed that they should look for a site suitable for the accommodation of the soldiers. Accordingly the site, where Koofah city is situated, was selected. Hadhrat Umar also issued instructions with regard to the plan of the city.

Hadhrat Amr bin Al-Aas laid the foundation of Fustat. It was founded at a place where the city of Cairo stands today. Fustat made rapid progress and soon became a famous city.

MILITARY ORGANISATION

In 15 A.H Hadhrat Umar decided to organise the army. There were two types of soldiers, those who were on active service and those who were called for duty whenever there was a need. A register was kept for the regular soldiers and their pay scales were fixed. Cantonments were built in many cities, which had army barracks and stables for horses. The cities like Koofah, Basrah and Fustat were originally built for the army. It is said that at one time there were one hundred thousand soldiers in Koofah alone. Big stables containing four thousand horses, fully equipped and ready for service at short notice, were kept at military centres. In addition, army posts were built near the borders of the Empire. Military posts were also built near the sea so as to guard the coast from the enemy's attack. Much thought was given to climate and sanitation in the layout of these cantonments and military posts. Hadhrat Umar was so anxious with regard to the site plan that he himself specified the width of the roads and lanes.

The soldiers were well looked after. Those who took part in battles at places, where the climate was unsuitable for them, were sent to healthier resorts after the battle. Commanders were issued instructions that they should not put their soldiers through hardship unnecessarily. When the army was on the march it was allowed to halt on Fridays so that the soldiers can have rest and overhaul their equipment too. The day's march was never so long as would tire out the troops. The stages were selected in such a way that water and provisions were available to them in those places.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HIJRI CALENDAR

Once Hadhrat Umar received a document on which the month 'Sha'baan' was written but there was no mention of the year in which it was written. It was not clear whether the letter was written that year or the previous year. Hadhrat Umar placed the matter before Majlis-i-Shoora. Someone suggested that the Persian method be adopted where the name of the month as well as of the year was always indicated. The discussion took place as to which date the era should begin. Hadhrat Ali suggested that Islamic era should start from the Year of Migration and all present agreed to this proposal. That is how Hijri Calendar came into existence.

The names of the months in a Muslim Calendar are as follows:

1. Muharram
2. Safar
7. Rajab.
8. Sha'baan

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| 3. Rabi-ul-Awwal | 9. Ramadhaan |
| 4. Rabi-ul-Saani | 10. Shawwaal. |
| 5. Jamaadi-ul-Awwal | 11. Dhul Qua'dah |
| 6. Jamaadi-us-Saani. | 12. Dhul Hijjah. |

FAMINE SPREAD IN THE COUNTRY

In 18 A.H a famine struck Arabia. There was no rain for nine months. As a result the crops, trees and even the wild plants and bushes died for lack of water. The animals were reduced to skeletons and many died because of hunger. Distressed people flocked to Hadhrrat Umar and asked for help. Hadhrrat Umar comforted them and ordered that those who were suffering should be helped from the treasury, but soon all food in the Central Treasury at Madinah ran out. It is related that during those days Hadhrrat Umar used to go straight to his house and engage himself in prayer until midnight. He would also get up in the later part of the night and cry before his Lord for help. His son Abdullah related that one day he heard his father praying to God saying, "O Allah! Deliver the Muslims from this calamity. Do not let them perish."

Hadhrrat Umar wrote to all Provincial Governors to send food to Madinah immediately. In one such letter to Hadhrrat Amr bin Al-Aas, the Governor of Palestine, he wrote, "O Amr, if you do not want us to die of hunger, help." Similar letters were despatched to the Governors of Syria and Iraq. The tone of these letters show how grieved Hadhrrat Umar was at the plight of the people of Arabia.

In reply, Hadhrrat Abu Obaidah bin Al-Jarrah, the Governor of Syria, sent four thousand camels loaded with grain. Hadhrrat Umar directed that the food be distributed to people living in the outskirts of Madinah.

Hadhrrat Amr bin Al-Aas sent twenty ships full of food. Two large buildings were built at the port to store this food. Hadhrrat Umar appointed Hadhrrat Zaid bin Saabit to list all the famine stricken people and the amount of food they needed. Coupons, bearing the seal of Hadhrrat Umar, the Khalifah, were given to the people against, which they could obtain their food.

When Hadhrrat Umar learnt that more food supplies were on the way to Madinah, he sent his officers all over Arabia to inform the people that aid was coming. Hadhrrat Umar instructed his officers to distribute the food under their own supervision and to see that no person dies of hunger. They were asked to distribute the food justly and send any remaining food to Madinah.

In Madinah the condition was bad too. A centre was set up where meals were cooked every morning and evening under Hadhrrat Umar's supervision. Hadhrrat Umar would also sit along with other people to eat. Thus everyone knew that the Khalifah was eating the same food, which they were eating. It is related that at one sitting about seven thousand men ate with him and food for about fifty thousand women and children was sent to their homes.

Once someone brought bread dipped in ghee for him. Hadhrrat Umar called upon a villager to share the food with him. The villager began to eat hastily. Hadhrrat Umar asked him, "How long has it been since you have eaten such a bread?"

He replied that he had not eaten ghee or meat for a long time nor did he see anyone eating such delicious bread for that period. Hadhrrat Umar resolved that he would not eat ghee or meat unless they were easily available to the public.

Once when he was passing near his son Abdullah's house he smelt roasted meat. He was much perturbed to see that his family was cooking meat while other people were striving to get any food. He went straight in and found that Abdullah was busy in cooking meat. Assuming that the animal was one of that which was sent in aid, he brought the cooking pot outside. His son Abdullah also came out and begged, "Ameer-ul-Momineen! This animal was not from the lot sent in aid. It belonged to my son,

who is your grandson as well. I longed for eating meat so I purchased it from him and slaughtered it.” Hearing this explanation Hadhrat Umar forgave him.

On another occasion when a camel was slaughtered in Madinah and food was served to Hadhrat Umar, he found nice big chunks of meat in his plate. He refused to eat saying, “I do not want to eat these nice big chunks of meat and leave meatless bones for other Muslims.”

Hadhrat Umar used to spend the nights in supplication to God Almighty and days in distributing food to the people of Madinah. As the food that he was eating was not wholesome, his health began to deteriorate. When a Companion of the Holy Prophet showed his concern regarding the health of Hadhrat Umar, he said, “An Arab (meaning he himself) used to eat ghee and meat and drink milk. Because of famine he stopped eating such food. As a result the colour of his skin has changed and he often starves.”

Hadhrat Umar, because of his position, could get nice food to eat and plenty of it if he so desired, but he preferred to eat the same food as was available to others.

Once a small girl came to see him. She was very pale and weak. Hadhrat Umar asked who she was. His son Hadhrat Abdullah said, “Ameer-ul-Momineen! This is your grand daughter. Due to starvation she was reduced to a skeleton that is why even you could not recognise her.”

When the period of famine grew longer and Hadhrat Umar realised that it was extremely difficult to get more food from outside and there was no sign of any rain either, he got more worried. He asked the people of Madinah to come out of the city in order to beg mercy from Allah and offer special prayers for rain. It is related that he held the hand of Hadhrat Abbas, an uncle of the Holy Prophet, and prayed to God Almighty, “O Allah! For the sake of the uncle of the Holy Prophet, send us some rain.” It is reported that Hadhrat Umar went on praying until his beard was soaked in tears. God took mercy on them and soon afterwards it started to rain. The crops came to life and the period of famine ended.

Soon after the famine, another disaster in the form of plague struck Muslims and thousands died of plague in Syria. Hearing the news of this epidemic, Hadhrat Umar decided to visit Syria himself. A Companion of the Holy Prophet advised him not to undertake the journey. He drew his attention towards a Saying of the Holy Prophet, “Do not go to a place where there is epidemic or any other calamity.” Hadhrat Umar accepted his advice. He therefore sent a message to the Muslims of Syria and instructed them to leave the urban area and take shelter in the mountains. Muslims left the towns and went to the mountains and lived there until the epidemic ended. It is related that twenty five thousand Muslims died in Syria because of plague. Hadhrat Abu Obaidah bin Al-Jarrah, the Governor of Syria, also fell victim to the disease.

CHAPTER 5

SALIENT FEATURES OF HADHRAT UMAR'S LIFE

HAZRAT UMAR LOVED ALLAH THE MOST AND FEAR HIM THE MOST.

Hadhrat Umar always acted upon God's commandments. He wanted to please God and did not do anything to displease Him. He had strong faith in God Almighty. There were occasions when Muslims had to face a much stronger enemy. On such occasions Hadhrat Umar used to prostrate before Allah for hours begging Him for help, believing that God would surely fulfil His promise and Muslims would triumph. He loved the Holy Quran, Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and Hadhrat Abu Bakr, very dearly. He had great regard for the family members of the Holy Prophet and for the Companions of the Holy Prophet.

Once he was lying in his bed and looked very worried. Someone inquired about his health. He replied, "I am not worried about my health. The thought, that I might not have discharged my duties towards my people in the best possible way, worries me. I might have committed mistakes in some cases because of my weaknesses and shortcomings. I might have failed to fulfil my obligations towards my people. God might call me to account for the people who went to bed hungry while I had my fill, or had no clothes to wear while I had nice clothes on. I am accountable to Him even for a goat which was killed in Iraq, for example, during the fighting. I am so weak that I cannot bear the hardships of this world, how can I face the punishment of the Hereafter. It is only God's grace that I may be spared from the fires of hell and allowed to enter paradise."

He advised Muslims to fear Allah and supplicate before Him and ask His forgiveness because it is only His forgiveness that can save them from the fires of hell.

He is reported to have said, "My only desire is that Allah, in whose hands is my life, would let me off without any punishment."

HADHRAT UMAR'S LOVE FOR THE HOLY QURAN

Hadhrat Umar loved the Holy Quran so much that most often he would start crying with emotion during its recitation.

Hadhrat Umar's son Hadhrat Abdullah related that once he was standing in the third row in a congregational Prayer, which Hadhrat Umar was leading and he heard Hadhrat Umar crying bitterly while reciting the verses of the Holy Quran.

Hadhrat Umar wished that all Muslims should lead their lives according to the teachings of the Quran. He promoted the study of the Holy Quran and ordered the establishment of educational institutions to teach the Holy Quran in all parts of Muslim Empire. He also urged Muslims to commit the text of the Holy Quran to memory.

HADHRAT UMAR'S LOVE FOR THE HOLY PROPHET

Hadhrat Umar's love and respect for the Holy Prophet can be judged from the following incidents: The house of Hadhrat Abbas, an uncle of the Holy Prophet, was situated adjacent to the Prophet's mosque and the drainage pipe on the roof of his house was fixed in such a manner that the water dropped into the courtyard of the mosque whenever it rained. Hadhrat Umar, seeing the inconvenience of the worshippers, ordered the drainage pipe to be moved from that place. Hadhrat Abbas complained to Hadhrat Umar saying that the Holy Prophet himself fixed the drainage pipe to the roof. Hearing this Hadhrat Umar apologised and allowed the drainage pipe to stay where it was.

Hadhrat Abdullah, son of Hadhrat Umar, related that once he was accompanying the Holy Prophet on a journey. It so happened that once or twice his camel surged forward and went ahead of the camel on which the Holy Prophet was travelling. Hadhrat Umar saw this and rebuked Abdullah saying that one should show utmost respect to the Holy Prophet and should follow him instead of going ahead of him.

Once Hadhrat Umar kissed the Blackstone and then addressing it he said, "I know that you are a mere piece of stone which cannot bring harm or good fortune to anyone. I swear to God that I would not have loved you and kissed you, had I not seen the Holy Prophet doing the same".

Due to immense love for the Holy Prophet, Hadhrat Umar had great regard for the family of the Holy Prophet and his grand children, even more than his own family.

When Madaain fell to Muslims and the war booty came, Hadhrat Umar called the grandsons of the Holy Prophet, Hadhrat Hasan and Hadhrat Husain, and awarded them one thousand Dirhams each while he gave five hundred Dirhams to his own son Abdullah.

Hadhrat Abdullah asked him very respectfully, "Hasan and Husain were awarded one thousand Dirhams each but I was given only five hundred, while I took part in the battles and fought along with the Holy Prophet and they were merely children at that time."

Hadhrat Umar replied, "Don't think that you are equal to them. Does your maternal grandfather have the same status as their maternal grandfather?"

HADHRAT UMAR'S LOVE FOR HADHRAT ABU BAKR

Hadhrat Umar loved Hadhrat Abu Bakr, the first Khalifah of the Muslims. Once some people were sitting in the company of Hadhrat Umar. Someone praised Hadhrat Umar and exclaimed, "Indeed I find you the best person after the Holy Prophet of Islam, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him."

At this a Companion of the Holy Prophet who was also sitting there interrupted him and remarked, "Hadhrat Abu Bakr was the best among people after the Holy Prophet and then is Hadhrat Umar."

Hadhrat Umar said that he was right. Hadhrat Abu Bakr was indeed the best among the people after the Holy Prophet and then added, "Hadhrat Abu Bakr was purer than musk."

After the death of Hadhrat Abu Bakr, when Hadhrat Umar became the Khalifah of Muslims, and went to deliver his first Friday sermon, he sat on the lower step of the Minbar where Hadhrat Abu Bakr used to rest his feet while delivering a sermon. People asked him to ascend one step and sit where Hadhrat Abu Bakr used to sit but he refused and said, "I feel honoured to sit on the step where Hadhrat Abu Bakr used to rest his feet."

HADHRAT UMAR CARED FOR THE WELL BEING OF HIS PEOPLE

After performing State duties Hadhrat Umar often used to go outside at night to see if there was anyone in need of something. Once he met a woman in the street who told him that she had lost her husband and had nothing to feed her ten children. She told him that she was daughter of Hadhrat Khafaaf, a Companion of the Holy Prophet. Hadhrat Umar listened to her, came home, loaded a camel with provisions and delivered it to her. He also ordered that she should be given an allowance from the State regularly. Someone commented that she was given more than she needed. Hadhrat Umar did not agree to this and said, "She deserved plenty. I know she is the daughter of such a great person and sister of such a noble man."

Hadhrat Umar used to visit the families of those soldiers, who were fighting in the cause of Allah away from their homes, to buy daily needs for them, write letters for them and even deliver their letters to them personally. He was very anxious to know the condition of his people. Sometimes he would go alone in the dark in disguise to find out for himself how his people were getting on.

On one occasion when Hadhrat Umar was passing through a street in the outskirts of Madinah at night, he heard some children crying. He went to the house and saw a woman cooking something while her children sat crying close by. Hadhrat Umar waited for a while, then went to the woman and said to her, "Why don't you serve food to your children? It is getting too late."

She replied that she had no food to give to her children and had placed the pot, full of water, on the fire in order to give them the impression that the food would be ready in a short time.

Hadhrat Umar was very distressed to hear this. He rushed back to Bait-ul-Maal, picked up a bag of flour, meat, cooking oil and some dates and hurried back to the tent. His servant Aslam begged him to let him carry the load, but he refused saying, "No doubt you can carry this weight for me today, but who will carry my burden on the Day of Judgement?"

Arriving at the house, he delivered the food to the woman and told her to prepare the meal. In the meantime the children had gone to sleep exhausted. Hadhrat Umar waited till the meal was ready and the children were awakened and fed. The woman thanked him for his kindness and said, "May God bless you, it would be far better if you were the Khalifah of the Muslims, instead of Umar who is not aware of the condition of his people."

Hadhrat Umar said, "Well woman! Umar may not be so bad after all," and left.

Once when Hadhrat Umar was making a round at night, he saw a Bedouin sitting outside the door of his tent. He sat down beside him and began to talk to him. Suddenly he heard a groan from inside the tent. The man told him that his wife was in labour. Hadhrat Umar asked him if there was any woman with her to look after her. The man replied that there was none. Hadhrat Umar hastened back to his house, took his wife along with him and returned to the tent.

In a short while a child was born and Umm-e-Kalloom, wife of Hadhrat Umar, called out, "Ameer-ul-Momineen! Congratulate your friend on the birth of a son."

When the man heard the words "Ameer-ul-Momineen", he jumped up with surprise and stood respectfully before Hadhrat Umar.

"Never mind! Said Hadhrat Umar, "Come to see me tomorrow and I will sanction an allowance for the baby."

Another night when he was on his round in the streets of Madinah, he heard a mother telling her daughter to mix some water in the milk so that they can get more money by selling the milk.

The girl refused and said, "Haven't you heard Hadhrat Ameer-ul-Momineen's orders, not to cheat by mixing water in the milk."

Her mother retorted, "But Ameer-ul-Momineen is not watching us. Is he?"

The girl replied "True, that Ameer-ul-Momineen is not watching us, but what about Allah, Isn't He watching us all the time? I am not going to disobey Ameer-ul-Momineen. It is no good claiming to be obedient to Ameer-ul-Momineen but ignoring his instructions in private."

Hadhrat Umar was so impressed by the honesty of the girl that later on he asked her hand in marriage to his son Aasim.

On another occasion when he was walking in the street, he met an old woman. He asked her how she was keeping. The woman, not knowing that she was talking to Ameer-ul-Momineen, complained that she did not receive any money from the Khalifah.

Hadhrat Umar said to her, "How could Umar know that you need financial help? You should have approached him."

"He is our leader. It is his duty to find out how his people are getting on," retorted the woman.

Hadhrat Umar was greatly moved by her answer. He said to her, "Indeed you were ill treated. Tell me, what would you accept from him in order to pardon him?"

The woman thought that he was making fun of her. She said, "Why do you say that?"

In the meantime some people passed by and recognising Hadhrat Umar said, "Assalamu Alaikum ! Ameer-ul-Momineen".

The woman heard this and felt ashamed of her talk.

Hadhrat Umar said to her, "Never mind", and gave her twenty- five gold coins.

One day Hadhrat Umar saw someone who was eating his food with his left hand. He asked him to eat with his right hand, at which the man replied that he had lost the use of his right hand due to an injury during the Battle of Yarmok.

Hadhrat Umar was greatly moved. He sat down by his side, expressed his sympathy and finding out that there was no one to help him to wash and dress, gave him a servant to wait upon him and attend to his needs.

HADHRAT UMAR'S LOVE FOR CHILDREN

Hadhrat Umar loved children very much. He was always very kind to them. Every child regarded him as his best friend. Often Hadhrat Umar would hold the hands of a child and request him to pray for him. He would say to them, "You are innocent, so God will listen to your prayers."

Hadhrat San`aan related an incident from his childhood. He said that once he was playing with other children under the palm trees and picked up some dates that had fallen to the ground. Hadhrat Umar was passing that way. The children saw him coming and fled, but he did not move. He stood there. When Hadhrat Umar came near, San`aan told him, "We picked up only those dates which were fallen on the ground." Hadhrat Umar looked at the dates in his hand and said, "Indeed you have told the truth. You can keep them."

San`aan replied, "Ameer-ul-Momineen, If I go now, the boys would beat me up and snatch the dates from me."

Hadhrat Umar patted San`aan on his back and escorted him to his house.

HADHRAT UMAR'S CHARACTER

Hadhrat Umar was a man of simple habits. He would eat whatever was available and clothe himself in whatever was available to him. His food was simple and so were his clothes. He was a symbol of nobility and humbleness. He had no palace and no guards.

Once while he was having his meal, a rich person came to see him. Hadhrat Umar invited him to share his meal, which he gladly accepted. As the bread was made out of very coarse wheat flour the first morsel which the visitor took struck in his throat.

He said to Hadhrat Umar, "Don't you like bread made of fine flour?"

Hadhrat Umar replied, "I am appalled at your remarks. How can I eat bread made of fine flour when it is not available to all Muslims?"

It is related that once Qaiser, the king of Rome, sent a messenger to Hadhrat Umar. When he reached Madinah, he asked the people of Madinah, "Where is your king?"

They replied, "We have no king. We have a leader. We call him Ameer. He has gone out of Madinah."

The man went in search of Hadhrat Umar. He saw him resting on the ground under a tree using his stick as a pillow and was perspiring profoundly because of immense heat.

The messenger was quite amazed. He said to himself, "Here is a person who has filled awe in the hearts of the mightiest kings but as he is fair in the treatment of his people and administers absolute justice, he sleeps without any fear whereas our rulers are cruel to their people, therefore they always fear for their lives and cannot sleep."

Once Hadhrat Umar was going somewhere on foot. It was a very hot afternoon. He saw a slave who was riding a donkey and going the same way. Hadhrat Umar asked him to allow him to sit on the donkey at the back. The slave, out of respect, got down from the donkey and said, "Please ride my donkey. I will walk beside you."

Hadhrat Umar declined the offer saying, "I will sit at the back if you allow me. I don't want to see you walking on hot ground while I ride your animal."

During Hadhrat Umar's Khilafat God had given a lot of wealth to Muslims, which was put in the State treasury and from which the needs of the poor and needy were met. Hadhrat Umar was very particular about the State expenditure. He would keep an eye on the accounts and would hesitate to spend even one Dirham for any thing that was not necessary.

It is related that when he was attacked and lay injured in bed he realised that he had eighty six thousand Dirhams loan to pay back. Hadhrat Abdur Rahman suggested to him to take a loan from the treasury in order to pay back the loan. Hadhrat Umar refused to do so, instead he called his son Abdullah and asked him to stand surety for him and pay back from the proceeds of his estate after his death.

Once he said that if he heard a voice from the Heavens saying that God Almighty had allowed everyone to enter into Paradise except one person, he would think that he was that unfortunate person who was left out of the Paradise.

He was leader of the Muslims, yet he was himself a very humble person and wanted to serve humanity to the best of his ability.

Once he gathered people in the mosque and told them, "I was the one who used to tend the grazing camels belonging to my aunts and I was the one who used to fill their earthenware with water and in return they used to give me some dried dates."

Hadhrat Abdur-Rahman, a prominent Companion of the Holy Prophet, who was also present, inquired of him afterwards the reason of mentioning all that.

Hadhrat Umar replied, "As I was sitting on my own, contemplating upon my status in the society, I felt proud for a while. Then I decided to remind myself the real position that I hold. I convinced myself that I do not hold any position of honour in the society except that which comes through the sheer grace of Allah."

Hadhrat Umar occupies an important place in world history in general and the history of Islam in particular. He was a great statesman, a great General, and a great leader. He was accessible to every person, and he took pains to redress the genuine grievances of every person. He patronised education. He promoted the study of the Holy Quran and Hadith. Indeed Hadhrat Umar possessed all the qualities that are the characteristics of greatness.

TREATMENT OF NON-MUSLIMS IN A MUSLIM STATE.

The status of alien subjects was worse than slaves in Roman as well as Persian Empires. The Syrian Christians had the same faith as their rulers yet they had no proprietary rights in the land they tilled. On the contrary they themselves were treated as a kind of property, for when an estate was sold by one owner to another, all the cultivators went with the estate into the hands of the new owner, who had the same rights over them as their old master. The condition of the Jews was even worse.

On the other hand when these Empires were conquered during the time of Hadhrat Umar, the people belonging to other faiths enjoyed the same rights as the Muslim subjects. Their lives and properties were safe and so were their places of worship. They were free to celebrate their religious festivals and the rights and privileges of their religious leaders were maintained as before.

The rule of the Quran that there is no compulsion in matters of religion was strictly applied.

Great respect was shown to the honour and self-respect of all non-Muslims and it was considered totally wrong to utter words of contempt or disdain towards their beliefs and practices.

The prejudices found in some Muslim countries today regarding the non-Muslim minorities is alien to Islamic culture. It is claimed by some so-called religious scholars of today that no non-Muslim can be employed by a Muslim State on a key post, but during Hadhrat Umar's time the whole revenue records of Iraq, Syria and Egypt were kept in Syrian, Coptic and Persian languages and for that reason the officials of this department were all Christians or Magians. Moreover on Hadhrat Umar's orders Roman Christian was employed to compile records of taxes in Madinah. Hadhrat Umar also opened the ranks of the army to everyone without distinction of country, nation or creed. It is said that as many as five hundred Roman and Greek soldiers fought under the banner of Islam during the conquest of Egypt. When Amr bin Al-Aas founded Fustat city, they were settled in a separate quarter of their own. It is also mentioned in history books that a large number of Jews and Magians were enlisted in the Muslim Force.

Magians, who are also known as Parsees, are the followers of Zoroaster, a Prophet of God who lived in Persia long time ago. They, too, lived in a separate colony in Fustat called Parsee Colony.

Some Muslim scholars of today say that no non-Muslim can visit the holy city of Makkah. It is considered as a religious injunction. In the days of Hadrat Umar, however, non-Muslims used to visit Makkah without any hindrance and stayed there as long as they wished. This shows that there was no restriction on the non-Muslims to visit Makkah in the early period of Islam. The erroneous belief seemed to have crept into Muslim faith later.

HADHRAT UMAR WAS MARTYRED

Hadhrat Umar was sixty-five years old when a Persian slave Feroz, generally known as Abu Lu'Lu stabbed him six times. Feroz was a slave of Hadhrat Mugheerah. It is said that one day he approached Hadhrat Umar and complained against his master Mugheerah. He said, "My master treats me cruelly. I have to do great amount of hard work for him but he pays me very little in return."

He requested Hadhrat Umar to tell his master not to be so harsh to him and that his workload be reduced.

Hadhrat Umar, after listening to the details of his work, said to him, "This work is not too much for you. I do not see that you are being treated badly by your master. Fear Allah and be fair to your master."

Disappointed at his reply Feroz went away but he held a grudge against Hadhrat Umar and decided to kill him and made a dagger for that purpose.

One day when Hadhrat Umar was leading the Fajr Prayer, Feroz who was present in the mosque, rushed forward and attacked Hadhrat Umar with the dagger repeatedly. Hadhrat Umar fell to the ground. He, therefore, motioned Hadhrat Abdur-Rahman bin Auf to go forward and lead the Prayer. Feroz was caught and knowing that he would not escape punishment committed suicide immediately.

It seemed most probable that Feroz's actions were part of a large conspiracy by the enemies of Islam against the Muslims. The great progress that the Muslims had made and the victories they gained during Hadhrat Umar's Khilafat, caused jealousy among the enemies of Islam and they always tried their utmost to crush Islam in order to stop its spread.

Hadhrat Umar was taken home for treatment. He had six deep stab wounds on his body. Many a time he became unconscious. Once when he gained consciousness he asked Hadhrat Ibn-e-Abbaas, who was attending him, to find out who attacked him. When told that Feroz, the slave of Hadhrat Mugheerah, had attacked him, Hadhrat Umar thanked God that the attacker was not a Muslim. Then he asked Ibn-e-Abbaas to find out whether any Muslim was involved in the conspiracy. Hadhrat Ibn-e-Abbaas reported that no Muslim was involved in the attack rather they were all very upset at this dreadful incident.

Later Hadhrat Umar called his son Abdullah and told him to go to Hadhrat Aaishah, the wife of the Holy Prophet, and say to her that Umar requests her to allow him to be buried by the side of his beloved master, the Holy Prophet. He specifically mentioned to his son Abdullah not to say "Umar, the Ameer-ul-Momineen" but simply "Umar".

Hadhrat Abdullah went to Hadhrat Aaishah, who was crying with grief, and delivered the message of his father.

Hadhrat Aaishah told him that she had reserved that place for herself but Hadhrat Umar had priority over her. When Hadhrat Umar came to know of the decision of Hadhrat Aaishah, he was much relieved and said, "There is no better resting place for Umar than that."

The doctors were worried at the lack of his progress. Realising that they were soon be deprived of their great leader, some women began to wail and cry. Hadhrat Umar told them off by saying, "The Holy Prophet forbade Muslims to wail even at the death of their beloved ones."

When his condition became very serious, someone tried to cheer him up by saying, "You spent a large part of your life with the Holy Prophet and when he died he was pleased with you. Then you worked closely with Hadhrat Abu Bakr, and was his best friend and companion. When he died, he, too, was pleased with you. Then you became Khalifah of the Muslims and served them to the best of your ability. The entire Muslim community is pleased with you and is praying for you."

Hadhrat Umar replied, "I fear Allah alone and am worried whether I have discharged my duties properly or not."

He remarked, "Had I possessed gold and silver equal to that of the whole of earth, I would have given it in the cause of Allah to please Him."

Four days after the attack, the beloved Khalifah of the Muslims passed away. *INNA LILLAH-I- WA INNA ILAIHI RAJIOON.*

Hadhrat Umar had remained Khalifah for ten years and six months. The entire Muslim Community was grieved at his death. His dead body was taken to the burial place. Hadhrat Ali expressed his grief by saying, "O Umar, you were my most beloved friend. I often wondered that you will be with the Holy Prophet and with Hadhrat Abu Bakr after your death as you were always with them during their life time."

Hadhrat Umar was buried so that his head was close to the feet of his master the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

Hadhrat Umar had appointed a committee of six members, in his lifetime, to elect new Khalifah after his death. The committee chose Hadhrat Usmaan as their Khalifah and the whole Muslim community took initiation at his hands.

GLOSSARY

A

Abdicate: To give up. To renounce.

AD: Number of years since Jesus was believed to have been born.

Adhan: Call to Prayer.

AH: After Hijrah, migration of the Holy Prophet from Makkah to Madinah.

Alien: Strange. Foreign.

Allah-o-Akbar: Allah is the Greatest.

Ameer-ul-Momineen: The leader of the Muslims.

Amicably: To solve a problem by agreement.

Arbiter: Someone who judges and settles a dispute.

Arrayed: Arranged.

Apostasy: Desertion of one's faith.

Apprehensive: Someone who is worried or afraid that something unpleasant might happen.

Assalamu Alaikum: Salutation. Islamic greeting. Meaning: Peace be upon you.

B

Bait-ul-Maal: State treasury.

Blackstone: A corner stone in one of the walls of the Ka'bah.

Booty: The things that soldiers take away from their enemies after they have won a battle.

C

Calamity: An event that causes a great deal of destruction.

Caravan: Group of people who travel together for safety in places such as deserts.

Circuit: An act of going round the Ka'bah.

Confiscated: Seized by authority.

Conspiracy: Planning by a small group of people in secret to do some thing illegal.

Coptic: Relating to Egypt. Egyptian.

D

Delegates: Representatives.

Deteriorate: Become worse.

Dinar: An Arabian currency.

Dirham: An Arabian currency.

E

Earthenware: Bowls, pots and other things that are made of clay and then baked.

Epidemic: A disease, which spreads and affects a large number of People.

Escort: To accompany.

G

Ghee: Cooking oil.

H

Hadhrat: Hazrat. The Respected.

Hadith: Hadees. Sayings and Traditions of the Holy Prophet.

Hampered: Restricted.

Heed: Pay attention to.

Hijrah: The holy Prophet's migration from Makkah to Madinah.

Hubal: An idol placed in the Ka'bah.

I

Imam: A religious leader. A person who leads the Prayer.

Initiation: To take an oath of allegiance.

Inna Lillah-I-wa Inna Ilaihi Rajioon: Surely we belong to Allah and surely we return to Him.

Insha Allah: God willing. If God wills.

J

Jannat-ul-Baqee: Holy graveyard in Madinah.

Jizya : Land tax from Non Muslims.

K

Ka'bah: The first House built for the worship of Allah. It is situated in Makkah.

Kalima Tayyaba: Declaration of faith by a Muslim.

L

Livestock: Animals, which are kept on a farm.

Legitimate: In accordance with law.

M

Magians: Followers of Prophet Zoroaster.

Maimed: Crippled.

Majlis-I-Shoora: Consultative body. A committee in which important community matters are discussed.

Martyr: Someone who is killed in the cause of Allah.

Minbar: Pulpit, generally made of wood for the Imam to stand upon and deliver a sermon.

Merchandise: Goods for sale.

Musk: Scent obtained from a gland of the musk deer.

O

Omen: Sign to foretell success or bad luck.

Ordained: God had designed it so or God liked it to happen like that.

Outraged: Angry. Upset.

P

Pagan: People, beliefs and practices that do not belong to any of the main religions of the world.

Parsee: A follower of Prophet Zoroaster.

Proprietary: Rights of ownership.

Provisions: Foodstuff.

Purdah: Muslim men and women are commanded to restrain their looks when they happen to face each other
Muslim women are required to wear an outer garment to cover their entire body.

Pursuit: Chase.

Q

Qaba : A place near Madinah.

Qadhi: A Muslim judge.

Quraish: An Arabian tribe. The Holy Prophet was born in Quraish tribe.

R

Ramadhan: The month of Fasting.

Reinforcement: To strengthen by sending more troops.

Relinquish: To give up. To renounce.

Righteous: Pious.

S

Scribe: A writer.

Sheathed: Swords in their cases.

Skeleton: The bone framework of an animal.

Spurred: Urged forward.

Superstition: Irrational fear of unknown or mysterious.

T

Tawaaf: To perform seven circuits of the Ka'bah.

Transgress: To break a moral law. To go beyond limit.

Treaty: A written agreement.

V

Victor: Conqueror. Winner of a battle.

W

Wail: Cries of grief. Lament.

Whipped: Flogged. Beaten with a stick.

Wholesome: Healthy.

Z

Zakat: A capital levy paid by every Muslim who is in possession of wealth jewellery and other valuables for full one year, provided that he had it above the fixed limit.