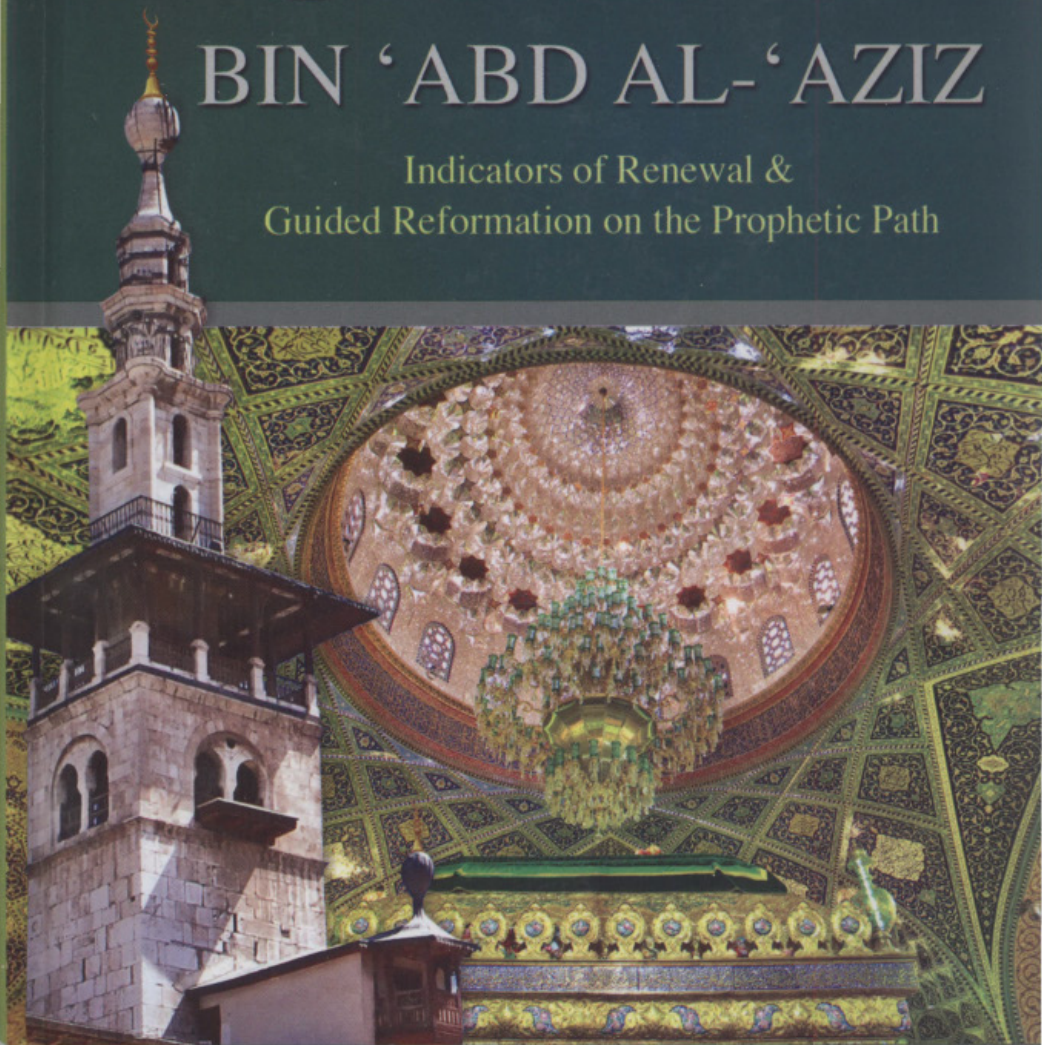


The Rightly-Guided Caliph & Great Reviver

‘UMAR

BIN ‘ABD AL-‘AZIZ

Indicators of Renewal &
Guided Reformation on the Prophetic Path



Dr. Ali Muhammad As-Sallabi

**The Rightly-Guided Caliph and
Great Reviver**

‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz

Indicators of Re

the Prophetic Path



By Dr ‘Alī Muḥammad Muḥammad aṣ-Ṣallābi



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Translator's Foreword

All praise and thanks are due to Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful and Master of the Day of Judgment. I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship save Allah Alone Who has no partner, the Lord of the Universe and the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth. I bear witness that Muhammad, upon whom be peace, is His servant and Messenger, who was sent as a mercy for mankind and a proof for those traversing the path to Allah.

It has been a great pleasure and delight to render the biography of such a righteous and virtuous character as 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz into English, while I recognise that doing it justice is probably almost impossible. Aṣ-Ṣallābi's extensive efforts are certainly commendable given that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz made it his life's work to reform his State and revive Islām by administering truth and justice in all aspects of his

personal, religious and political life, which this book proves he did with great success, by the will of Allāh. For this reason alone, it is no exaggeration to say that English readers have long been deprived of the life story of this outstanding Islāmic hero and exemplar. While there are some short and scattered accounts about his general life, this is the first book to deal specifically with 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's reforms, which is surprising given that he has been attributed the title of *Mujaddid* (Reformer; Reviver) within Islāmic scholarship, in great detail.

Aṣ-Ṣallābī covers a wide range of content matter: from religious treatise, doctrines and sermons, to political manifestos and edicts, to poems, eulogies and prayers. Since much of the texts he refers to are classical, translating them has required the consultation of specialist sources, such as reference books, classical dictionaries, *Shuyukh* (religious leaders), poets and specialists in classical Islāmic history to ensure correct understanding. Whilst the same cannot be said of many authors, aṣ-Ṣallābī adopts a proper referencing system throughout the book that makes locating the original works for the purposes of background research and cross-referencing so much easier. As a translator, this labour on the part of the author never goes unappreciated!

Translations from the Qur'ān were taken from Dr. Muhammad Taq-ud-Din al-Hillal and Dr. Muhammad Muḥsin Khan's *Interpretation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'ān in the English Language* (2007), Riyadh: Darussalam. All

authentic *Aḥadith* have been translated according to approved English translations of *Aḥadith Sahihah* where their sources have been provided, while all other *Aḥadith* not attributed to these sources have been sourced elsewhere, whenever possible; otherwise translations are my own.

Islāmic terms have been loosely translated, as literal translation would often result unfavourably and probably incomprehensibly. Some terms have been transliterated, such as *Sunnah* or *Bayt al-Māl*; these appear in italicized format and glosses have been included in the body of the text as well as in a glossary as a means of introducing specific Islāmic terms and concepts to the reader and preserving the Arabic and Islāmic authenticity of the original text. Another reason for keeping some of the terms in transliterated Arabic was that these words often deal with culture-specific or religion-specific concepts that need to be understood with their details intact and with their full meanings, which might have been lost in translation by attempting to offer equivalent terms in English. For example, the *Bayt al-Māl*, literally "The House of Money" and loosely rendered "Public Treasury", served as a royal treasury for the caliphs in the sense of managing finance and government expenditures as a treasury most commonly does, but it also administered distributions of *Zakāt* (Prescribed Alms) revenues for public works. Because of the added function specific to the role of the treasury in an Islāmic State, I found it more appropriate to use the transliterated

term throughout the book so as to imply this difference. A clear transliteration system has been adopted (see transliteration table) that would facilitate back-transliteration if necessary (such as in the case of proper names).

All good comes from Allah, while all mistakes are from myself. May Allah reward the author for his efforts, Darussalam publishers for their commitment to making such works available and I ask that Allah accepts this translation as a benefit to the *Ummah* and amongst my good deeds on the Day of Judgment – *Amin*.

Safina Naser

*M.A. Translation Studies, B.A. (Hons) Arabic Studies,
University of Manchester, U.K.*

Transliteration Table

giottal stop	'
أ	a
ب	b
ت	t
ث	th
ج	j
ح	h
خ	kh
د	d
ذ	dh
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	sh
ص	s
ض	d
ط	t
ظ	z
ع	
غ	gh
ف	f
ق	q
ك	k
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
هـ	h
و	w
ي	y
long vowel a	a

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About the Author

- ❖ Born in the city of Benghazi, Lībya, in 1963.
- ❖ Obtained a Higher Education Bachelor of Arts Degree at distinction level and at the top of his class from the College of *Da'wah* (Islāmic Preaching) and *Uṣūl ad-Dīn* (Tenets of the Religion) from the University of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah in 1992/1993.
- ❖ Graduated with a Master's Degree from the College of *Uṣūl ad-Dīn* (Tenets of the Religion), department of *Tafsīr* (Exegesis) and '*Ulūm al-Qur'ān* (Sciences of the Qur'ān), Umm Durmān Islāmic University, Sudān, in 1996.
- ❖ Obtained a PhD in Islāmic Studies awarded by Umm Durmān Islāmic University in 1999 with a thesis entitled: '*The Establishment of Jurisprudence in the Holy Qur'ān*'.
- ❖ He has published numerous works, including:
 - 'The Creed of Muslims based on the Attributes of the Lord of the Worlds'
 - 'Moderation in the Holy Qur'ān'
 - The series: 'Pages from Islāmic History in North Africa'

- 'The Umayyad and Abbasid Dynasties and the Emergence of the Kharijites'
- 'The Rafidite 'Abidiyyah (Fatimid) State'
- 'The Jurisprudence of Empowerment in the Murabiṭūn State'
- 'The Almohad Dynasty'
- 'The Ottoman Empire: Factors Behind its Rise and Reasons for its Decline'
- 'The Conqueror of Constantinople: Sultan Muḥammad al-Fātiḥ'
- 'Shi'ite and Kharijite Thought from the Perspective of the *Ahl as-Sunnah* and *Jamā'ah* (People of Prophetic Tradition and its Communities)'
- 'The Senūssi Movement in Libya':
 1. 'Imām Muḥammad bin 'Ali as-Senūssi and His Method of Establishment'
 2. 'Muḥammad al-Mahdī as-Senūssi and Aḥmad ash-Sharīf'
 3. 'Idrīs as-Senūssi and 'Umar Mukhtār'
- 'The Jurisprudence of Empowerment in the Holy Qur'ān'
- 'The Prophetic Biography: An exposé of its facts and an analysis of its events'



- 'The Uplifting Biography of Abū Bakr as-Siddīq: His Personality and Rule'
- 'The Section on Speech in the Biography of *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* (Commander of the Faithful) 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb'
- 'The Generous Beneficence of 'Uthmān bin 'Affān: His Personality and Rule'
- 'The Highest Demands in the Biography of 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib: His Personality and Rule'
- 'The Biography of the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* and the Fifth Rightly Guided, Al-Ḥasan bin 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib: His Personality and Rule'
- 'The Umayyad Dynasty: Factors for its Success and Causes of its Decline'
- 'Mu'āwiyah bin Abī Sufyān: His Personality and Rule'
- 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz: Indicators of Renewal and Guided Reformation on the Prophetic Path.'

Dedication

I dedicate this book to every Muslim who is eager to show pride in the Religion of Allāh and I ask the Almighty by His Beautiful Names and Attributes to make it purely for His sake. Allāh, the Sublime, says: "*So whoever hopes for the Meeting with his Lord, let him work righteousness and associate none as a partner in the worship of his Lord.*" (al-Kahf, 18:110)

Preface

Indeed all praise is for Allāh. We praise Him, seek His help and ask for His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allāh from our own evils and bad deeds. Whosoever Allāh guides will not go astray and whomever He leads astray will not be guided. I declare that there is no god worthy of worship other than Allāh Alone without any partner and I declare that Muḥammad is His servant and messenger [O you who believe! Fear Allāh (by doing all that He has ordered and by abstaining from all that He has forbidden) as He should be feared. (Obey Him, be thankful to Him, and remember Him always) and die not except in state of Islām [as Muslims (with complete submission to Allāh. (Āl-'Imrān, 3:102).

“O Mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person (Ādam), and from him (Ādam) He created his wife (Ḥawwa) Eve, and from them both He created many men and women; and fear Allāh from whom you demand (your mutual rights), and (do not cut the relations of) the wombs (kinship).” (an-Nisā', 4:1)

“O you who believe! Keep your duty to Allāh and fear Him, and speak (always) the truth! He will direct you to do righteous good deeds and will forgive you your sins. And whosoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him), he has indeed achieved a great achievement (i.e. he will be saved from the Hellfire and admitted to Paradise).” (al-Aḥzāb, 33:70-1)

O Allāh! All praise belongs to You as befits Your Majesty and Your great Might. You are praised until You are pleased and if You are pleased all praise still belongs to You after that. To proceed:

This book constitutes one section from the work entitled: *'The Umayyad Dynasty: Factors for its Success and Causes of its Decline'*, itself a more detailed description of a period of significant reform and the famous *Mujaddid* (reviver or one who renews the Religion of the *Ummah*), 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz. It is a biographical account of his life story, his quest for knowledge, his most prominent achievements during al-Walīd and Sulaymān's caliphates, as well as his own caliphate, his accession of the seat of power and the administration of his state. He would go on to restore importance to the principles of *Shūra* (consultation) and justice, exhort his governors to abolish all unjust ordinances and dismiss all repressive subordinates from their ranks. He ordered the governors in his administration to return to the owners and the *Ahl adh-Dhimma* (Non-Muslims living under Muslim rule) what had been confiscated from them under the rule of the former Caliphs. He administered justice for the people of Samarkand and he succeeded in reviving the spirit of freedom in his state, such as the freedom of thought, ideological, political and personal freedoms, and the freedom of trade and welfare. Attention is also afforded to his outstanding qualities, such as his profound fear of Allāh, the Sublime, his asceticism, humility and piety, his clemency and ability to forgive and pardon others, his patience and forbearance, and as an ardent

worshipper, he would earnestly supplicate to Allāh and implore for his prayers to be answered. The book takes a further look at the characteristics of renewal executed by 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, such as the adoption of *Shūra* (consultation), the transparency and integrity of his leadership, uprightness in the selection of trustees, and his revival of the principle of enjoining good and forbidding evil, as well as the principle of justice.

Among the criteria of a *Mujaddid* (reviver or one who renews the Religion of the *Ummah*) is that his *'Aqīdah* (doctrine of faith) must be manifestly pure, his practices sound, he must be a diligent scholar, and his renewal and reformation is to prevail over the intellectual and behavioural status quo. Another section of the book looks at how 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz led a campaign in the interests of the creed of the *Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* (People of Prophetic Example and its Communities), the Oneness of Allāh, His Most Beautiful Names and Sublime Attributes, the concept of *Imān* (Faith), faith in the *Ākhirah* (Hereafter), belief in the *Ghayb* (Unseen), such as the existence of bliss and punishment of the grave, Resurrection, the Balance of the Scales on the Day of Judgement, the *Hawdh* (Pool where the Prophet will quench the thirst of the believers on the Day of Judgement), the *Sirāt* (Bridge" on the Day of Judgement), *Jannah* (Paradise), *an-Nār* (Hellfire) and that the believers will see their Lord in Paradise where they will be called to adhere to the Book (i.e. the Qur'ān), the Prophetic *Sunnah* (Tradition) and the *Sunnah* of the Rightly Guided *Caliphs*.

His stance in dealing with the *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions of the Prophet) and the discord that had ensued between them, in addition to his position with the *Ahl al-Bayt* (Family of the Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is detailed herein, along with the strategies he employed to resolve complex matters involving the emergent Kharijite, Shi'ite and *Qadariyyah* sects.

A closer study of his personal life depicts his treatment of outsiders within the social realm, the attitude he had in the upbringing of his children and family, in terms of his choice of tutors and righteous mentors to supervise their education, which he determined in accordance with a strict programme of training and upbringing. In this manner, he specified the teaching methods that he wanted to be used and prioritised the subject matter to be taught, the effects of which proved to have a significant and fruitful impact on his son, 'Abd al-Mālik.

On a social level, accounts of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's interaction with the people and his interest in public welfare are related, for example, how he would take it upon himself to remind the masses to be mindful of the *Ākhirah* (Hereafter) and to correct false beliefs and misconceptions that had become prevalent, such as his rejection of tribalism. He further recognised the rights of creditors and therefore paid off the debts of the insolvent in a bid to settle matters. In a similar manner, he offered ransom for Muslim prisoners of war, gave to the needy, authorised for marital dowries to be paid from the *Bayt al-Māl* (Public Treasury), and by making

changes of this sort, he attempted to narrow the disparities between the social classes. He proved to be distinct in his attitude towards poets and the great importance he placed on the active participation of scholars in the process of reform, so much so that he immediately appointed a consultative body or *Shūra* council to remain close by his side for the purpose of keeping a watchful eye over him and his subordinates in the administration of state affairs.

Another notable feature related to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's life story are the schools of knowledge that were established during his reign and under the Umayyad dynasty, among which were the schools of ash-Shām (the Levant), al-Ḥijāz, Irāq, Egypt etc. Collectively, these schools followed the teachings of the *Tābi'īn* (second and third generations of pious followers) centred on the science of Qur'ānic exegesis and exerted great effort to enforce the *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition), of which 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz played a fundamental role in its codification. At the heart of the school curriculums were the teachings of purification and emulating the conduct of the *Tābi'īn*, as in the case of Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī's school which will be looked at in greater detail. Thus the book talks about his school, its students, among who was the likes of Ayyūb as-Sukhtiyāni, Mālik bin Dīnār and Muḥammad bin Wāsi', and of how Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī requested permission to retire from his post. It further notes his relationship with 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and the letters he sent to him, which serve to depict the just attitude of the leader who complied with his wishes.

Of interest is 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's political stance and his reasons for lifting the siege of Constantinople, which was due to his insistence on comprehensive *Da'wah* (calling to Islām; preaching), the institutionalisation of scholars and the dissemination of knowledge directed at the masses. To this end, he dispatched earnest scholars to the shores of North Africa and elsewhere to educate the people and teach them the Book (i.e. Qur'ān) and *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition), in addition to sending messengers bearing invitations to Islām to the kings of India and other distant lands. Driven by his commitment to inculcate true values, he further believed that reform had to affect fiscal policy also, which is evident from his economic mandate that aimed to remove injustice through the redistribution of income and wealth in a sustainable manner towards the achievement of social well-being and prosperity. The book tells of the realization of these objectives as creating a viable atmosphere for development, the restitution of rights, liberation, a thriving economy and the enactment of a new agricultural policy that would prohibit the sale of foreign land, protect the interests of farmers and relieve them of the heavy taxes formerly imposed on them. It was on such a broad scale and through means of the above that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz advocated reform, improvement, the recovery of destitute land and the initiation of infrastructural projects. His policies on public expenditure, for example, the provision of a social security welfare system, rationalising spending in the interests of the state, such as slashing the special privileges enjoyed by the Caliph and Umayyad generals, on top of his capping

administration and military funds, are stated. Another notable feature that is given due attention is the judicial institution under his rule and some of the independent rulings that were reached in the field of jurisprudence, such as his view on giving gifts to governors of state, his negation of rulings that went against religious legal texts and so forth.

In terms of administration, the book looks at his management policies and some of the most popular governors and subordinates within it, the likes of whom he selected based on his eagerness to depend on and delegate personnel from good, righteous backgrounds. Characteristic of his leadership style was his direct supervision of state matters, his capacity to manage, plan and organise affairs, the strategies he employed to combat administrative corruption, such as relieving delegates of their livelihood, and his commitment to eradicating dishonesty and deceit. Likewise, he banned the acceptance of gifts or donations for fear of falling into bribery and he put a stop to extravagance and excess. Workers and delegates were further prohibited from engaging in trade and it was he who opened up the channels of communication between officials and their subjects. Remarkably, he accounted for money that had been wrongly deposited from the *Bayt al-Mal* (Public Treasury) by those in power before him. Foundations for the management concepts of centralisation and decentralisation were first laid under 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's administration, who equally underlined the need for flexibility. He divided his own time between the service of the state and its citizens, while exercising the principle of delegating the responsibly of running it.

As the title would suggest, the book exhibits 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's dedication to reform and renewal – whether fiscal, political, administrative or otherwise -- and his commitment to implement the precepts of Islāmic law upon the state and nation, and upon societies and individuals. In doing so, he demonstrated the effects of holding fast to the Holy Qur'ān and *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition) and that a righteous Caliph means guidance, security and stability for his state, not to mention the victory, conquest, glory, honour and blissful existence lived by this great reformer until his death.

It can certainly be said that the emergence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the scene at this precise stage in history constituted a decisive turning point in the history of the *Ummah* (Community of the Faithful), whereupon he assiduously took pains to return life to the regulation of Islāmic law and for the prospects of the rightly guided Caliphate to be dedicated to the precepts of the Qur'ān and *Sunnah*. Of course, the manifestation of this unique phenomenon was not merely down to the heroism of the leader but ultimately on the capacity of Islām itself to revert political, legal and social life back to stability and bringing it in line with its basic principles.⁽¹⁾ In fact, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Caliphate provides historical proof against those to continue to claim that a state based on the teachings and legal rulings of Islām is prone to disaster and evident failure. On the contrary, the idea has not been dreamt up and history itself defies those who argue against it.

(1) *Fi Ta'asul al-Islami li-Tarikh* [At the Root of Islāmic History] by Dr 'Imad ad-Din Khalil, p. 62.

Let it be said to them: [*Produce your proof if you are truthful.*] (*al-Baqarah*, 2:111)

By adopting the methodologies of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz and taking him as his role model, Nūr ad-Dīn Zangi (died 568 AH) made reformations that became the fruit of the nation, contributed to its advancement, revived its consciousness, beat its enemies, the Crusaders, who were purged from the *Bayt a-Muqaddas* (Holy House”, i.e. Jerusalem) at the hands of his disciple, the most honourable leader and heroic commando, Salāḥ ad-Dīn al-Ayyūbi (may Allāh enhance the likes of him in our own generation).

Reformation – as understood by honest Muslims and not what is propagated by the enemies of Islām – is realised by Allāh’s sending of messengers to the people, just as Shu‘ayb (peace be upon him) said to his nation who were steeped in error and corruption in both belief and conduct: “*He said: ‘O my people! Tell me if I have a clear evidence from my Lord and He has given me a good sustenance from Himself (shall I corrupt it by mixing it with unlawfully earned money). I wish not, in contradiction to you, to do that which I forbid you. I only desire reform to the best of my power. And my guidance cannot come except from Allāh, in Him I trust and to Him I repent.*” (*Hud*, 11:88)

To have undertaken the task of reform, after the greatest of all human reformers, Muḥammad (prayers of Allāh and peace be upon him), on the Prophetic path were his rightly guided successors and the pious scholars of the *Ummah*

(Community of the Faithful), such as ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz. Due to having been afflicted by backwardness, waywardness, dispersion, weakness and degradation, today’s societies are definitely in most need of the guidance practiced by these early reformers as derived from the example of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

If truth be told, the jurisprudence of the Islāmic historical movement guides us to the factors that lie behind its many successes and at the foundations that form the root of its staggering triumph. Most importantly, there existed purity of creed, clarity of approach, the application of Allāh’s law within the state, righteous leadership that looked to the Light of Allāh for guidance and who enacted the *Sunan* (Traditions; Laws; Ways) of Allāh in the nurturing and education of communities. Knowledge of the ills and conditions of societies and nations, the secrets of history, the schemes and ploys of the enemy – whether that was the Crusaders, Jews, atheists, false cults or innovated sects – enabled the righteous government to act with them accordingly and whereby every party was granted its inalienable rights. As a devout Muslim, ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz was not only graciously tolerant to the members of other creeds but also solicitous towards them. Hence, cases of revival jurisprudence and renaissance initiatives prove to constitute a well-nested, long-established, complex history that cannot be absorbed only by understanding the Book of Allāh, the Almighty and the *Sunnah* of the Messenger of Allāh (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), which is connected to the preserved, guided jurisprudence of our great forebears.

Rather, knowledge of revival phenomena comes from knowing its manifestations, its features and characteristics, the reasons for its existence, causes for its removal and how it has been a benefit within Islāmic history and in the revival experience.

It is without doubt that this nation has not only become uprooted because of the relegation of God and His Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), but the occurrence of defeat on so many levels expresses such relegation as a fatal culture. In terms of the “correct culture”, then, this is built on the Muslim identity – the Muslim family, Muslim society and Muslim State – based on the strong precepts of the Book of Allāh, the *Sunnah* of His Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and on the guidance of the Rightly Guided *Caliphs*. The one who follows this way is on the straight path and it goes without saying that the genius of establishing the “correct” civilisation is in preserving unadulterated Islām till this present day with the help and will of God.

The biography of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz offers us insight into the correct concept of the term “reformation”, that is, the original Qur’ānic concept as it is properly understood and applied by our reformist ‘*Ulama*’ (scholars), not in the modern Western sense that had been coined in the minds of some political thinkers who then spread their false ideas to unfortunately receive some acceptance from certain Muslim

imitators of the West. Today, the idea of revolution refers to broader, more comprehensive and deeper reformation that consists of gradual, non-violent, small changes, although it has somehow been rendered synonymous by the West with sudden, radical upheaval that is both violent and sporadic. However, this fails to encapsulate the correct meaning that is derived from the Holy Qur'ān, which implies a more comprehensive, greater revolution, which is always directed at the greater good, whilst the revolutions of others might conversely be in the interests of the already corrupt, or for the purpose of disposing one authority for another, or a governor for another governor, etc.⁽¹⁾

As for he who longs to tread the Prophetic path and the course of the Caliphate upon having declared the sincerity of his reformation mission to Allāh, the Sublime, then Allāh will facilitate his success and loosen the people's tongues to profusely praise and commend him, just as the Libyan poet, Ahmad Rafi al-Mahdawi, wrote:

*"When God loves the heart of His servant,
The Gifts of the Opener are bestowed upon him;
When God refines the intention of a reformer,
The souls of His slaves incline towards Him."*

I ask Allāh, the Sublime, to make this work purely for his sake, of benefit to His servants and a source of reward for me and my brothers who helped towards the publishing of this

(1) *'Athar al-Imām Muḥammad Bashīr al-Ibrāhīmī* [The Sayings of Imām Muhammad Bashīr al-Ibrāhīmī] (2/6).

work by His good grace and generosity. I humbly request for every Muslim who takes up this book not to forget this poor slave when supplicating to his Lord for His forgiveness, mercy and pleasure. *"My Lord! Grant me the power and ability that I may be grateful for Your Favours which You have bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I may do righteous good deeds that will please You, and admit me by Your Mercy among Your righteous slaves."* (an-Naml, 27:19). Allāh, the Sublime, says: *"Whatever of mercy (i.e. of good), Allāh may grant to mankind, none can withhold it; and whatever He may withhold, none can grant it thereafter. And He is the Almighty, the All-Wise."* (Fatir, 35:2).

Peace and blessings of Allāh be on our Master, Muḥammad, and on his family and Companions.

Glory and Praise be to Allāh. I declare that there is no god worthy of worship other than You. In You I seek forgiveness and unto You I repent. To conclude, we invoke all praise for Allāh, the Lord of the Worlds.

**A poor servant in pursuit of his Lord's
forgiveness, mercy and pleasure,**

‘Ali Muḥammad Muḥammad aṣ-Ṣallābi

(Email: abumohamed2@maktoob.com)

Part One

The Era of the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz

From Birth to Caliphate -

His Name, Title, Epithet and Family:

His name was 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz bin Marwān bin al-Ḥakm bin Abī 'al-'Āṣ bin Umayyah bin 'Abd Shams bin 'Abd Manāf, the eminent *Imām* (leader), *Mujtahid* (issuer of independent legal rulings), *Hafīẓ* (one who has committed the entire Qur'ān to memory) ascetic and slave, the true *Amīr al-Mu'mimīn* (Commander of the Faithful), Abū Hafs, the Qurayshi Umayyad, al-Madani (from al-Madīnah) and later al-Maṣri (from Egypt), the rightly guided, pious Caliph and "Ashajj" (the Mark; Scar) of the Umayyad tribe.⁽¹⁾

He was one of the Imāms of *Ijtihad* (the process of independent law-making based on the Islāmic *Sharī'ah*

(1) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5/144).



and other legal sources)⁽¹⁾ and one of the Rightly Guided *Caliphs*. He was a person of outstanding morals and ethics, well-rounded, refined, diplomatic and politically-minded who showed a keen interest and passion for justice whenever possible. He possessed extensive knowledge as an acclaimed *Faqīh* (jurist) of unadulterated intelligence and understanding. He was devoutly repentant, consciously God-fearing and upright in his obedience to Allāh. Despite holding the seat of the Caliphate, he remained an ascetic who pronounced the truth with firm conviction to those around him, including the many governors who detested his inquisitions of them, or his deducting their salaries, or repossession of their illegitimate acquisitions. He relentlessly discouraged and punished laxity of morals. In fact, they did not cease to hate him up until the moment he was poisoned, upon which he gained conviction and happiness, not counting his high ranking as one of the Rightly Guided Caliphs in the view of the people of knowledge.⁽²⁾ As for his speech (may Allāh have mercy on him) it was nothing other than eloquent and articulate.⁽³⁾

His Father:

His name was 'Abd al-'Azīz bin Marwān bin al-Ḥakm, a name that acquired a status as one of the finest Umayyad leaders. Courageous and generous, he held the position of Governor of Egypt for more than twenty years. His qualities

(1) *Ibid* (5/114).

(2) *Ibid* (5/120).

(3) *Ibid* (5/136).

of piety and righteousness were so resolved that when he wanted to marry, he said to his assistant: "Collect four-hundred *Dinar* (coins; units of account) of my good money for I want to marry from a household that possesses goodness." He would later marry Umm 'Āṣim, the daughter of 'Āṣim bin 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allāh be pleased with him), i.e. the granddaughter of the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb, whose name it is said was Layla.⁽¹⁾ It is noteworthy to mention here that his marrying into the family of 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb would not have been so, were it not for his upstanding reputation and virtuous character.

Even as a youth, he possessed a remarkably good character as regards his dedication to pursue knowledge and his obvious interest in the Prophetic *Aḥādīth* (sayings). In favour of his own merit, he once sat in the company of Abū Hurayrah and others among the *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions), his study of the *Aḥādīth* continued to excel even after his appointment as Governor of Egypt. Thereupon, he would habitually appeal to *ash-Shām* (the Levant) to send him what they had been informed pertaining to the sayings of the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) apart from what had been narrated by Abū Hurayrah, since he was already familiar with those.⁽²⁾ Nevertheless, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's father was the type of person who was accustomed to addressing important

(1) 'Abd al-'Azīz bin Marwān: *Sirāthu wa Athruhu fi Aḥdāth al-'Aṣr al-Umawī* ['Abd al-'Azīz bin Marwan: His Biography and Legacy from the Events of the Umayyad Era], p. 58.

(2) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (474/).

matters, both before and after he became the Governor of Egypt. From the time he entered Egypt, he longed to rule over it and for that reason, he exerted great effort from then onwards to one day meet his aspirations, which he did;⁽¹⁾ in actuality, not only did he assume this position but became one of the finest and most generous Umayyad Governors.⁽²⁾ Every day, a thousand dishes would be prepared and placed around his house, in addition to a further one hundred dishes brought round by the tribes. On the subject of his generosity, he used to say: "If a man allows me to give him something knowing that it is from me, then whatever I have of his is greater than what he has of mine."⁽³⁾

Many a historian has commended his distinct munificence, a quality that was coupled with certainty of faith in the fact that Allāh, the Sublime, bestows sustenance on whosoever He wills. Concerning this he would say: "How strange it is that a *Mu'min* (believer) believes that Allāh provides sustenance to whosoever He wills yet he keeps his money locked away at the expense of great reward and commendation!" In the same manner, 'Abd al-'Azīz was a God-fearing man, which is evident from the last words he uttered while on his deathbed: "I wish I were of no importance. If only I were this free-flowing water or plant in the land of the Ḥijāz!"⁽⁴⁾

(1) *Al-Wilāyat wa Kitāb al-Qaḍāh* [Governors and Judges] by al-Kundī, p. 54.

(2) *Mu'jiz al-Islām* [The Miracle of Islām] by Khālid Muḥammad Khālid, p. 55.

(3) *Abd al-'Azīz bin Marwān*, p. 55.

(4) *Ibid*, p.56; an extract from *al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah* [The Beginning and End] by Ibn Kathīr.

His Mother:

She was known by the epithet Umm 'Āṣim, the daughter of 'Āṣim bin 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allāh be pleased with him). Her father, 'Āṣim bin 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb, the *Faqīh* (jurist) and nobleman, also known as Abu 'Amr, the Qurashi of the 'Adwi tribe, was born during the days of Prophethood and related traditions from his father and mother, Jamīlah bint Thābit bin Abī al-Aqlah, a woman from the *Anṣār* (Helpers). Her father, Thābit bin Abī al-Aqlah, was tall in stature and from nobility. He was devout, righteous and charitable, and as far as his speech was concerned, he was a talented and lucid poet. This was the character of Caliph 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's grandfather from his mother's side. He died in the seventieth year and was eulogised by his brother, Ibn 'Umar, in the words:

"Had only the fate of death left 'Āṣim alone,

So that we might come and go together."⁽¹⁾

As for the person of his maternal grandmother, she held a special status with 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allāh be pleased with him). On the authority of 'Abdullah bin az-Zubayr bin Aslam, on the authority of his father who reported it from his grandfather, Aslam, he said: "While I was with 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allāh be pleased with him) in al-Madīnah during one of his frequent journeys in disguise to survey the condition of his people, we overheard a milkmaid

(1) *Siyar A'lam an-Nubala'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (797/).

refusing to obey her mother's orders to sell adulterated milk by diluting it with water. When her mother insisted that 'Umar would be none the wiser, the girl replied: "O mother! By Allāh! I would never obey him in public and disobey him in private. For if 'Umar will not come to know of it, the Lord of 'Umar surely knows!" Upon hearing every word, 'Umar then gave instructions for the door of their house to be marked.

The following morning, 'Umar said: 'O Aslam, pass by that house and purchase milk from the girl to see if she kept her resolve', and so he did to learn that the milk was unadulterated as she had vowed. 'Umar summoned the girl and her mother to his court and told them what he had heard. As a reward, he offered to marry the girl to his son 'Āṣim. She accepted, and from this union was born a girl named Layla that would in due course become the mother of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz."⁽¹⁾ It is reported that 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb had a vision in his dream, after which he used to say: "I wish I knew the man from my offspring bearing a mark on his face who will fill the earth with justice just as it was filled with injustice and oppression."⁽²⁾ 'Abdullah bin 'Umar used to say that when the al-Khaṭṭāb family saw that Bilal bin 'Abdullah had a mole on his face they took it as a direct sign of his appointment, until Allāh brought them 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz."⁽³⁾

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar* [The Biography of 'Umar] by Ibn al-Hakm, p. 19-20; *Sīrat 'Umar* [The Biography of 'Umar] by Ibn al-Jawziyyah, p. 10.

(2) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (122/5).

(3) *Ibid* (5/122).

Birthdate and place (61 AH, al-Madīnah):

Historians have shown some discrepancy about the exact year in which he was born, although the majority suggest that it was in 61 AH, a date that coincides with the fact that he died at the age of forty in the year 101 AH.⁽¹⁾ Some sources mention that he was born in Egypt; however, this is hardly plausible given that his father, 'Abd al-'Aziz bin Marwān bin al-Ḥakm, became the Governor of Egypt in 65 AH after authority had been wrested by Marwān bin al-Ḥakm from the then standing governor, 'Abdullah bin az-Zubayr (may Allāh be pleased with them). Thereafter, Marwān's son, 'Abd al-'Aziz, became his successor over it but prior to which there is nothing to indicate that 'Abd al-'Aziz bin Marwān had ever resided in Egypt. On the contrary, he and the Banī Marwān (tribe) were based in al-Madīnah.⁽²⁾ The acclaimed adh-Dhahabi mentions that he was born in al-Madīnah during Yazīd's era.⁽³⁾

"The Mark of the Umayyad Tribe":

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was known by the agnomen "Ashajj" (Mark) or "Ashajj Banī Marwān" (the Mark of the Marwān Tribe), a name which stems from an incident that took place during his childhood. One day, at a time when his father was the Governor of Egypt, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz went into one of his father's stables in order to see the horses

(1) *Al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah* [The Beginning and End] (12/676).

(2) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (154/).

(3) *Tadhkirat al-Huffāz* [The Memorial of the Hadith Masters] (1/118-120).

when a horse suddenly hit him in the face and caused him to sustain a head-wound. As his father was wiping away the blood, he said to 'Umar: "If you were to be the one with the scar, then you would be the happiest of all the Umayyads."⁽¹⁾ Upon seeing the mark from the blow to his head, al-Asbagh, his brother, remarked: "Allāh is the Greatest! This is the one who holds the title of "the Scar of the Marwān Tribe!" 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allāh be pleased with him) used to say: "There will be among my offspring a man with a scar on his face who will fill the earth with justice just as it was filled with injustice and oppression."⁽²⁾ Reportedly, *al-Farūq* (The Distinguisher of Truth from Falsehood, i.e. 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb), once had a vision that also pointed to this, as did numerous other people to the extent that it became common knowledge and substantiated the claim made by 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's father and brother regarding the mark on his face being a sign that he would be the one who would fill the land with justice.⁽³⁾

Siblings:

'Umar's father, 'Abd al-'Azīz bin Marwān, had ten sons named 'Umar, 'Abū Bakr, Muḥammad, 'Āṣim, all of whom were to Layla bint 'Āṣim bin 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb, in addition to six more children by other women and these were called

(1) *Al-Bidayah wa an-Nihayah* [The Beginning and End]; an extract from *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (1/20).

(2) *Al-Ma'ārif* [The Facts] by Ibn Qutaybah, p. 362.

(3) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (1/20) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

al-Asbagh, Suhī, Suhayl, Umm al-Hakm, Zayyan and Umm al-Banīn.⁽¹⁾ 'Āṣim was the name ascribed to his mother's *kunya* (epithet), meaning that she known as Umm 'Āṣim (the Mother of 'Āṣim).⁽²⁾

Children:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz (may Allāh have mercy on him) had fourteen sons named 'Abd al-Mālik, 'Abd al-'Azīz, 'Abdullah, Ibrahīm, Ishāq, Ya'qūb, Bakr, Walīd, Mūsā, 'Āṣim, Yazīd, Zayyan and 'Abdullah. He also had three girls called Amīnah, Umm 'Ammār and Umm 'Abdullah. In fact, accounts vary concerning the number of children 'Umar had. While some give a total number of fourteen boys, which is in agreement with Ibn Qutaybah's account, others state twelve boys and six girls, such as Ibn al-Jawzī;⁽³⁾ the general consensus, however, is that he had twelve sons. It is a well-known fact that when 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz departed from this world, he left behind no money to his children apart from an insignificant sum of nineteen *Dirhams*, compared to Hishām bin 'Abd al-Mālik who bequeathed a grand sum of one million *Dirhams* to his sons. Nevertheless, it was but a few years on that one of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's sons was seen donating one hundred horses for the sake of Allāh in one day, whilst people were said to have witnessed one of Hishām bin 'Abd al-

(1) *Al-Ma'ārif* [The Facts] by Ibn Qutaybah, p. 362.

(2) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (1/22) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

(3) *Ibid* (1/23).

Mālik's sons receiving charity.⁽¹⁾ Therefore, glory be to Allāh, the Lord of the Worlds!

Wives:

'Umar grew up in al-Madīnah and naturally acquired the etiquettes of its people. He was influenced by its scholars and dedicated himself to the pursuit of knowledge from its *Shuyūkh* (religious leaders). He was accustomed to sitting in the company of Quraysh's elders in favour of being with his peers, a habit which stuck with him even after he attained prominence. Upon his father's death, his paternal uncle, the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, 'Abd al-Mālik bin Marwān, became his guardian and so 'Umar became like one of his own children but whom 'Abd al-Mālik very much favoured so much so that he married him to his daughter, Fāṭimah bint 'Abd al-Mālik. A pious and virtuous woman, she was significantly influenced by 'Umar, which even extended to what she owned of the luxuries of this world. As poet succinctly said about her:

"The daughter of the Caliph and the Caliph was her grandfather,

The sister of the Caliphs and the Caliph is her husband."

More specifically, the above verse alludes to her relationship as the daughter of 'Abd al-Mālik bin Marwān, the granddaughter of Marwān bin al-Hakm, the sister of al-

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Life of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzi, p. 338; *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (1/24).

Walīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik, Sulayman bin 'Abd al-Mālik, Yazīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik and Hishīm bin 'Abd al-Mālik, and the wife of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz (may Allāh be pleased with him). Her special status has led some to believe that there has not been a woman like her until today.⁽¹⁾ She bore 'Umar's three sons, Ishāq, Ya'qūb and Mūsā. As for his wife, Lamas bint 'Ail bin al-Hadith, she bore his children, 'Abdullah, Bakr and Umm 'Ammār, and his wife, Umm 'Othman bint Shu'ayb bin Mayan, bore his son, Ibrahīm. The rest of 'Umar's children, namely, 'Abd al-Mālik, al-Walīd, 'Āṣim, Yazīd, 'Abdullah, 'Abd al-'Azīz, Zayyan, Amīnah, and Umm 'Abdullah, were bore by his wife, Umm Waleed.⁽²⁾

Physical Features:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was dark in complexion, slim-faced, small in stature and heavysset. He had hollow eyes and at the front of his head he had a quiff of hair that had a grey streak running through it.⁽³⁾ Regarding his appearance, it has otherwise been said: "He was fair-skinned with a slim face. He was handsome and slim." Another description states: "He was fair-skinned with a slim face, handsome, slim and he had a nice beard."⁽⁴⁾

(1) *Ibid* (12680/).

(2) *Sirat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Life of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] by Ibn al-Jawzi, p.314-5.

(3) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fil-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/58).

(4) *Al-Kitāb al-Jamī' li-Sirat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz* [A Complete Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (1/11); *al-Athar al-Warida* (1/58).

Factors that Contributed to Shaping 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Personality:

Family Life:

'Umar grew up al-Madīnah. Once he had reached maturity, which was at such a young age, 'Abdullah bin 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb would go to his mother to ask about his whereabouts. Upon returning home, 'Umar would say to his mother: "I hope to be like my maternal uncle" (referring to 'Abdullah bin 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb). At that point, she would tell him: "There is no doubt that you are like him", and she would repeat herself more than once. When he grew up, his father, 'Abd al-'Aziz bin Marwān, travelled to Egypt to occupy the office of Governor, but it was not before long that he wrote to his wife, Umm 'Āṣim, instructing her to make her way to him there. Startled by his proposal, she immediately sought advice from her paternal uncle, 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, informing him that she had received a letter from her husband, to which he remarked: "O my niece! He is your husband. You should catch up with him." However, as she was about to leave, he said: "Leave the young boy (meaning 'Umar) with us, for he

most resembles us, the *Ahl al-Bayt* (Family of the Prophet) of you all", and so, she left him behind. When she arrived in the presence of 'Abd al-'Aziz, he began to look around for his son, although when he could not see him, he asked: "Where is 'Umar?" She then informed him of what happened with 'Abdullah and that he had asked her to leave 'Umar behind in order that he resembled the *Ahl al-Bayt*. Upon hearing this, 'Abd al-'Aziz was delighted and so he wrote to his brother, 'Abd al-Mālik, to tell him, who in reply stated that he should send 'Umar one thousand *Dinar* on a monthly basis.⁽¹⁾ 'Umar would later go to his father in Egypt as an upstanding Muslim, which wholly reflected his upbringing in al-Madīnah between his maternal uncles from the family of 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb, all of whom, along with the society of *Sahaba* (Companions), were undoubtedly instrumental in shaping his personality.⁽²⁾

His Early Dedication to the Pursuit of Knowledge and Memorisation of the Holy Qur'ān:

A childhood love for the pursuit of knowledge, studying and reading distinguished 'Umar from an early age, as did his eagerness to remain in the scholarly gatherings of al-Madīnah. In those days, al-Madīnah represented a beacon of knowledge and righteousness, given that it was full of scholars, jurists and virtuous people. One of the first manifestations of

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar* [The Biography of 'Umar] by 'Abd al-hakm, p. 24-5.

(2) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/58).

'Umar's guidance was his evident longing to become a learned scholar during his childhood, a path which he began to pursue by devoting his time to studying literature and the sciences.⁽¹⁾ He was able to prove this dedication when he collected together the entire manuscript of the Qur'ān, which was not only a great accomplishment in itself but it also facilitated his memorisation of it, self-purification and his ability to apply the knowledge he had gained. From that point onwards, his outlook was deeply shaped by what the Qur'ān taught with respect to Allāh the Almighty, life, the universe, Heaven and Hell, Decree and Fate, and the reality of death. It is said that he would cry at the mention of death irrespective of his age. Upon hearing about this, his mother wrote to him and asked: "What makes you cry?" He answered: "The remembrance of death", a response which caused his mother to weep when she heard it.⁽²⁾ There is no exaggeration to say that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz lived his entire life by the Book of Allāh, the Sublime, whether in contemplation of it or in exercising its injunctions. Among the stances he took in accordance with the Holy Qur'ān were:

- 1) On the authority of Ibn Abī Dhābi who said: "I was informed by someone who witnessed 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, at the time when he was the commander of al-Madīnah, reciting the following Verse to a man: [*And when they shall be thrown into a narrow place thereof, chained together, they shall exclaim therein for destruction*] (*al-Furqān*, 25:13),

(1) *Al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah* [The Beginning and End] (12/679).

(2) *Ibid* (12/678).

at which point 'Umar began to sob so overwhelmingly that he stood up from his gathering and entered his house, after which the people dispersed."⁽¹⁾ The meaning of the Verse is that when those liars will be put into the tight constraints of the Hellfire with the reckoning of the Hour, their hands will be shackled to their necks in chains. *"They shall therein exclaim for destruction"*, wherein "destruction" here refers to the people crying out in regret of their disobedience to Allāh in this world and for not believing in what was revealed to the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as they face their punishment.⁽²⁾

- a. According to Abī Mawdūd who said: "I was informed that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz read one day: *"Neither you (O Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon him) do any deed nor recite any portion of the Qur'ān, nor you (mankind) do any deed (good or evil) but We are witness thereof when you are doing it"* (Yūnus, 10:61). He then began to cry so hysterically even the people in the house heard him. At that point, Fāṭimah (his wife) went in but started to cry at seeing him crying, which caused everyone in the house to cry too. 'Abd al-Mālik happened to enter the house and when he saw them in that state, he inquired: "O father! What are you crying for?" He replied: "It is fine,

(1) *Ar-Riqqah wa al-Bakā'* [Sensitivity and Crying] by Ibn Abi Dunya, p. 83.

(2) *Dumuu' al-Qurā'* [Tears of the Reciters] by Muhammad Shuman, p. 107; an extract from Ibn Jarīr's *Tafsīr* [Exegesis].

my son. Your father only wishes that he neither knew the world nor it knew him. By Allāh, O son! I fear for your family. By Allāh! I fear that I will be among the people of the Hellfire.”⁽¹⁾ The meaning of this Verse is that Allāh, the Sublime, informed his Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that He knows all his conditions and states, as well as those of his *Ummah* (Community of the Faithful) and all creation, every second of every minute of every hour. Not so much as a mustard seed, however miniscule or insignificant, in the entire heavens and earth escapes His Knowledge or Sight, and there is nothing too big or too small except that it has been recorded down. As He says: *"And with Him are the keys of the 'Ghayb' (all that is hidden), none knows them but He. And He knows whatever there is in the land and the sea; not a leaf falls but He knows it. There is not a grain in the darkness of the earth, nor anything fresh or dry, but is written in a Clear Record."* (al-An 'ām, 6:59). Thus, Allāh informs us that He knows the movement of the trees and all other inanimate fixed objects, just as He knows the swift movements of creatures, about which He says: *"There is not a moving (living) creature on earth, nor a bird that flies with its two wings, but are communities like you. We have neglected nothing in the Book, then to their Lord they shall all be gathered"* (al-'An 'ām, 6: 38). Allāh, the Sublime, also says: [And

(1) *Ar-Riqqah wa al-Bakā'* [Sensitivity and Crying] by Ibn Abi Dunya, p.91.

no moving (living) creature is there on earth but its provision is due from Allāh." (*Hūd*, 11:6). And so, Allāh knows the movements of such things, just as He says He knows when worship is being observed: "*And put your trust in the All-Mighty, the Most Merciful, Who sees you (O Muḥammad, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) when you stand up (alone at night for prayer). And your movements among those who fall prostrate (to Allāh in the prayers)] (ash-Shu'arā*", 26:217-19). Thus, Allāh is saying that when one undertakes an action, He sees and hears it.⁽¹⁾

- 2) According to 'Abd al-A'lā bin Abī 'Abdullah al-'Atari who said: "I saw 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz coming out on the day of *Jumu'ah* (Friday congregational prayer) wearing a grubby garment and there was an Ethiopian man walking behind him. When he reached the people, the Ethiopian went back, then 'Umar went up to two men and said: "May Allāh have mercy on you both", at which point he ascended the *Minbar* (pulpit) and began to deliver the sermon, reciting the Verse: "*When the sun shall be wound round and its light is lost and overthrown.*" (*at-Takwīr*, 81:1). He then said: "And what is the affair of the sun?" He went on: "*And when the stars shall fall*" (*ibid*:2) up to the Verses: "*And when Hellfire shall be set ablaze. And when Paradise shall be brought near*" (*ibid*: 12-13). At that point he began to cry, as did the people in the *Masjid* (mosque)

(1) Ibn Kathīr's *Tafsīr* [Interpretation].

until it began to shake and its walls wept with them.”⁽¹⁾ This Verse depicts a description of the events on the Day of Judgement when hearts will be full of anguish, violent fear will seize them and anxiety will prevail therein. This is the Day for which people of understanding prepare, on which nobody will evade blame and accountability, about which the *Salaf* (Pious Forebears) would say: “Whoever wants to see the Day of Judgment as if with his very own eyes, let him contemplate on the *Sūrah* (Chapter) “*When the sun shall be wound round and its light is lost and overthrown*” (*at-Takwīr*, 81)⁽²⁾ In a *Hadīth Marfū‘* (narration that is traced back directly to the Prophet, (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) on the authority of Ibn ‘Umar (may Allāh be pleased with him), the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever secretly wants to see the Day of Judgment as if with his naked eye, let him recite (the chapters): “*When the sun shall be wound round and its light is lost and overthrown*” (*at-Takwīr*, 81); “*When the heaven shall be cleft asunder*” (*al-Infīṭār*, 82); and “*When the heaven shall be split asunder*” (*al-Inshiqāq*, 84).”⁽³⁾

- a. Maymūn bin Mahrān is reported to have said: “Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz recited the Verse: “*The mutual rivalry (for piling up world things) diverts you.*” (*at-Takāthur*,

(1) *Dumu‘ al-Qurrā’* [Tears of the Reciters], pp. 111-2.

(2) As-Sa‘adī’s *Tafsīr* [Interpretation], 912.

(3) Reported in at-Tirmidhi, no. 3333 and al-Hākim (2/515) (4/576); adh-Dhahabi and al-Albāni have authenticated them in the *as-Sahīḥah* [Verification] (3/70).

102:1) and began to cry. He then said: “*Until you visit the graves*” (*ibid*: 2), while the graves are but a visiting place and one must return to either *al-Jannah* (Paradise) or to *an-Nār* (Hellfire).”⁽¹⁾ Some of the positions that illustrate the type of influence the Holy Qur’ān had on ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’s personality include:

i. Social Environment:

One’s surrounding social environment plays a decisive role in shaping men and building their characters and in this respect ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz lived in an era wherein *Taqwā* (God-consciousness), *Salaḥ* (goodness), a thirst for acquiring knowledge and applying the Book (i.e. the Qur’ān) and the *Sunnah* (Prophetic Example) prevailed. A number of the *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions of the Prophet, (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) were still in al-Madīnah, which allowed him to narrate *aḥadīth* (Prophetic sayings) from the likes of ‘Abdullah bin Ja’far bin Abī Ṭālib, as-Sā’ib bin Yazīd and Suhīl bin Sa’ad who gave him a cup which the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had drunk from. As for Anas bin Mālīk, he said: “I never saw anyone imitate the prayer of the Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) like this young man”, in reference to ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz.⁽²⁾ In this manner, residing in al-Madīnah as part of that society had an

(1) *Ar-Riqqah wa al-Bakā’* [Sensitivity and Crying] by Ibn Abi Dunya, no. 425.

(2) *Siyar A’lām an-Nubalā’* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5/114).

enormous impact on his temperament, his sense of faith and his spiritual adherence in making the eminent and intellectual person 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz became.⁽¹⁾

ii. His Learning at the Hands of al-Madīnah's Senior Fuqahā' (Jurists) and Scholars:

'Umar's father, 'Abd al-'Aziz, entrusted him to the care of Ṣāliḥ bin Kīṣān who was one of the most learned and pious men of al-Madīnah. 'Umar received his education under the supervision of Ṣāliḥ, who was very particular about his role in disciplining 'Umar. For instance, he made it incumbent upon 'Umar to pray every prayer with the congregation in the *masjid* (mosque), but when 'Umar turned up late one day, the congregation informed Ṣāliḥ who questioned him about it, asking: "What business were you engaged in?" 'Umar replied: "I was sorting out my hair", to which Ṣāliḥ remarked: "You love yourself that much that you would let it influence your prayers?!" He immediately wrote to 'Abd al-'Azīz informing him about it, at which instant his father sent a delegate to 'Umar who was instructed to not speak a word before shaving his son's head completely.⁽²⁾ From then on, 'Umar desired to imitate the manner in which the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) prayed: ardently and meticulously. In keeping with that, he would prolong his bowing and prostrating and lighten his standing and sitting,

(1) *Al-Jawānib at-Tarbawīyah fī Hayāt 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Educational Aspects in the Life of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 23.

(2) *Al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah* [The Beginning and the End] (12/678).

and as the authentic narration states: "He would glorify Allāh ten times in each bow and prostration."⁽¹⁾

When his father performed the *Hajj* pilgrimage, passing through al-Madīnah on his way, he enquired to Ṣāliḥ bin Kīsān about his son and Ṣāliḥ's response to him was: "Allāh is not known in the heart of anyone more than this boy's."⁽²⁾ Among the *Shuyūkh* (religious elders) who had an influence on 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was 'Ubaydullah bin 'Abdullah bin 'Utbah bin Mas'ūd who 'Umar highly revered and had a great thirst for his knowledge and etiquettes so much so that he would continue to frequent him even when he was the *Amir* (Governor) of al-Madīnah. 'Umar would express his admiration for his *Shaykh* and thereby frequented his sittings more and more. On one occasion, he said to a gathering for the blind: "'Ubaydullah bin 'Abdullah bin 'Utbah bin Mas'ūd is more beloved to me than a thousand *Dīnārs* (gold coins; units of account)."⁽³⁾ During 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Caliphate he would acknowledge his *Shaykh's* knowledge by making such statements as: "Were 'Ubaydullah alive, no legal opinion other than his would be issued", "I wish I could have just one day with 'Ubaydullah" and so forth.⁽⁴⁾ 'Ubaydullah was in fact the *Muftī* (the title given to the official issuer of legal rulings) of al-Madīnah during his time and one of the seven *Fuqahā'* (jurists),⁽⁵⁾ about whom az-

(1) *Ibid* (12/682).

(2) *Ibid* (12/678).

(3) 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz by 'Abd as-Sittār ash-Shaykh, p. 59; *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5/250); *Tahdhīb at-Tahdhīb* [Refinement of the Discipline] by Ibn Hajar (7/22).

(4) Umar bin 'Abd al-Aziz by 'Abd as-Sittār ash-Shaykh, p. 59.

(5) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (4/475).

Zuhri said: "‘Ubaydullah bin ‘Abdullah was a sea among the seas of knowledge."⁽¹⁾ A writer of poetry, Ibn Mas‘ūd wrote the following verses to ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz:

*"In the name of He Who sent down the verses from Him,
If you only knew what is to come about,
Therefore be on your guard that you might benefit from
cautiousness;
And be patient in the face of sure fate and be grounded in it,
Should an undesirable fate befall you;
What is the class of a man living in ease,
Except that it shall one day be followed by trouble?"⁽²⁾*

He died later this year (98/99 AH).⁽³⁾

Another of ‘Umar’s *Shuyūkh* (religious elders) was Said bin al-Musayyib, the biographical account of whom was related during ‘Abd al-Mālik bin Marwān’s era, who would not see any of the governors except for ‘Umar.⁽⁴⁾ Sālim bin ‘Abdullah bin ‘Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb was also his *Shaykh*, about whom Sa‘īd bin al-Musayyib would say: "‘Abdullah bin ‘Umar most resembles his father and Sālim most resembles his father."⁽⁵⁾

(1) *Ibid.*

(2) *Ibid*

(3) *Ibid* (4/478-9)..

(4) *Al-Jawānib at-Tarbawīyyah fi Hayāt ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz* [The Educational Aspects in the Life of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz], p. 25.

(5) *Siyar A‘lām an-Nubalā’* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (4/459).

Ibn 'Umar used to love his son Sālim, for which he would get blamed, and he would say:

"They blame me concerning Sālim and I blame them;

While Salim is the skin between the eyes and nose."⁽¹⁾

Sālim's mother's epithet was *Umm Walad* (Mother of a Boy) supposedly in reference to Ibn Abī az-Zinād. The people of al-Madīnah used to hate the idea of taking on women to bear children until the likes of 'Alī bin al-Husayn, al-Qāsim bin Muḥammad and Sālim bin 'Abdullah emerged who caused the people of al-Madīnah to excel in knowledge, devotion, worship and piety and which caused their contemporaries to be awe of concubines. Imām Mālik says: "None of Sālim's peers resembled the righteous forebears in asceticism, virtue and lifestyle like him. He would wear a *thawb* (long dress-like garment worn by men) worth just two *Dirham* (coins; units of currency) and he would buy with his left hand in order that it may bear the burden."⁽²⁾ Upon witnessing his nice appearance, Sulaymān bin 'Abd al-Mālik asked Sālim: "Do you eat anything in particular?" He answered: "Bread and oil, and if there is any meat I eat that too." So 'Umar said to him: "Do you like eating that?" He replied: "If I do not desire to eat it then I leave it until I do."⁽³⁾ On one particular day, Sālim bin 'Abdullah entered upon Sulaymān bin 'Abd al-Mālik wearing ragged, rough clothes but nevertheless Sulaymān

(1) *Ibid* (4/460).

(2) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (4/460).

(3) *Ibid*.

welcomed him all the same and even took him up and seated him by his side, while 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was sitting with the gathering. A man belonging to an outside tribe therefore asked 'Umar: "Can your maternal uncle not wear something more dignified than this to enter upon the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* (Commander of the Believers)? It is upon the speaker to wear something of value." 'Umar therefore said to him: "I do not see these clothes worn by my uncle putting him in your place nor do I see the clothes you wear raising you to his status."⁽¹⁾

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was mentored and educated under many scholars and *Fuqahā'* (jurists), numbering at least thirty-three, eight of whom were honourable *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions) and the other twenty-five were *Tabi'un* (second and third generation followers).⁽²⁾ Thus, he acquired their knowledge and manners and devotedly attended their sittings until this nurturing and discipline notably influenced his character and behaviour.⁽³⁾ He was distinct regarding the firmness of his personality, his earnestness in dealing with matters, resoluteness, intellectual assiduity, perpetual consideration of the Qur'ān, strong will and great disdain for idle talk and joking.⁽⁴⁾ In fact, these factors were the main contributors shaping his character, along with the lessons he drew from those devout scholars who carried on their

(1) *Ibid* (4/461).

(2) *Musnad 'Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Umar* [The Supported Narrations of the Commander of the Believers, 'Umar], p. 33.

(3) *Al-Jawānib at-Tarbawīyah fi Hayat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Educational Aspects in the Life of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (1/67).

(4) *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* by az-Zahli, p. 30.

shoulders the great responsibility of giving attention to the children of the governors, judges and high-ranking officials, since their righteousness was for the greater good of the Islāmic *Ummah* (Community of the Faithful).

iii. Knowledgeable Status:

Translators agree that he was "The *Imām* (Muslim Leader) of His Era", a name that was given to him by both *Imām Mālik* and *Imām Sufyān bin 'Uyaynah*.⁽¹⁾ About him, *Mujāhid* said: "We would tell him what we knew and we would not leave until we had learned from him."⁽²⁾ *Maymūn bin Mahrān* said: "Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was the teacher of scholars."⁽³⁾ *Adh-Dhahabi* says: "He was an *Imām* (Leader), a *Faqīh* (jurist) and a *Mujtahid* (one who issues independent legal opinions). He was well informed of the *Sunan* (traditions), knowledgeable on important matters, a *Hāfīz* (one who has committed the entire Qur'ān to memory), obedient to Allāh and extremely conscious of good conduct and acting fairly, in likeness to his grandfather from his mother's side. He was equal to *Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri* in asceticism and to *az-Zuhri* in knowledge. His words and actions were requested by the *Fuqahā'* (jurists) and scholars, like when *Imām al-Layth bin Sa'ad* wrote a short letter to *Imām Mālik bin Anas* (may Allāh

(1) *Al-Āthār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Mark of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (1/67).

(2) *Tahdhīb at-Tahdhīb* [Refinement of the Discipline] by Ibn ʿAjr (7/405); *Al-Āthār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Mark of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (1/67).

(3) *Tārīkh Abī Zar'ah* [Abī Zar'ah's History], p. 255; *Al-Āthār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Mark of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (1/67).

be pleased with them) in which al-Layth stated he needed – numerous times – a sound opinion, which is why Imām Malik went to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz concerning some of his questions.⁽¹⁾ Thus, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz is mentioned in the books of *Fiqh* (jurisprudence) pertaining to all four schools of thought because of his need to follow the school he thought was necessary, such as his concluding of Ḥanafī rulings in reference to his actions and deeds, a stance that distinguished 'Umar as the grandson of 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allāh be pleased with him), according to al-Qurashi in *al-Jawāhir al-Maḍī'ah* [The Dazzling Jewels]. However, it is worth mentioning that he would also conform to other opinions, which some have failed to acknowledge in an attempt to convey him as the popular Caliph and Imām.⁽²⁾

His name appears recurrently in the books of the Shāfi'i authors and has therefore been rendered by an-Nawawi who refined their names and language, which he states at the beginning of his work were repetitive and needed shortening. As for the adherents of the Mālikī school, their books contain copious reference to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, far more than all others, given that Mālik was the Imām of the school who required the legal rulings and statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz in many areas, as mentioned in Mālik's *al-Muwatta'* [The Well-Trodden Path].⁽³⁾

(1) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz* [The Cited Stories of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (1/70).

(2) *Al-Jawāhir al-Maḍī'ah* [The Dazzling Jewels] (4/552); *Al-Athār al-Wāridah* (1/71).

(3) See *al-Muwatta'* [The Well-Trodden Path], no. 305; 592; 594; 614.

Regarding Ḥanbali works, 'Umar is given ample mention as the one about whom Imām Aḥmad said: "I do not know of any speech of the *Tabi'īn* (second and third generation of followers) that constitutes proof except for the speech of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz which is sufficient in itself."⁽¹⁾ The following statement of Imām Aḥmad is sufficient enough for us too: "If you see a man who loves 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and says good things about him, then know that behind that lies good, if Allāh wills."⁽²⁾ Whoever wants to delve deeply into 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's knowledge and discern his knowledgeable status, let him refer to the following books: *Al-Āthār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Mark of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Prof. Hayat Muḥammad Jabār, which is an intellectual treatise comprising over two volumes; *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Dr Muḥammad Sa'ad Shaqīr, which is an intellectual treatise presented at doctorate level; and *Mawsū'ah Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [An Encyclopaedia of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Jurisprudence] by Muḥammad Rawas Qal'aji. By the permission of Allāh, we will herein get to see 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's *Fiqh* (jurisprudence) at play in relation to doctrine, worship, *Sharī'ah* policy, administration of the state, financial management, judicial execution, Islāmic preaching and his observance of the Book (i.e. the Qur'ān), the *Sunnah* (Prophetic Example) and the Rightly-Guided Caliphs in his footsteps and lifestyle.

(1) *Al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah* [The Beginning and the End] quoted in *Al-Athār al-Wāridah* (1/72).

(2) *Sirat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzi, p. 61.

Part II

‘Umar during the Caliphate of al-Walīd bin ‘Abd al-Mālik:

‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz enjoys the status of those scholars who were close to the *Caliphs* and imparted considerable bearing on them through their advice and directed their policies based on their opinions and consultation. ‘Umar occupied an eminent position in the Umayyad household, which is clear from ‘Abd al-Mālik’s veneration of him and his amazement at ‘Umar’s brilliance during his youth, so much so that he favoured him over many of his own sons and even married him to his daughter. In spite of this, ‘Umar did not make any contributions of this sort during ‘Abd al-Mālik’s rule due to his young age and his preoccupation with the pursuit of knowledge in al-Madīnah. However, Ibn al-Jawzi maintains that he once wrote to ‘Abd al-Mālik reminding him of the responsibility he bore on his shoulders, in which he said: “To proceed: You are a shepherd and responsible for everyone in your flock. Anas bin Malik informed us that he

heard the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) say: 'Everyone is a shepherd and responsible for his (or her) flock'.⁽¹⁾ "*Allāh! None has the right to be worshipped but He. Surely, He will gather you together on the Day of Resurrection about which there is no doubt. And who is truer in statement than Allāh?*" (*an-Nisa'*, 4:87)

It is said that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was appointed by his paternal uncle, 'Abd al-Mālik, over Khanasser (the city of Anasarthā located in western Syria) in order to become practiced in the tasks of leadership at an early age.⁽²⁾ Alternatively, some believe it was 'Umar's cousin, Sulayman bin 'Abd al-Mālik, who appointed him over Khanasser. With his uncle's death, 'Umar was deeply saddened by his loss and so he wrote to his uncle's other son, Maslamah bin 'Abd al-Mālik, saying: "O Maslamah! I attended your father's burial and my eyes had to bear the sight of his grave. His banner has been left to the affair of Allāh. I was dismayed and struck with terror, which is why I vowed to Allāh that if I were to assume power, I would not do as he did; I will make sure of that!"⁽³⁾

His Governorship of al-Madīnah:

In the month of *Rabī' al-Awwal* (the third Islāmic calendar

(1) *Athār al-Hayāt al-Siyāsiyyah* [The Impact of Political Life], p. 159.

(2) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah* 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz *Niẓām al-Ḥakm* of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (1/93).

(3) *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 10.

month) of 87 AD, Caliph al-Walīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik appointed 'Umar over the province of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, and later extended his office to include Ta'if in 91 AH, thereby making him the governor of the entire Hijaz region. Before taking over, 'Umar laid down three conditions for assuming office, which were: 1) to deal with the people with truth and justice without oppressing anyone or depriving anyone of their rights to the *Bayt al-Mal* (Public Treasury). In keeping with this, any money obtained by the Caliph therefrom would be declared; (2) He would be permitted to perform the *Hajj* pilgrimage at the beginning of the year, as he had not already done so; and (3) He would be permitted to make donations to the people of al-Madīnah. Accordingly, al-Walīd complied with these conditions and so 'Umar gladly began to administer al-Madīnah to the extreme delight of the people.⁽¹⁾

The Shūra (Consultation) Council of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz: A Committee of the Ten Jurists of al-Madīnah:

Immediately on arrival in al-Madīnah, 'Umar formed an advisory council of ten eminent jurists and notables of the holy city, unlike the other autocratic governors. When the people turned up to greet the new Caliph and pray behind him, he summoned the ten *Fuqaha'* (jurists), namely, 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr, 'Ubaydullah bin 'Abdullah bin 'Utba, Abu Bakr bin 'Abd ar-Raḥmān bin al-Ḥārith bin Hishām, Abū Bakr

(1) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (1/63); *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, pp. 41-2.

bin Sulaymān bin Abī Khaythamah, Sulaymān bin Yasār, al-Qāsim bin Muḥammad, Sālim bin 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, 'Abdullah bin 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, 'Abdullah bin 'Āmir bin Rabī'ah and Khārijah bin Zayd bin Thābit.

They came to him, entered his place, and sat down. He praised Allāh all the due praise and said: I have called you for a matter that will help you earn reward and also enable you to be supporters of the truth. I shall not decide on a matter unless I take your opinion into consideration. If you see someone violating the boundaries, or if you hear of any injustice on the part of my workers, I ask you by the Majestic, Allāh, to inform me about that." He also said: "Rulers usually appoint people to watch over their subjects. I appoint you a watcher over me and my behaviour. If you find me at fault in a word or action, guide me and stop me from doing it."⁽¹⁾ This short statement was the constitution and the straightforward methodology that he put in place for his rule.

It was a well-known fact that 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb had assembled a council to deal with the affairs that were about to ensue and thereby saw the need for *Shūra* (consultation) in that regard. As for 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, he was the great grandson of 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb who also created a council and in doing so endorsed its authority in two respects:

- 1) Its members were bearers of the truth in issuing opinions and that he would not take any action without first

(1) *Aṭ-Tabaqāt* [The Classifications] (5/257); *Mawsū'ah Fiqh 'Umar* [An Encyclopedia of 'Umar's Jurisprudence] by Qalji, p. 548.

consulting them. In doing so, the *Amīr* (Commander) passed on his function to the council that came to be known as "the Council of Ten."

- 2) He made them inspectors of deeds and watchers over behaviour such that should one of them witness some misconduct or come to know of it, it was then their duty to inform him, or else their silence would be left to Allah. Here, we notice that this course of action consisted on two factors: 1) That the *Amīr*, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, did not assign some form of compensation or wage to the Council of Ten, since they were people to whom a tender was due and because they were *Fuqahā'* (jurists). He therefore did not commission to his aid anyone who was stubborn and obstinate in nature.
- 3) Had 'Umar supposed that the absence of one of the council members was an excuse for not administering to matters, he would have stipulated that all members had to be present; however, he did not do this, which is why he said "or the opinions of those present."⁽¹⁾ In actual reality, this council was consulted on every issue without exception.⁽²⁾ This infers the importance of the devout scholars and their high standing, given that he loved to have them near to him and at hand to take counsel with in relation to matters affecting his subjects. Similarly, it is the

(1) *Niẓām al-Ḥakm fī ash-Sharī'ah wa at-Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [The System of Government in Islāmic Law and Islāmic History] (1/561-2).

(2) *Niẓām al-Ḥakm fil-Islām bayna an-Naẓariyyah wa at-Taṭbīq* [The System of Government in Islām between Theory and Practice], p. 391.

duty of the scholars to surround those executing decisions for the benefit of attaining as much good as possible and diminishing corruption wherever possible. For this reason, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz did not completely restrict taking counsel with only them; on the contrary, he would seek advice from other scholars in al-Madīnah, such as Sa'īd bin al-Musayyib, az-Zuhri and so on. In fact, he would not give a verdict on a case without asking Sa'īd about it first.

'Umar made his high esteem and respect for the scholars apparent. It so happened that he once sent a messenger to Sa'īd bin al-Musayyib to enquire about an issue, while Sa'īd would never visit any of the governors or *Caliphs*, but the messenger made a mistake by saying to him: "The Leader summons you", upon which Sa'īd put on his sandals and paid him a visit. However, when 'Umar saw him, he said: "I urge you, O Abū Muḥammad, to return to your council and our messenger will come to seek your resolve there. We did not send him to summon you; he made a mistake. We only wanted to ask you about a matter."⁽¹⁾

During his short time as the Governor of al-Madīnah, he repaired and extended the Prophet's Mosque (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) under the orders of al-Walīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik to make it two-hundred by two-hundred *Dhirā'* [cubits; units of measure], as well

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Manāqibihi* [Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and His Outstanding Traits] by Ibn 'Abd al-Hakm, p. 23.

as embellishing it also in accordance with al-Walīd's instructions. However, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz personally despised the beautification of *Masajid* (mosques) but he was compelled to comply with the Commander's orders since he was his superior and even though he was not content with doing it, he considered his serving as Governor to be of greater interest in other respects.

During his governorship of al-Madīnah in 91 AH, the Caliph, al-Walīd, embarked on the *Hajj* pilgrimage and he was met by 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz with the best of receptions. It was during this visit to al-Madīnah that al-Walīd witnessed with his own eyes the magnificent advancements that had been accomplished by 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz in the holy city.⁽¹⁾

The Unfortunate Incident of 'Umar's Governorship:

In his biography, the scholars say: "Khubayb bin 'Abdullah bin az-Zubayr reported that the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'Thirty men will arrive at the *Banū* Abī al-'Āṣ (tribe)⁽²⁾ and seize the servants of Allah and the wealth of Allah's State."⁽³⁾ However, this was

(1) *Mawsū'ah Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [An Encyclopaedia of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Jurisprudence], p.20.

(2) Abī al-'Ās: i.e. the tribe of al-'Ās belonging to the Umayyad tribe as the great, great, great grandfather of both al-Walīd and 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz.

(3) *Niẓām al-Ḥakm fī ash-Sharī'ah wa at-Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [The System of Government in Islāmic Law and Islāmic History] (1/561-2).

a weak narration and so al-Walīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik sent word to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz – his Governor of al-Madīnah – commanding him to flog Khubayb one hundred lashes and imprison him. Accordingly, 'Umar flogged him and then poured a cold vessel of water over him and made him stand outside on a cold evening, which caused him to catch pneumonia and die. 'Umar released Khubayb from prison when his suffering became severe and 'Umar began to deeply regret what he had done to the point he felt extremely troubled by his death.

Muṣ'ab bin 'Abdullah narrated on the authority of Muṣ'ab bin 'Uthmān that they moved Khubayb to the house of 'Umar bin Muṣ'ab bin az-Zubayr on az-Zubayr's patch of land and gathered around him until he died. As they were sitting there, al-Majishūn turned up and sought permission to enter as Khubayb was lying there in his *thawb* (long dress-like garment worn by men). Al-Majishūn was an official of al-Madīnah under 'Umar's administration and so 'Abdullah bin 'Urwah said: "Let him in." Upon entering al-Majishūn said: "If your friend is in doubt about his death, reveal it to him", and so they told him he was going to die. He then looked at al-Majishūn who turned around and left. Al-Majishūn said: "After that I went to Marwān's house where I tapped on the door and entered to find 'Umar who was standing and sitting in such a way he looked like a woman suffering from labour pains. He then said to me: "How did you get on?" I replied: "The man died." At that point he fell to the ground in a state of panic and every time he lifted his head he uttered the words: "To Allāh we belong and to Him we shall return!" Following

that incident, 'Umar resigned from his post in al-Madīnah and refrained from governorship altogether. From then onwards, whenever it was said to him: "You have done such and such a thing, so rejoice at it", he would say: "What about Khubayb?"⁽¹⁾ He did not stop remembering or picturing this incident in his mind to the point of death.⁽²⁾

Proof of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's righteousness exhibited during his time as Governor of al-Madīnah can be seen in many instances, but just one example lies in what Abū 'Umar, the slave of Asmā' bint Abī Bakr, related when he said: "I went to his gathering in which he prayed *Fajr* (Dawn Prayer) and the *Muṣ-ḥaf* (Arabic manuscript of the Qur'ān) was on his lap while tears were flowing down his beard."⁽³⁾ Ibn Abī az-Zinād narrated from his father: "When 'Umar wanted to give during his time as the leader of al-Madīnah, he would say: 'Fulfill a household of its needs.'⁽⁴⁾

The Lesson of Mazāḥim for 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz:

'Umar imprisoned a man in al-Madīnah and it happened that the man had served more time than he deserved and so 'Umar went to speak to him regarding his release, saying: "I am not the one getting out, yet I am more cautious about the

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, pp. 43-4.

(2) *Ibid*, p.42.

(3) *Ibid*.

(4) *Ibid; Athār al-Wāridah* [The Cited Stories] (66/1).

sentence having overrun.” Enraged, the man said: “O ‘Umar! I warn you of a night that will give rise to the Resurrection and whose morning will establish the Hour! O ‘Umar! I begged that I might forget what I heard of your prestige: the Commander, the Commander, the Commander!” ‘Umar said: “The first time that this was ever brought to my attention was with the Mazāḥim affair and, by Allāh, when he said that to me it was as if he lifted a cover from my face.”⁽¹⁾ This story illustrates to us the importance of righteousness, integrity and sincerity that remind one of Allah in times of negligence.

The Ordeal between ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz and al-Ḥajjāj bin Yūsuf during al-Walīd’s Caliphate:

Ibn al-Jawzī mentions that ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz had resigned from al-Madīnah for the aforementioned reasons, however, others have stated that he was in fact dismissed from his post. These accounts assert that in the year 92 AH, Caliph al-Walīd officially entrusted the *Ḥajj* (Major Pilgrimage) banner to al-Ḥajjāj bin Yūsuf ath-Thaqafī to hold the capacity of leader of the *Ḥajj* pilgrimage. Once ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz learned of this, he instantly wrote to the Caliph urging him to instruct al-Ḥajjāj to bypass al-Madīnah, given that ‘Umar loathed al-Ḥajjāj and could not stand the sight of him ever since al-Ḥajjāj had wronged him. Accordingly, al-Walīd complied with his request and therefore wrote to al-Ḥajjāj:

(1) *Strat ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz* [The Biography of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 140.

"Verily, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to me to request that you take a detour and avoid seeing him. Since it is not upon you to visit someone who hates you, stay away from al-Madīnah."⁽¹⁾

When 'Umar was Governor of al-Madīnah, he had written to al-Walīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik to inform him of the complaints he had received concerning the harsh, oppressive and unbearable conditions of the people of 'Irāq at the hands of the tyrant al-Ḥajjāj. In addition, many people emigrated from al-Madīnah from 'Irāq seeking refuge from their harsh governor, which angered al-Ḥajjāj who consequently retaliated against 'Umar by pressing al-Walīd to remove 'Umar. Al-Ḥajjāj wrote to al-Walīd: "It had become apparent that the people of 'Irāq and Thaḳāf are fleeing from 'Irāq and seeking refuge in al-Madīnah and Makkah." Therein al-Ḥajjāj further advised him to appoint 'Uthmān bin Ḥabbān and Khālīd bin 'Abdullah instead. To the dismay of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, al-Walīd bowed to the pressure and he was dismissed.⁽²⁾ Al-Walīd's political inclinations towards the strict regime of al-Ḥajjāj who exhibited a lot of control over the provinces he governed were apparent, as unfortunately usually is the case to ensure the stability of a vast state. The conflicting views of 'Umar and al-Ḥajjāj were so, although it later came to light that adopting 'Umar's advice as opposed that of al-Ḥajjāj would have been more favourable following 'Umar's ascent to the Caliphate and his implementation of what he had advocated in the first

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Manāqibihī* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and His Outstanding Traits] by Ibn al-Hakm, p. 24.

(2) *Tārīkh at-Ṭabarī* [Tabarī's History] (7/383).

place.⁽¹⁾

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Return to Damascus:

Crying and in the company of his attendant, Mazāḥim, 'Umar left al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, upon which he turned to Mazāḥim and said: "O Mazāḥim! I fear that we are being banished from al-Madīnah."⁽²⁾ By this, 'Umar was alluding to the statement of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who said: "Al-Madīnah is like the blacksmith's furnace. It removes impurities and purifies the good. The Hour will not be established until all evil is expelled from al-Madīnah like a blacksmith removes impurities from iron."⁽³⁾ Al-Mazāḥim said: "When 'Umar left al-Madīnah, I looked up at the sky and the moon was in the phase of *Dabrān* (when the star between Pleiades and Orion follows Pleiades); it was as if it were pessimistic about what was happening. However, I hated the thought of saying that to 'Umar so instead I said: 'Have you seen how perfect the moon is tonight?!' 'Umar replied: "O Mazāḥim! It is as if you wanted to show me that the moon is in the phase of *Dabrān*. O Mazāḥim! We are not leaving because of the Sun or the Moon but we are leaving because of Allāh, the One, the Subduer."⁽⁴⁾ 'Umar continued to embark on his journey until he reached Swaydā', a city in Syria, where

(1) *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 165.

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Manāqibihī* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and His Outstanding Traits] by Ibn al-hakm, p. 24

(3) Muslim, *Kitāb al-Ḥajj*: [The Book of Hajj]: "al-Madīnah expels all evil."

(4) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Manāqibihī* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and His Outstanding Traits] by Ibn al-hakm, p. 27.

he had a house and farm. He decided to remain there for some time while he observed the situation from a distance, to conclude later that the welfare of the Muslims required his being stationed in Damascus in proximity to the Caliph.⁽¹⁾ Due to the fact that 'Umar was not in complete agreement with al-Walīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik, his establishment in Damascus was not free from problems, particularly since al-Walīd executed his rule through the use of powerful and staunch governors who were only interested in subjugating the people through force, which was naturally accompanied by great injustice. 'Umar, on the other hand, believed that the administration of justice between people rested on the stability of the sovereign and their consultation with one another under the command of authority. He would say (may Allāh have mercy on him): "Al-Walīd is in the Shām (the Levant), al-Ḥajjāj is in 'Irāq, Muḥammad bin Yūsuf, al-Ḥajjāj's brother, is in the Yemen, 'Uthmān bin Ḥayyān is in the Ḥijāz and Qurrah bin Shurayk is in Egypt. By Allāh, the earth had become filled with injustice!"⁽²⁾

'Umar's Advice to al-Walīd to Restrain the Killing Power of His Officials:

'Umar took various courses of action to rectify the situation, one of which was to write to al-Walid advising him to put an end to the killing carried out by his officials. Initially, his appeal

(1) *Al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah* [The Beginning and the End] (12/683).

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Manāqibihi* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and His Outstanding Traits] by Ibn al-hakm, p. 146; *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 162.

to al-Walīd was somewhat successful when the latter agreed to issue a resolution prohibiting any governor from killing. Ibn al-Ḥakm mentions that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz entered upon al-Walīd and said: "O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* (Commander of the Faithful). I have some advice for you. Therefore, if you are not without reason or the ability to understand then you will embrace it." Al-Walīd said: "What prevents you from telling me now?" However, after withdrawing for a number of days, al-Walīd: "O boy! Who is at the door?" The boy replied: "Some people and one of them is 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz. So al-Walīd told him to let him in, which point 'Umar entered upon him and al-Walīd said: "Your advice, O Abū Ḥafṣ?" 'Umar began: "Certainly, after *Shirk* (Polytheism; associating partners in worship with Allāh) there is no greater sin in the Sight of Allāh than the spilling of blood, yet your officials are killers who record down that the sin of the murdered person was such and such. Indeed, you are responsible for this and will be held to account for it; therefore, write to them commanding them to not kill a single person but to record their sins and then to give testimony to them. This way, your order will allow your affairs to become clear to you." As a result, al-Walīd said: "May Allāh bless you, O Abū Ḥafṣ, and forbid your misfortune. It is incumbent upon me to write to them."

In keeping with his word, al-Walīd wrote to all officials of the major provinces, not leaving out any of them including al-Ḥajjāj, but al-Ḥajjāj became disturbed and troubled by this, particularly since he assumed it was personal and that al-Walīd had only written to him. He consequently wrote back

to al-Walīd, asking: "Where did this come from? Who advised the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* of such a thing?" Al-Walīd therefore told him that it was 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, to which al-Ḥajjāj remarked: "It impossible for 'Umar to stay out of matters!" He subsequently sent for I'rābī Ḥarūrī from the *Kharijites* (sect of "Dissenters") to whom al-Ḥajjāj said: "What do you say concerning Mu'āwiyāh?" He then grabbed him and said: "What do you say about Yazīd?" After that, he cursed at him and asked: "What do you say concerning 'Abd al-Mālik?" Next, he oppressed him and asked: "What do you say concerning al-Walīd?!" So, I'rābī replied: "I became outraged by them when you were appointed as governor given your well-known enmity and injustice."

Al-Ḥajjāj was silenced by his answer and thereby seized the opportunity to send him to al-Walīd, to whom he wrote: "I am taking precautions with regard to my religion and I am taking care of that which you asked me to take care of. Thus, I have not killed anyone who does not need to be killed, which is why I have sent you some of those who I would have ordinarily killed so that you might deal with the matter at your own discretion." It follows that al-Ḥarūrī entered upon al-Walīd who was sitting with some of the notables from the Shām (Levant), among whom was 'Umar. Al-Walīd said to al-Ḥarūrī: "What do you have to say about me?" He answered: "You are an insolent tyrant." Al-Walīd continued: "And 'Abd al-Mālik?" He answered: "An arrogant oppressor." "And what do you say concerning Mu'āwiyah?" asked al-Walīd. He answered: "A tyrant." So al-Walīd turned to Ibn ar-Rayyān and ordered

to him to behead him, which he did. Al-Walīd then stood up, went into his house and the people left. At that point, al-Walīd shouted to his servant: "Boy! Go and bring 'Umar back to me." When 'Umar returned, al-Walīd said: "O Abū Ḥafṣ! What do you have to say about this? "Were we right or wrong?" 'Umar answered: "You were not right to kill him, as to have taken a different course of action would have been more guided and correct. You should have imprisoned him until you had sought the counsel of Allāh or his fate had been determined." Al-Walīd remarked: "He insulted me and 'Abd al-Mālik while he is a mere Harūrī! Do you consider this permissible? It is not! If you would have imprisoned him then it seems that you would have pardoned him for doing so" and at that point al-Walīd stood up in a fury. Ibn ar-Rayyān then said to 'Umar: "Allah forgives you, Abū Ḥafṣ! I thought the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* called you back so that I could behead you!"⁽¹⁾ This was in fact the ploy of al-Ḥajjāj to frustrate al-Walīd about adopting 'Umar's opinion that al-Ḥajjāj's killings were immoderate and inappropriate.⁽²⁾

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's View on Dealing with the Khārijites:

In addition to the aforementioned incident in which al-Ḥajjāj sent al-Ḥarūrī to al-Walīd, some narrations have

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Manāqibihī* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and His Outstanding Traits] by Ibn al-hakm, pp. 119-121; *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 164.

(2) *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 164.

been related that serve to shed some light on what exactly happened. On the authority of Ibn Shihāb, who was informed by 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, al-Walīd sent for 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and when he arrived, he noticed that al-Walīd was frowning. He said: "So I sat down and there was nobody with him except for Ibn ar-Rayyān who was standing there with his sword. He then said: 'What do you say concerning someone who insults the *Caliphs*? Do you think he should be killed?' However, I remained silent so he scolded me and said: 'What is wrong with you?' Again, I kept quiet and the same happened again, after which I said: 'Do I kill, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*?' He answered: 'No, but he insulted the *Caliphs*'. I said: 'And I think he should have abstained'. At that point, he lifted his head, looked at Ibn ar-Rayyān and said: 'He is certainly absent-minded'".

Advising al-Walīd on the Subject of Deposing Sulaymān and Pledging Allegiance to His Son:

One of the last events involving 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz to be mentioned during al-Walīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik's Caliphate is his advising al-Walīd at the time when the latter wanted to renounce Sulaymān's right to the Caliphate and pass the pledge of allegiance after him on to his son, 'Abd al-'Azīz. However, 'Umar put a decisive end to that and he did not comply with al-Walīd's orders in this instance but instead said to him: "O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*! If we pledge allegiance to both of you in a single covenant, then how can we renounce him and

leave you?" Al-Walīd was outraged by 'Umar's comments and it is said that he attempted to deal with him harshly as a means of getting him to agree to do what he wanted. It has been stated that he locked him in a room and sealed the door shut until Umm al-Banīn, 'Umar's sister and the wife of al-Walīd, requested to enter. As a result, the door was opened after three (days or weeks) by which time 'Umar's face had become withdrawn and his neck had become bent.⁽¹⁾

Umar during the Caliphate of Sulaymān bin 'Abd al-Mālik:

It was during Sulaymān's rule that tremendous opportunities opened up for 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and his impact became manifest in various forms. By the time of Sulaymān's accession to the Caliphate, 'Umar had become a close intimate of Sulaymān, who in turn opened up many opportunities for 'Umar, saying: "O Abū Ḥaḥṣ! We have turned out exactly as you saw we would. This knowledge cannot be measured and you did not consider something in the general interest and let it pass." Thus, he made 'Umar an advisor and minister within his administration to remain by his side whether at home or away. In fact, Sulaymān was of the opinion that he needed 'Umar throughout his childhood and adulthood, as he would say: "If this man is ever absent from me I would never find anyone to instruct me with legal knowledge."⁽²⁾ On another occasion, he said: "O Abū Ḥaḥṣ! I was never filled with distress or troubled about something

(1) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5/148-9); *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 167.

(2) *Al-Ma'rifah wa at-Tārīkh* [Knowledge and History] by al-Baswī (1/598).

that you had not warned me about in advance.”⁽¹⁾

The Reasons For Sulaymān's Closeness to 'Umar:

Sulaymān's insistence on making available a vast array of opportunities before 'Umar, in my opinion, was motivated by the following reasons:

- Sulaymān bin 'Abd al-Mālik's Personality: He was not like his self-conceited brother, al-Wālid, who relied on his own opinion and bowed to the pressure of some of his governors. Rather, Sulaymān was the opposite of him such that he did not rely on his own opinion and he was not influenced by others.
- Sulaymān's satisfaction and contentment with 'Umar's sound opinions and views.
- 'Umar's stance during al-Walīd's endeavors to depose Sulaymān, for which Sulaymān felt indebted to 'Umar. This was suggested by adh-Dhahabī, once 'Umar's stance had become apparent, who said: "Because of that, Sulaymān was grateful to 'Umar and nominated him as his successor to the Caliphate."⁽²⁾
- 'Umar's influence on Sulaymān in issuing reformative

(1) *Strat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Hakm, p. 28; *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 168.

(2) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5/149).

resolutions: ‘Umar was instrumental in a number of important decisions made by Sulaymān, the most significant of which were:

- The dismissal of al-Ḥajjāj’s governors and certain other governors, such as the Governor of Makkah, Khālīd al-Qasrī, and the Governor of al-Madīnah, ‘Uthmān bin Ḥayyān;⁽¹⁾
- The establishment of prayer on time; Ibn ‘Asākir reports on the authority of Sa’īd bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz that al-Walīd bin ‘Abd al-Mālīk would habitually delay the *Ẓuhr* (Midday) and ‘*Aṣr* (Afternoon) prayers. Therefore, upon assuming power, Sulaymān wrote to the people – in accordance with ‘Umar’s advice – stating that prayer had been dead and so they should revive it.⁽²⁾ There were many other instances of ‘Umar’s great influence on Sulaymān, which have been summarised by aḏ-Ḍahḥrī in his statement: “In relation to all matters of great importance, he would listen to what ‘Umar had to say.”⁽³⁾

His Contestation with Sulaymān bin ‘Abd al-Mālīk over the Latter’s Enactment of His Father’s Deed:

‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-Mālīk spoke to Sulaymān on the subject

(1) *Athar al-‘Ulamā’ fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 169.

(2) *Tārīkh Damashq* [The History of Damascus] extracted from *Athar al-‘Ulamā’ fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 170.

(3) *Siyar A’lām an-Nubalā’* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5/125).

of the inheritance of some of 'Abd al-'Azīz's daughters from the *Banī* 'Abd al-Mālik (tribe) and in the course of their dispute, Sulaymān said to him: "If 'Abd al-Mālik wrote that in a deed then he prevented it from them", which caused 'Umar to walk out. Afterwards, Sulaymān summoned him back as he suspected that 'Umar had denounced him for what he had said concerning 'Abd al-'Azīz's position, upon which Sulaymān shouted to his servant: "O boy! Bring me 'Abd al-Mālik's deed." 'Umar therefore said to him: "*Abū al-Muṣḥaf* (Father of the Qur'ānic Manuscript), you called, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* (Commander of the Faithful)?" However, Ayyūb bin Sulaymān remarked: "One of you speaks words that could bring about his beheading!" 'Umar replied: "If I conveyed the matter to you, the ramifications for the Muslims would be greater than my mentioning it." At that point, Sulaymān scolded Ayyūb, but 'Umar interrupted and said: "If he was ignorant about the matter then let us not dwell on it."⁽¹⁾ Typical of his character, this incident illustrates just one example of the courageous stances taken by 'Umar in adherence to the truth, which ultimately was a merit to him when Sulaymān deemed his father's deed legally binding and non-amendable. On this occasion, 'Umar pointed out that the only book for which it is neither permissible to detract from nor make any changes to is the Book of Allāh. Tyrants subject victims by aggrandizing the issue of their fathers and grandfathers who bequeathed that temporal glory to their children to the

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Hakm, p. 31.

extent that they then consider their judgments effectively law-binding, irrespective of their position under Islāmic Law or whether they are in violation of it. Sulaymān's attitude towards his son who threatened ‘Abd al-‘Azīz for speaking the truth substantiates what was attributed to Sulaymān as far as his readiness to accept the truth when it was presented to him is concerned.⁽¹⁾

His Contestation with Sulaymān bin ‘Abd al-Mālik over Spending:

Sulaymān bin ‘Abd al-Mālik made a trip to al-Mādinah during which he gave out a vast amount of money. He later asked ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz: "What do think of what we just did, O Abū Ḥaḥṣ?" He replied: "I witnessed you enhance the wealth of the rich and abandoned the poor in their poverty."⁽²⁾ This was a perfect assessment made by ‘Umar of Sulaymān's actions, since Sulaymān's ignorance of the exactitudes of Islāmic rulings led him to assume that spending all that money on his subjects was a good deed, whereas ‘Umar enlightened him to the fact that he had made an error by spending it only the undeserving and depriving the deserving. ‘Umar therefore demonstrated the definitive difference between praiseworthy generosity and spending for his own merit.

(1) *Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [Islāmic History] (15/30-1).

(2) *Sīrat ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz* [The Biography of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz] by Ibn ‘Abd al-Hakm, p. 131.

'Umar's Urging Sulaymān to Restore the Rights of the Aggrieved:

Sulaymān embarked on a journey to the desert in the company of 'Umar and while they were on their way, a lightning and thundercloud cast over them that caused Sulaymān to become extremely frightened. As a result, 'Umar said: "Verily, this is a blessed sound. Therefore what would you be like at the sound of punishment?" Sulaymān, however, responded: "Take this one hundred thousand *Dirhams* and give it away in charity." So 'Umar replied: "Or even better than that, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*?" He asked: "And what is that?" He said: "A nation has sent you complaints that you have not attended to", and so Sulaymān sat down to restore them their rights.⁽¹⁾ It is evident from this that 'Umar had clear legal insight with respect to the arrangement of priorities whereby redressing grievances was put before giving out charity.

"I see a world devouring one another..."

At the time when he was *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, Sulaymān went out to see his military base with 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz in his company. The military base was comprised of horses, camels, asses, armour, possessions and men, which brought Sulaymān to ask 'Umar: "What do you say about

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Hakm, p. 33; *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 170.

this, O 'Umar?" He answered: "I see a world devouring one another and you are responsible for it all." As they drew near to the army, a crow took up a morsel of food from Sulaymān's canopy, flew away with it and began to croak. Sulaymān said: "What do you say to that, O 'Umar?" He answered: "I do not know." So he said: "What do you reckon he is saying?" 'Umar replied: "It is as if he saying: 'Where did you come from? And where are you going with it?'" Sulaymān then said to him: "Does that not amaze you?" He replied: "What amazes me is someone who acknowledges Allāh yet disobeys Him and someone who acknowledges the *Shayṭān* (Satan) yet obeys him."⁽¹⁾

"These will be your adversaries on the Day of Judgment":

When Sulaymān and 'Umar stopped in 'Arafat, Sulaymān was pleased by the vast numbers of people there, so 'Umar said to him: "These are your subjects today and you will be held responsible for them tomorrow." Another narration of this account reads: "They will be your adversaries on the Day of Judgment", which made Sulaymān cry and say: "I seek help from Allāh."⁽²⁾

(1) *Al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah* [The Beginning and the End] (12/685).

(2) *Ibid.*

Zayd bin Al-Ḥasan bin 'Alī and Sulaymān:

Zayd bin Al-Ḥasan bin 'Alī had succumb to al-Walīd on the issue of deposing Sulaymān out of fear of al-Walīd, following which he wrote to al-Walīd confirming his acceptance from al-Madīnah. Once Sulaymān had assumed the seat of power in succession, he found Zayd's letter and, immediately, he sent word to his Governor of al-Madīnah to question Zayd about it to see whether he acknowledged or denied Sulaymān in oath before the *minbar* (pulpit) of the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). However, even after word had been sent to Sulaymān regarding his acknowledgment of his Caliphate, Sulaymān ordered the Governor of al-Madīnah to flog him one hundred lashes and make him walk barefoot. In response to this, 'Umar imprisoned the messenger and said: "You are not leaving until I have spoken to the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* concerning Zayd bin Al-Ḥasan bin 'Alī who has bettered himself since writing this letter." The messenger remained where he was, while in the meantime Sulaymān had fallen ill, but 'Umar said to the Messenger: "You will not be getting out, as Sulaymān is sick." Hence, when Sulaymān died and 'Umar learned of his death, he ordered for the letter to be brought to him and he tore it up."⁽¹⁾

'Umar remained a close confidante of Sulaymān throughout the period of his Caliphate, delivering him advice

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 104.

and sharing his responsibility.⁽¹⁾ According to Dr. Yūsuf al-'Ashī, the starting point of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's policies was with the commencement of Sulaymān's Caliphate on the basis that although Sulaymān would at times digress from his policies, such as when adopting his own course of action unapproved by 'Umar, nevertheless, 'Umar was undoubtedly a key player throughout Sulaymān's Caliphate. Notably, 'Umar's policies were unchangeable irrespective of whether he was in Damascus or al-Madīnah, despite the fact that he had the capacity to do more in Damascus than in al-Madīnah. Important to him was the issue of eradicating inequity,⁽²⁾ oppression and tyranny and it was because of his anxiousness to do so that his strategies were executed in a gradual and moderate manner and his legal understanding of enjoining the good and prohibiting the evil, such as restoring the rights of the wronged and prohibiting it. When the mantle of the Caliphate would fall upon 'Umar, he further enhanced the enforcement of justice and the eradication of inequity on account of the power that had become available to him.

Thus, 'Umar advised his paternal uncle, 'Abd al-Mālik, and reminded of the *Ākhirah* (Hereafter) in relation to his authority and injustice. Even during al-Walīd's Caliphate, he did not remain aloof but it was with the ascent of Sulaymān to the Caliphate that 'Umar began to take the relevant steps and he was afforded opportunities. Hence, it is not plausible

(1) *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Hayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 173.

(2) *Dawlat a-Umawiyyah* [The Umayyad State] by Yūsif al-'Ashī, p. 254.

to say that 'Umar underwent change on a personal level but that the change was in the appointment of the state to serve the *Shar'īah* (Islāmic Law) in all aspects of life, even if that was at the expense of the ruling family that had become extravagant in its allowances and powers. Anxious to promote the welfare of the people, he restored the rights of the people by returning money to the *Bayt al-Māl* (Public Treasury) or to its rightful owners.

The Caliphate of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz:

One of the advantages of Sulaymān bin 'Abd al-Mālik's acceptance of the advice of the *Faqīh* (jurist) and scholar, Rajā' bin Ḥaywah al-Kundī, was his suggestion to Sulaymān on his deathbed to appoint 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz as his successor, since writing his will meant the *Shayṭān* (Satan) had no share in it.⁽¹⁾ Sulaymān died in the year 99 AH, on which occasion 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz offered the prayer at his funeral. Engraved on his ring were the words: [I sincerely believe in Allāh].⁽²⁾ There are multiple accounts relating Sulaymān's appointment of 'Umar as his successor, some of which I previously cited in the chapter on Sulaymān's Caliphate. Other narrations include those mentioned by Ibn Sa'ad in his *Tabaqāt* [The Classes] on the authority of Suhayl bin Abī Suhayl who said: "I heard Rajā' bin Ḥaywah say: 'On the day of *Jumu'ah* (Friday; congregational prayer), Sulaymān bin 'Abd al-Mālik was wearing green silk robes and as he looked in mirror, he said: 'By Allāh! I am a young king.' He then left for prayer, led the people in the Friday congregation and he did not return except that he had fallen ill.

When he later burdened his son, Ayyūb, who was just a

(1) *'Aṣr ad-Dawlatayn al-Umawiyyah wa al-'Abbāsiyyah* [The Age of the Umayyad and Abbasid States] by as-salābī, p. 37.

(2) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5/111-2).

boy at the time, with writing a book on his Caliphate, I said: 'What are you doing, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*? Among the things that can preserve the Caliph in his grave is the appointment of a righteous successor'. Sulaymān said: 'I will seek Allāh's counsel on the book. Wait and see. I have not decided upon it yet'. After one or two days, however, he had torn up the book and upon summoning me, he said: 'What do you think of Dāwūd bin Sulaymān?' I answered: 'He is away in Constantinople and you do not know if he is alive or dead'. He said: 'O *Rajā*', who do you see fit?' So I said: 'It is your choice, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*. I want to see who you mention'. He then said: 'What do you think of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz?' I replied: 'I know, by Allāh, that he is a pious, good Muslim'. So he said: 'He was certainly that while he was governor. He is not the first in line considering 'Abd al-Mālik's sons and will certainly never leave him to be appointed over them unless I make one of them his successor after him. Yazīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik is absent this season, so I will make him his successor. This should appease 'Umar and keep the others satisfied'. I said: 'It is your choice'. He then wrote down: [In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, Most Merciful. This is a deed from the servant of Allāh, Sulaymān bin 'Abd al-Mālik, the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz. Verily, I have handed over the Caliphate to him after me, and after him, to Yazīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik. Therefore, hear and obey him, fear Allāh and do not differ over it lest it make you avaricious'. He then sealed the deed and sent Ka'ab bin Hāmid, Chief of Police, to the members of his family who he had told to gather, which

they did.

Next, he sent the letter with me after giving me instructions to inform them that it was his deed, to pass it on to all of them and then to take their pledge of allegiance to the one he appointed therein. Accordingly, I went to them and when I told them that it was the deed of Sulaymān, they automatically said: 'We hear and we obey whoever is in it. May we enter and give our greetings to the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*?' I answered in the affirmative and they entered upon Sulaymān who said to them: 'This deed – and pointed to it for them to look at in my hands – is my covenant, so hear, obey and pledge allegiance to whoever is named therein. He then left while the sealed deed was in my hand.

Once the people had dispersed, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz approached me and said: 'O Abī al-Miqdām! If Sulaymān has any reverence and respect for me, or wished to put my mind at ease, as I fear that he might have attached this affair to me in some way, I implore by Allāh and my respect and esteem that you inform me if that is the case, so that I can ask him to pardon me of it now before a situation emerges in which I will have no power to do so, as I have no power on the Hour'. However, I said: 'No, by Allāh, not even a single letter'. 'Umar then angrily left. Soon afterwards, I was met by Hishām bin 'Abd al-Mālik, who said: 'O Rajā! Verily, I have a long-standing respect and love for you; therefore, will you not inform me of this affair? Even if you told me and then went to speak to someone else about it, they would not have heard

anything from me, so it will not make a difference anyway. Tell me and, by Allāh, I will never mention your name!' However, I refused and said: 'No, by Allāh, I will not inform you of so much as a single letter of that which was revealed to me in secret', at which point, Hishām walked away, hitting one hand with the other and saying: 'Apart from me, who else could it be? Have you gone outside of the *Banī 'Abd al-Mālik* (tribe)?! By Allāh, I am the outcast of *Banī 'Abd al-Mālik*'.

I entered upon Sulaymān bin 'Abd al-Mālik as he was dying and when I saw that he was suffering the agony of death, I turned him towards the *Qiblah* (direction of the *Ka'abah* in Makkah) and once he had gained consciousness, he uttered to me: 'That time hasn't come yet, O Rajā'. I repeated this two times until on the third time, he said: 'It is now, O Rajā', if you want to do it. I declare that there is only One God and that Muḥammad is His servant and messenger', and straight after that he died. Once I had closed his eyelids, covered him with green velvet and locked the door, I sent a messenger to his wife requesting her to come and see him. She returned the message: 'How was he when he woke this morning?' I told the messenger: 'Sleeping and covered'. He then looked at him covered in green velvet and returned to tell her what I had said, however, she understood that to mean that he was sleeping. I subsequently entrusted someone to sit by the door and informed him that under no circumstances should anyone be allowed in to see the Caliph.

At that point, I left and sent a message to Ka'ab bin Ḥāmid

al-'Unsī to gather together the family of the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* and so they convened in the *Dābiq masjid* (mosque). Upon addressing them, I said: 'Pledge your allegiance'. They retorted: 'We pledged our allegiance once before and you want us to do it again?!' I answered: 'This is the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*! Pledge your allegiance as he commanded you to do to whoever is named herein'. At that point, they gave their pledges one by one and now that Sulaymān had died, I realised that I would have to arbitrate the matter and so I said: 'Arise for your companion who has just died'. They uttered the words: 'To Allāh we belong and to Him we shall return', after which I began to read out the letter. When I reached the part that mentioned 'Umar's name, Hishām exclaimed: 'We will never pledge allegiance to him!' I said: 'I will, by Allāh, have you beheaded! Stand up and pay homage', and so, dragging his feet, he stood up. I then escorted 'Umar onto the *Minbar* (pulpit) where I sat him down while 'Umar was visibly reluctant. Hishām was, too, unaccepting of the fact that 'Umar's name had been written down and so when Hishām reached 'Umar, he said: 'To Allāh we belong and to Him we shall return. It is absurd that you should be endowed with this affair (the Caliphate) over the sons of 'Abd al-Mālik!' 'Umar humbly said: 'Yes, to Allāh we belong and to him we shall return. I hate that it has fallen on me'.⁽¹⁾

Concerning Rajā' bin Ḥaywah's distinct position, Abū Al-Ḥasan an-Nadwī said: "Rajā' accomplished a feat that cannot be forgotten by Islām. I do not know of any confidante of kings

(1) *Tārīkh aṭ-Ṭabarī* [Tabarī's History] (7/445); *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5/335-8).

and their men whose eminence proved to be as revered as and of more benefit than that of Rajā' bin Ḥaywah. Likewise, nobody seized opportunities like him and by doing so he rendered a great service to Islām."⁽¹⁾ Thus, may Allāh bestow His mercy on Rajā' who presented an exemplary model for those scholars who sit in the intimate circles of kings in showing them how they can honour Islām, remind the *Caliphs* of Allāh and take the opportunity to serve the Religion of Allāh.

'Umar's Approach to Administering the State According to His First Sermon:

Having now officially assumed the seat of the Caliphate, 'Umar ascended the *Minbar* (pulpit) in what would be his first encounter with the *Ummah* (Community of the Faithful). He said: "O people! I have been burdened with the responsibilities of the Caliphate against my own will and without your consent. I thereby remove the oath of allegiance to me that is on your necks so that you are at liberty to elect anyone whom you like." But the audience cried out with one voice that he was the fittest person for the high office and said: "We have chosen you, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, and we are pleased that you have blessed and honoured our good affair." At this juncture, 'Umar sensed that he was not going to be able to evade bearing the responsibility of the Caliphate, and so he decided to go on with determining his method and approach in dealing with the politics of the Muslim *Ummah*,⁽²⁾ stating:

(1) *Rijāl al-Fikr wa ad-Da'wah* [Men of Thinking and Preaching] by an-Nadwī (1/40).

(2) 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Siyāsatihi fī Rudd al-Maẓālim ['Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and

“To proceed: Verily, there is no prophet to come after your Prophet, and no book after the Book that was revealed to him; indeed, that is what Allāh resolved until the Day of Resurrection. I am not here as a judge but as an executor, neither am I an innovator but rather a follower, in which case nobody is to obey me should I act in disobedience to Allāh. I am not better than you, although a man from amongst you, by the decree of Allāh, has burdened me with a heavier burden than yours.

O people! Whoever wants to associate with us, he may do so in five things otherwise let him not come near us: He raises the need of whoever is incapable of raising it to us himself; he helps us to do good through his efforts; he acts in accordance with the good that we lead him to; he does not cheat anyone in our community; and he does not get involved in what does not concern him. I advise you to fear Allāh before anything and everything else, as besides this there is nothing else. Know your *Ākhirah* (Hereafter), as Allāh, the Beneficent, will satisfy the worldly affairs of the one who works towards it. Improve your inner-selves and Allāh will better you outwardly. Be increasingly mindful of death and prepare for it before it seizes it, as that will be the destroyer of you. This *Ummah* is neither divided over its Lord, the Majestic, nor its Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), nor its Book, while it does differ on the *Dīnār* and *Dirham* (units of currency; money). By Allāh, I will not give to anyone who is untrue and I will not deprive anyone who is true”, and at that

his Policy on Restoring the Rights of the Victims] by Mājidah Faysal, p. 102.

point he raised his voice so the people could hear him clearly, then he continued: "O people! As for he who obeys Allāh, his obedience is a duty but for the one who disobeys Allāh, he has no obedience. Obey me in obedience to Allāh but should I disobey Allāh, you must not obey me. If those around you in the major cities and provinces obey as you obey, then I am your leader, but if they are against it and seek to revolt, then I am not a leader."⁽¹⁾ With that closing statement, he descended the *minbar* (pulpit).

Thus, the Caliphate was assigned to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on that day, specifically, Friday, fifteen days before the close of the Islāmic month of *Ṣafar* in 99 AH.⁽²⁾ It is evident from his political sermon that 'Umar and his followers decided on the following rule:

- To adhere to the Book and *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition) and that he was not prepared to listen to any dispute on the issue of Islāmic Law and the Religion on the grounds that he was the leading executor, and Islāmic Law is executed through the authorization of what Allāh has made lawful and the prohibition of what Allāh has made unlawful, along with his rejection of *Bid'ah* (innovation) and fabricated opinions.

(1) See "Some of the Difference of Opinion" in *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5/340); *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Ḥakm, p. 35-6; *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Siyāsatihi fī Rudd al-Maẓālīm* ['Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and his Policy on Restoring the Rights of the Victims] by Mājidah Fayhal, p. 104.

(2) *Al-Bida'ayah wa an-Nihāyah* [The Beginning and the End] (12/657).

- He limited who he wanted to be connected with and who would work with him from his subordinates in accordance with five criteria:
 - 1) He raises the need of a person incapable of raising it to the Caliph himself, i.e. he made his close associates the connecting link between him and those incapable of reaching him for themselves in order that he might know of the people's needs and address them.
 - 2) He helps us to do good through his efforts, i.e. the relationship between them and him is on the basis assisting the Caliph towards good, and by implication, warning him against evil.
 - 3) It is incumbent on those close to the Caliph to guide him and advise him on the good of the *Ummah* (Community of the Faithful) and Religion.
 - 4) He forbade anyone who wants to get close to him with the aim of cheating or deceiving him.
 - 5) None of his close associates were to interfere in government matters that do not concern them.

In fact, 'Umar was all too familiar with the influence of the ruler's entourage and close associates on the ruler and subordinates, as well as the manner of rule. This is why he chose to make an impact on the people from the onset, by warning them to leave the ruling to him as he saw fit concerning the Law of Allāh, without completely excluding

them given that he permitted those close associates to direct him towards good, assist him and to transmit to him the demands of the needy.⁽¹⁾

- He warned the people of the worldly consequences if they behaved wrongly, he appealed to them to better their inner-selves and he warned them to draw lessons from death before it is too late.
- He made a vow to not give to anyone who is untrue and to not withhold from anyone who is true, whereby he made giving to them a right upon him. Those who are right are the ones who obey him in that which he obeys Allāh, however, he allowed them to break their oath of allegiance to him if he wavered from the path of Allāh, the Sublime.

The above constitute the broad statutes of 'Umar's political mandate, which he stipulated during his first encounter with his subordinates and the *ahl al-hall wa al-'aqd* (the people of decision and power" i.e. those scholars or political and military leaders who have power and are influential in the decision-making process) in the *Masjid* (mosque) on the day that he received the pledge of allegiance. In this manner, he defined his state in accordance with the Book of Allāh and the *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition) of the Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) whereby he stressed that he would not allow any of his delegates and officials to

(1) 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Siyāsatihi fī Rudd al-Maẓālim [Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and his Policy on Restoring the Rights of Victims] by Mājidah Faysal, p. 104.

influence him after that. He then summarised the main points of his first speech in a memo which he subsequently sent out to all his officials. This memo served two purposes:

- To point out to his officials what was required of them in terms of personal demeanour, and especially with regards to subjects, which we shall elaborate on in more detail by the will of Allāh;
- To outline their political mandates and determine their mode of dealing with individual subjects from the Muslim community and non-Muslims living under Muslim rule. As we shall come to see, by the permission of Allāh, 'Umar went on to speak about his position as a *Faqīh* (jurist) proficiently knowledgeable in *Uṣūl ad-Dīn* (the Fundamentals of Religion).⁽¹⁾ Here, it is fitting to go on to what 'Umar actually said to his officials vis-à-vis his attitude and approach.

Adherence to the Qur'ān and Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition):

One of the most distinct features of 'Umar's political life was his adherence to the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* such that he embarked on a campaign to disseminate knowledge amongst his subjects in order that they gain a deeper understanding of the Religion and become more informed of the *Sunnah*. This was triggered by 'Umar's recognition of the importance of the Caliphate, which meant the preservation of the Religion and the politics of

(1) *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Siyāsatihi fī Rudd al-Maẓālīm* [Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and his Policy on Restoring the Rights of the Victims] by Mājīdah Fayṣal, p. 106.

the world in accordance with it.⁽¹⁾ From this standpoint, 'Umar considered it both a priority and a duty to educate his subjects on the principles of their Religion so that they would take it upon themselves to act in agreement with them.

He has been reported as having said in one of his sermons: "*Imān* (Faith) includes *Farā'id* (duties), *Sharā'i* (legal laws), *Hudūd* (Allāh's ordinances between lawful and unlawful things) and *Sunan* (ways and acts of worship). Whoever acts on all of these things completely, has complete faith, and whoever does not act on them completely, his faith is incomplete. As long as I live, I shall continue to tell you about these things until you learn (act on) them. And should I die, I am not anxious to have your company."⁽²⁾ He also said: "Should Allāh cause every *Bid'ah* (innovation in the Religion) to perish by my hands and every *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition) to live by my hands so that part of my flesh might bring that about until I die, that is easy for Allāh." In another narration, he says: "By Allāh! Were it not for my reviving a *Sunnāh* or pursuing a truth, I would not wish to live a breath longer", and it was due to these very reasons that 'Umar took the initiative to administer to this weighty responsibility.

In pursuit of educating the masses and providing them with a greater understanding of the Religion, 'Umar dispatched an impressive number of scholars to the different corners of the

(1) *Al-Aḥkām as-Sulṭāniyyah wa al-Wilāyāt ad-Dīniyyah* [The Ordinances of Government] by al-Mawaridī, p. 5.

(2) *Sirat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakīm, p. 60.

vast empire to include major cities and townships. Therein, he instructed his delegates over the regions to press the scholars to spread their knowledge, which can be seen from the letters he wrote to them that state: "Visit the people of knowledge and *Fiqh* (jurisprudence) with your soldiers in order that they impart to others what Allāh gave them knowledge of, and they speak in a manner consistent with it in their gatherings."⁽¹⁾ Similarly, he wrote to some of his delegates: "To proceed: Order the scholars to spread knowledge in the *Masajid* (mosques), as the *Sunnah* has definitely perished."⁽²⁾ Furthermore, he instructed his officials to pay the scholars stipends to facilitate their devoting themselves purely to teaching. He deputed numerous scholars to instruct the people in the ruling of the Religion, including the likes of Yazīd bin Abī Mālik ad-Damashqī and al-Ḥārith bin Yamjad al-Ash'arī who he sent instruct both city people and Bedouins.⁽³⁾ Adh-Dhahabi documents that 'Umar delegated Yazīd bin Abī Mālik to instruct the *Banī* Namīr (tribe) on matters of Islāmic jurisprudence and to teach them to read. He sent Nāfi', the slave of Ibn 'Umar, to the people of Egypt to teach them the *Sunan* (Prophetic Traditions).⁽⁴⁾ He had also sent tens of *Fuqahā'* (jurists) to Africa to instruct its people on matters of Islāmic jurisprudence, which we shall come to in more detail

(1) *Ibid*, p. 73.

(2) *Sirat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 76.

(3) *Mukhtaṣar Tārīkh Damashq* [A Concise History of Damascus] (6/175); *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 179.

(4) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5/438).

by the permission of Allāh.

The roles of these scholars, however, were not merely limited to educating and no more; on the contrary, some of them were vested with authority over the provinces, some were entrusted with the administration of the law and the vast majority, in addition to disseminating knowledge, participated in the fields of *Da'wah* (Islāmic preaching) and *Jihad* (fighting for Allāh's Cause). While these constitute but a few of his reforms, they were in reality among the most distinct qualities of his political regime that served to set him apart from his predecessors. His eagerness to promote a sound religious consciousness and enhance the understanding of Islāmic rulings among the individuals of his state meant that he was instrumental in protecting the minds of the *Ummah* from the frivolous ideas that had detrimental effects on political stability and peace, such as the ideas of the *Kharijites* (sect of "Dissenters) among others.⁽¹⁾

The Presence of Shūrā (Consultation) within 'Umar's State:

Allāh, the Sublime, says in the Holy Qur'ān: [*And those who answer the Call of their Lord, perform the Ṣalāt (Prescribed Prayers), who (conduct) their affairs by mutual consultation and who spend of what we have bestowed on*

(1) *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 180.

them" (*ash-Shūrā*, 42:38). And He says: "So overlook (their faults), ask Allāh's forgiveness for them and consult them in affairs. Then when you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allāh; certainly, Allāh loves those who put their trust in Him." (*Āl-'Imrān*, 3:159). Undoubtedly, 'Umar showed great concern over the implementation of the principle of *Shūrā* during the course of his Caliphate. Just one of the many things he said on the topic was: "Indeed, advice and debate are gateways of mercy and blessing with which opinions cannot deviate and resolve cannot be lost."⁽¹⁾ One of the first decisions taken by 'Umar upon his appointment over al-Madīnah by al-Walīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik was to dedicate himself to the application of *Shūra*, which he made a ground rule of his governorship when he summoned al-Madīnah's *Fuqahā'* (jurists) and senior scholars to form a permanent advisory council,⁽²⁾ as we discussed earlier.

It is only proper for one on whom the enormous responsibility of leading rests to establish *Shūrā* as one of its principles to be applied throughout the entire duration of his office, and more importantly, because it pertains to the mandate of the Muslims. From the onset of his Caliphate, the principle of *Shūrā* was made evident when he said to the people: "O people! I have been burdened with the responsibilities of the Caliphate against my own will and

(1) *Adab ad-Dunyā wa ad-Dīn* [The Ethics of the World and of the Religion (of Islām)] by al-Mawaridī, p. 189

(2) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 283.

without your consent. I thereby remove the oath of allegiance to me that is on your necks so that you are at liberty to elect anyone whom you like." But the audience cried out with one voice that he was the fittest person for the high office and said: "We have chosen you, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, and we are pleased that you have blessed and honoured our good affair." By declaring this, 'Umar abandoned the principle of hereditary accession that had practiced by most of the 'Umayyad Caliphs and replaced them with the principles of *Shūrā* and election. In that way, 'Umar did not oblige those present to choose him and pay homage to him, given that he was worried about the view of the Muslims within the major cities and their consent to it, which is why he said in his first speech following his assumption of the Caliphate: "If those around you in the major cities and provinces obey as you obey, then I am your leader, but if they are against it and seek to revolt, then I am not a leader" and he descended the *Minbar* (pulpit).

Having written to major cities of the Islāmic empire, every one of them offered their vow of allegiance. Among those who wrote them was Yazīd bin al-Muhallab who advocated pledging allegiance to 'Umar once it had become clear to him that there was a Caliphate that had not been pursued and so he called the people to pledge their allegiance, which they did.⁽¹⁾ It is evident that 'Umar not only received the consent of those around him but, the same was true for the Muslims of

(1) *Tārīkh aṭ-Ṭabarī* [Tabarī's History], extracted from: *An-Namūdḥaj al-Idārī al-Mustakḥlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 285.

all the cities. From this, we can infer the following regarding 'Umar's position:

- He revealed the nonconformity of most of the Umayyad Caliphs with fundamental Islāmic principles in their accession to the Caliphate
- He urged the application of *Shūrā*, in specific reference to his own assumption of the Caliphate
- Applying the principle of *Shūrā* to matters such as succession to the Caliphate makes it fitting to be applied to other similar matters

'Umar would take counsel with the scholars and seek their advice on many matters. He attracted around him a galaxy of talented men, including the likes of Sālim bin 'Abdullah, Muḥammad bin Ka'ab al-Qurṭubī and Rajā' bin Ḥaywah. Addressing them, 'Umar said: "I have burdened with this affair, so advise me on it",⁽¹⁾ and in a similar manner he would also take counsel with men of outstanding intellect.⁽²⁾ 'Umar had become determined to reform his inner circle once he was appointed to the Caliphate, which he did by means of remaining in the close company of the scholars and righteous and distancing himself from those only interested in worldly enhancement and personal gain. It was not enough for him, may Allāh have mercy on him, to select his inner circle of associates but he

(1) *Sīrat wa Manāqib 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Life Story and Outstanding Traits of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 65.

(2) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlāṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 285.

went a step further than that by urging and commending them to assess him. Thus, he said to 'Umar bin Muhājir: "If you were to ever see me stray from the truth then put your hands around my throat, shake me and say: 'O 'Umar, what are you doing?!'"⁽¹⁾ It was this very attitude that had an influence on the rectification of his reformatory political mandate and its success, in conjunction with the influence of his inner-circle in supporting and encouraging him, keeping him levelheaded and ensuring correctness in taking decisions.⁽²⁾ Of the many reasons for 'Umar's outstanding success was his closeness to the people of knowledge and righteousness and his contentment with them in sharing the immense responsibility with him. In due course, the outcome of this unison brought about greater good for the Muslims and Islām.

Justice within 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's State:

Allāh, the Majestic, says: "*Verily, Allāh enjoins justice and doing good*" (*an-Naḥl*, 16:90). He also orders compliance with that which He makes compulsory: "*You who believe! Uphold justice and bear witness to Allāh, even if it is against yourselves, your parents, or your close relatives. Whether they are rich or poor, Allāh can best take care of both. Refrain from following your own desire, so that you can act justly – if you distort or neglect justice, Allāh is fully aware of what you do.*" (*an-Nisā*', 4: 135).

(1) *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], pp. 175-7.

(2) *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 178.

Justice had two forms: 1) the form that is negative in the sense of preventing injustice and removing it from the oppressed, i.e. preventing the violation of people's rights in connection with themselves, their possessions and their wealth, eradicating the effects of the wrong that has been done to them, restoring their rights to them, punishing the wrongdoer where punishment is necessary;⁽¹⁾ 2) positive justice, which is mainly connected to the State in reference to state officials carrying out the truth in guaranteeing the people's freedom and livelihood to the extent that not a single one of them remains helpless, despondently weak, depravedly poor, or timorously threatened. It is the duty of the ruler in Islām to ensure all of these things.⁽²⁾ The *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* (Commander of the Faithful), 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, embarked on this enormous task and weighty principle to the fullest and he believed that responsibility and authority corresponded to granting people their rights, yielding to the conditions of their oaths of allegiance and realizing their legitimate interests. In view of that, the Caliph worked for the *Ummah* and it was upon him to attend to their fair demands according to the conditions of the pledge of allegiance.⁽³⁾

'Umar loved to gain better insight into the characteristics of a just leader and what he had to undertake in order to

(1) *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz: Khāmis al-Khalafā' ar-Rāshidīn* ['Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz: The Fifth Rightly-Guided Caliph] by 'Abd as-Sittār ash-Shaykh, p. 222.

(2) *Ibid; Niẓām al-Islām* [The System of Islām] by Muḥammad Mubārak. P. 45-6.

(3) *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz: Khāmis al-Khalafā' ar-Rāshidīn* ['Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz: The Fifth Rightly-Guided Caliph] by 'Abd as-Sittār ash-Shaykh, p. 223.

earn such a praiseworthy, unique and special reputation. He once wrote to Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī to write him the description of a just leader and Al-Ḥasan wrote: "The just ruler, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, is like a loving father who works hard for his children when they are young, teaches them when they get older, writes to them while he is alive and puts away for them for after his death. The just leader, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, is like the gracious, honest, merciful mother to her child who she carries reluctantly, bears reluctantly, nurtures as a child, stays up at night with him, soothes and calms him, breastfeeds him for some time, weans him for some time more, expresses joy at his good health and is saddened by his illnesses. The just leader, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, is the guardian of the orphan and the treasury of the poor, fostering the little ones. The just leader, *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, is as the heart is to the organs of the body: all are sound when it is sound, and all corrupt when it is corrupt. The just ruler, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, is he who stands between Allāh and His servants, hearkening to Allāh's Words and making them hearken; looking to Allāh and making them look; obedient to Allāh and making them obedient. Therefore, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, act not in what Allāh, the Mighty and Glorious, has given you like a servant whose master has trusted him and given into his care his wealth and hid children, who then squanders his master's wealth and drive his children away, and reduced the family to poverty and scatters their fortune."⁽¹⁾

(1) 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz: *Khāmis al-Khalafā' ar-Rāshidīn* ['Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz: The Fifth Rightly-Guided Caliph] by 'Abd as-Sittār ash-Shaykh, p. 224.

His Policy on Redressing Grievances:

The *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* Began with Himself –

Whether in his youth or as adult, 'Umar's eagerness to attend to the needs of every person in the empire and administer to restoring the rights of victims always began through personal example. Ibn Sa'ad narrates: 'When 'Umar would restore the rights of those who had been wronged, he would say: 'I should not start with anyone other than myself'.⁽¹⁾ 'Umar first discarded what he owned of land, possessions and wealth until he finally looked at his ring and said: "This was presented to me by al-Walīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik upon his return from the *Maghrib* (Arab West", i.e. the western region of North Africa)", upon which deposited it into the public treasury.⁽²⁾ This was done to demonstrate his insistence on eradicating all doubtful matters with certainty, while assuring others that what he owned did not resemble injustice or inequity in any shape or form, even if it had been bequeathed to him. This was primarily due to the many stories of illegal extortion committed by the Umayyad *Caliphs* and their agents that were being told by the people. When 'Umar heard that the people were saying he had a sword embellished with silver, while it was actually embellished with iron, he said: "The sword of Abī Muḥallā was embellished with silver so I removed it and embellished it with iron."⁽³⁾ The means by which he discarded his possessions

(1) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5/341).

(2) *Ibid* (5/341-2).

(3) *Ibid* (5/355); 'Umar was *Siyāsatuḥu fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* [Umar and His Policy on Redress-

and land varied, one of which was by selling them, since once he assumed the Caliphate he saw that his place was one of a servant. According to the author of *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes], Ibn Sa'ad, "He got his articles of luxury [which included items of clothing and perfume] auctioned for 23 thousand *Dinar* and spent the amount on charitable purposes."⁽¹⁾

The other way was the restoration of the properties confiscated by the Umayyads to their rightful owners. Ibn al-Jawzī reports on the authority of Ismā'īl bin Abī al-Ḥakm that he said: "Umar was hardly free from the burial ceremonies of Caliph Sulaymān and wanted to take a short respite when his son, 'Abd al-Mālik, asked him if he would like to take a rest before dealing with the cases pertaining to confiscated properties. He replied: 'Yes, I will deal with them after taking a rest'. 'Are you sure that you will live up to that time?' asked his son. 'Umar kissed his dear son and said: 'Praise be to Allāh for having given me such a virtuous son'. He immediately went out, ascended the *Minbar* (pulpit) and publically dealt with the urgent matter before the people, which he began by returning all his movable and immovable properties to the public treasury. His faithful slave, Mazāhim, was deeply moved by this uncommon sight and asked: 'Sir, what have you left for your children?' 'Allāh', was his reply."

Other deposits into the *Bayt al-Māl* (Public treasury) included his properties in Jabal al-Wars in Yemen and his

ing Grievances], p. 205.

(1) *Ibid* (5/345); *Umar was Siyāsatuḥu fī Rudd al-Mazālim* [Umar and His Policy on Redressing Grievances], p. 205.

properties in al-Yamāmah.⁽¹⁾ Thus he deposited every one of his properties apart from Fadak, Khaybar⁽²⁾ and as-Swaydā'. Regarding the latter, 'Umar said: "There is nothing that I have not returned to the wealth of the Muslims except for the spring that is in as-Swaydā', for this is land where I retreat to and be free from the lashes of the Muslims. I have restored all other properties and the annual income of my personal treasury has been reduced to two hundred *Dīnār*."⁽³⁾

He restored the possession of the garden of Fadak, located in the north of al-Madīnah, to the descendants of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) which had been appropriated by Marwān during the Caliphate of 'Uthmān bin 'Affān (many Allāh be pleased with him) and yielded approximately ten thousand *Dīnār* on an annual basis. Upon assuming office, 'Umar took it upon himself to make enquiries and investigate into its status. He was subsequently informed that the matter had been settled from the time of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), Abū Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmān. In view of that, he then wrote a letter to Abī Bakr bin Muḥammad bin 'Amr bin Ḥazm in which he said: "To proceed: Having examined and considered the matter of Fadak, I conclude that it does not befit me. Rather, it should be returned to the way it was during the era of the Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him),

(1) *Umar was Siyāsatuḥu fī Rudd al-Mazālim* [Umar and His Policy on Redressing Grievances], p. 207.

(2) *Ibid.*

(3) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 40.

Abī Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmān, and I abandon what took place after them. If this letter has reached you then take hold of it and consider that a man has come to you to execute truth and peace."⁽¹⁾

On another occasion, 'Umar went back to an Egyptian man from the land of Ḥelwān who he knew his father, 'Abd al-'Azīz, had wronged. 'Umar even returned the house that his father had purchased from ar-Rabī ' bin Khārijah, which had an orphan staying in one of its rooms, based on 'Umar's understanding that it is not permissible for a guardian to sell the property of an orphan. He next turned his attention to the money he had acquired from his estate in Jabal al-Wars in the Yemen and he returned it to the *Bayt al-Māl* (Public Treasury) despite the fact that its people were in severe need of this money. However, 'Umar was undeniably more prompted by the Hereafter than the life of this world, which was evident from the time he instructed his slave, Mazāḥim, to return the money given to him by al-Baḥrayn every year to the "money of Allāh."⁽²⁾ Hence, it was through personal example and by beginning with himself before his subjects that 'Umar settled affairs not merely by returning confiscated properties to their rightful owners, but by discarding any of his own properties that he considered either impure and inappropriate or dubious about his right to it.

(1) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5/389); *Umar wa Siyāsatuḥu fī Rudd al-Mazālim* [Umar and His Policy on Redressing Grievances], p. 208.

(2) *Umar wa Siyāsatuḥu fī Rudd al-Mazālim* [Umar and His Policy on Compensating the Victims of Injustice], p. 212.

Disdainful of worldly luxuries, 'Umar preferred simplicity to the extravagance that had become the hallmark of the Umayyad lifestyle, depositing all assets and finery meant for the Caliph into the *Bayt al-Māl* (Public Treasury). 'Umar was extremely pious and he feared Allāh concerning illegal extortion and the violation of rights. He bade his wife, Fāṭimah, to return the jewelry she had received from her father, Caliph 'Abd al-Mālik, saying: "Having learned that you were given this by your father, you can either return it to the *Bayt al-Māl* or else permit me to separate from you, for I cannot stay in this house with you knowing where it has come from." She said: "Do with it as you will", and thus, the faithful wife complied with his request and deposited all of it in the *Bayt al-Māl*. After her husband's death, her brother, Yazīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik, who succeeded him as Caliph offered to return it to her. "I returned these valuables during my husband's lifetime; why should I take them back after his death?", she told him. After that, Yazīd divided it between his wives and his son's wives.⁽¹⁾

Returning the Illegally Appropriated Property of the Umayyad Family:

Having embarked on a mission to restore confiscated properties to their rightful owners, starting with himself, he then looked at his family and the families of his uncles and siblings from the Umayyad household. Soon after the burial

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 52-3.



of his cousin, Sulaymān bin 'Abd al-Mālik, 'Umar became astonished by the displays of extravagance practiced by his Umayyad cousins that had not been present during the time of the Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) or the Rightly-Guided *Caliphs*. The house of the Umayyads had become accustomed to luxuries at the expense of the common man whereby they would squander vast amounts of wealth on making pompous, grand displays in front of their subjects. The Caliph's personal mounts comprised of a variety of workhorses, stallions and asses, each of which was assigned its own stableman and enjoyed its own pavilion, stable, mattress and footstool. All of this passed on to the new Caliph, including new garments, bottles of fragrances and oils, which had been presented to him by the orders of the deceased Caliph as was befitting a new Caliph. Disdainful of luxuries, 'Umar viewed all of this as extravagant and wasteful, since there was no justification for taking these things at the expense of the Muslims' *Bayt al-Māl*. Rather, he made his objective to spend every *Dirham* therein in the approved manner that Allāh revealed to His Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Thus, he immediately ordered Mazāḥim to take away the indulgences, sell them and deposit their total yield in the Muslims' *Bayt al-Māl*.⁽¹⁾

'Umar had a fixed policy on returning the illegally appropriated property of the Umayyad household from the time that he took hold of the reins of the Caliphate. When

(1) *Umar wa Siyāsatuhi fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* [Umar and His Policy on Compensating the Victims of Injustice], p. 213.

a delegation of the Umayyad family went to see him after he had finished burying Sulaymān to ask him what they had been promised by the former Umayyad *Caliphs*, 'Abd al-Mālik wanted to respond to them on behalf of his father. It was at that point that 'Umar revealed to him his policy, saying: [Say (Muḥammad, *may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him*): 'Verily, if I disobey my Lord, I am afraid of the torment of a great Day] (*az-Zumar*, 39:13). He then clarified it for him another time when he came to demand that he act swiftly in exacting the confiscated property from the Umayyads, on which occasion he said: "O my son! Your people have tied up this affair knot by knot, loop by loop. If I conspire against them to exact what is in their possession, I would not be safe from them slitting me open and spilling my blood. By Allāh, my demise from this world is easier on me than to shed an ounce of blood of a war captive. Would you be pleased if your father, one of these days, dies while committing *Bid'ah* (heresy; innovation), or would you rather he lived by the *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition) until Allāh judges between me and your people based on the Truth, while He is the Best of Judges?"⁽¹⁾ He continued to elucidate his policy further after his son, 'Abd al-Mālik, asked: "What keeps you from pursuing what you want? As by Him in Whose Hand in my soul! I would not care if I were put into chains if it enabled to do it!" "Is that so?" remarked 'Umar. "Yes", 'Abd al-Mālik replied. "Praise be to Allāh for giving me such a pious and virtuous son to help

(1) *Strat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, pp. 260-3.

me with my religion. However, if the people get wind of what you just said, they would oblige me to use the sword and I would not be able to deny it. In the event that they do so, I would find no escape from the sword and there is no good that cannot be achieved without using the sword. My son! Managing people is a difficult sport. Therefore, should Allāh prolong my life, I beg that He fulfils my wishes and speeds up my death; for Allāh knows that I have wanted this."⁽¹⁾

The approach and etiquette used by 'Umar to implement his policies were wise and good, which served to smooth the process of taking decisive action. This was done by first discarding what was in his own possession of property to either their rightful owners or to the *Bayt al-Māl*, and then by moving on to the house of the Umayyads, whom he assembled together and demanded the return of all money and property that had been acquired illegitimately.⁽²⁾ The early days of 'Umar's Caliphate witnessed the large-scale depletion of extensive funds and properties accumulated by the Umayyad ruling family. Once 'Umar assumed office, he took the necessary measures to ensure that the assets were rightfully channelled back to the *Bayt al-Māl* for the welfare of the Muslims and not dominated by one person or one party. Meticulously, money and property of every type and quantity was traced through various means and avenues, one by one, in order to return them to their rightful place. By 'Umar's

(1) *Ibid*, pp. 262-3.

(2) *Umar wa Siyāsatuhi fī Rudd al-Mazālim* [Umar and His Policy on Redressing Grievances], p. 215.

estimation, confiscated property, rewards, special allowances, gifts, estates and land, all in the form of fixed assets and cash flow, amounted to a vast portion of the *'Ummah's* money exceeding almost half of the total funds.⁽¹⁾ Not long after, the Umayyad tribe began to feel that they had been stripped of their natural and legal rights by 'Umar and so they rose up to voice their displeasure at his policy and declared their firm objection to it. 'Umar's response was: "By Allāh, I desire that no wrong remains on the land except that I compensate for it, which I have vowed to do on the condition that if I do not, then I will feel the pain of losing one of my limbs, for it to return to the way it was, such that it might happen all over again. Therefore, if I do not compensate for some wrong that remains, I have myself to answer to."⁽²⁾

To his dismay, however, the Umayyad tribe did not empathise with his determination and resolution concerning the rights of the *Ummah*, since they had never hesitated to violate them before. Afterwards, they convened a meeting wherein they decided to nominate one of al-Walīd's son, who was their elder and adviser, to write to 'Umar. Hence, he wrote: "To proceed: It is apparent that you have forgotten who the former *Caliphs* were and you conduct yourself in a manner other than the way they conducted themselves. What you have declared illegitimate in fact dishonours the former *Caliphs* and harms their children after them; that is not for

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 115.

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 147-151.

you to do. Therefore bring what Allāh does not allow to an end, for you have behaved in disagreement with the truth in relation to your kith and kin by your pursuance of the wealth, inheritance and rights of the Quraysh so that you might unjustly, adversely and immorally deposit them into your *Bayt al-Māl*. Fear Allāh, O son of 'Abd al-'Azīz, and return them, as you will certainly not be comfortable whilst up on your *Minbar* (pulpit) should you choose to alienate and wrong your relatives. By Allāh Who bestowed Muḥammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) with the special honour that he had, you have far exceeded the bounds of Allāh with this leadership of yours that you claim is a burden upon you, which it is. In that case, suppress some of your inclinations and refrain yourself."⁽¹⁾ The tactics employed by the Umayyad tribe against 'Umar's policy that are manifest in this letter are:

- That he has contradicted the way of the former Caliphs, deprecated them and dishonoured their actions
- He has offended the children of the former Caliphs
- His actions are not harmonious with the truth
- If he alienates his family then his Caliphate is in jeopardy

There is no doubt that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's policy threatened the standing of the Umayyad family and weakened their centres of power, which resulted in their use

(1) *Ibid*, pp. 126-7; 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz by Sāliḥ al-'Alī, p. 194.

of threatening tactics against the standing Caliph. Of course, this presented a real danger to 'Umar and his Caliphate,⁽¹⁾ however, 'Umar's response to the letter intensified the fire of truth that gushed forth with his every word. He wrote: "Woe unto you and woe unto you father! How numerous your claimants and adversaries will be on the Day of Judgment! Be patient, for if Allāh should grant me a prolonged life and restore the truth to His people, I will devote my attention to you and your family. I have acted upon the clear proof, while you have left the truth behind you [...]"⁽²⁾

The Umayyad Family Resort to Calm Dialogue:

Having begun to despair at 'Umar's rigid withstanding of their staunch collective disposition, the Umayyad family decided to resort to calm dialogue with the hope that they might be able to achieve their goals by this way instead. One day when they were speaking to him, they consulted him on the issue of the status of relatives and showing kindness towards kith and kin. In response, he answered them: "I will not extend my money to you and as for this money – referring to the public funds – your right to it is like the right of any Muslim. By Allāh! I do not see that matters are ever going to change so much so that should the people on the earth do as they have seen you do, they will surely be afflicted with a

(1) *Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* by Sāliḥ al-'Alī, p. 195.

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 147-151.

calamity from the punishment of Allāh.”⁽¹⁾ One day, Hāshim bin 'Abd al-Mālik entered upon him and said: “O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*! I am the messenger of your people to you. They would like me to inform you that they say: ‘Continue to do as you see fit concerning that which is under your authority and leave what belonged to your predecessors and now to their beneficiaries alone’.” Wittily, 'Umar remarked: “Do you think that I should bring out either Mu'āwiyah's records or 'Abd al-Mālik's?” “The most preceding one”, Hishām answered. So 'Umar said: “In that case, I believe that is the Book of Allāh. Therefore I am imputed to that which has been brought to me by those under my authority and those who preceded me.”⁽²⁾

The Umayyad Family Send 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Paternal Aunt:

When the men of the Umayyad family proved incapable of intimidating 'Umar or getting him to moderate his policy in their favour, they turned to his aunt, Fāṭimah bint Marwān. This particular aunt of his was well acquainted with the *Caliphs* and 'Umar had never denied her any request or need before. She was held in high esteem by the Umayyad family who respected her tremendously, just as 'Umar had always done before he became the Caliph. Thus, when she entered upon him, he honoured her as he was accustomed to doing and

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 114-5.

(2) *Ibid*, pp. 118-9; *Malāmiḥ al-Inqilāb al-Islāmī fī Khilāfat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Characteristics of the Islāmic Transformation during the Caliphate of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Dr 'Imād ad-Dīn Khalīl, pp. 117-8.

gave her a cushion to sit on. She then said to him: "Indeed, your relatives are complaining about you and mention that you have confiscated all the lands that an earlier Caliph had given them." He said: "I have neither refused them their rights or anything belonging to them nor have I taken their rights or anything belonging to them." She said: "I witnessed them talking and I fear they will one day rise up against you." "I will be fearful of that every day except on the Day of Judgment when Allāh will not shield me from its evil."

'Umar then stopped commenting and instead asked for a *Dīnār* (coin; unit of account), a piece of meat and some iron to be brought to him. He then threw the coin into a fire and began to blow on it until it turned red, after which he picked it up with something. When the iron became red hot, he put the piece of meat on it. It started sizzling and giving off a smell. He then turned to his aunt and said: "Do you want me to burn in Hell like this?" "No. Of course not", she replied. He asked again: "What uncle do you commiserate for having done this to your nephew?"⁽¹⁾ 'Umar continued to say: "What I have done is according to the Word of Allāh. I have executed justice. Whatever the Umayyads had looted, I have confiscated for the state." As a result, his aunt was deeply moved by what he had witnessed from 'Umar and requested that he continue to act as he saw fit. She also said that the Umayyads should listen to what he was saying and that he had painted a lucid picture of what social justice means in Islām whereby wealth

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p.

and ease extends to all.

He said: "Indeed, the Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was sent as a mercy, and not as a punishment, for all humankind. He then chose to leave a river behind for the people to drink from indiscriminately. After that, Abū Bakr was appointed and he left the river as it was. 'Umar succeeded him and did as they both had done. The river then ceased to be a source of water for Yazīd, Marwān, 'Abd al-Mālik, his son, al-Walīd, Sulaymān and the sons of 'Abd al-Mālik, until the matter has now come to me. The greatest river has become so dry that its people with never see it until it is returns to what it was." She replied: "You have said enough. I wanted to hear what you had to say but as what we have just discussed here, I will never mention of it again." At that point, she went back to the Umayyads and told them what he said.⁽¹⁾ According to one narration, she said to them: "You have brought this upon yourselves. You married with the children of 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb and now he comes resembling his grandfather." Upon hearing that, they remained silent.⁽²⁾

Fading Collective Umayyad Resistance:

Before long, traces of collective resistance on the part of the Umayyads had all but disappeared following their consideration of 'Umar's grandfather with regard to the

(1) *Al-Kāmil fī at-Tārīkh* [A Complete History] (3/270).

(2) *Ibid* (3/271).

Ummah's wealth and because of which they said: "Nothing else remains to be said or done."⁽¹⁾ On the other hand, every one of them made their own individual endeavor to retrieve what they could of their confiscated funds, but now that they had become fragmented, it had become more appropriate for 'Umar to confront them one by one about what they were striving to achieve. As such, he individually informed them that the rights of the *Ummah* could not be bargained with just like that.⁽²⁾

Restoring Rights to their Owners:

'Umar did not just put an end to the Umayyad's attempts to retrieve the confiscated money and return it to the *Bayt al-Māl*; that was not enough for him. He went a step further by publically announcing to the Islāmic *Ummah* the names of every eligible claimant who remained to have their rights restored by a governor or member of the Umayyad family or if they had a genuine grievance to be taken up by them. 'Umar thereby went forth bearing proof so that he could address each case, which he did, one after another, to the many people whose testimonies matched their complaints

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p.58-9; *Malāmiḥ al-Inqilāb al-Islāmī fī Khilāfat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Characteristics of the Islāmic Transformation during the Caliphate of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Dr 'Imād ad-Dīn Khalīl, p. 119.

(2) *Malāmiḥ al-Inqilāb al-Islāmī fī Khilāfat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Characteristics of the Islāmic Transformation during the Caliphate of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Dr 'Imād ad-Dīn Khalīl, p. 119.

of injustice pertaining to land, farms, money and property.⁽¹⁾ In one instance, 'Umar's governor in al-Baṣrah had sent a man to him whose land had been savaged. Upon returning the land to him, 'Umar then said to him: "How much did you spend in order to get to me?" "O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*! You ask me about my expenses whilst you have already returned my land to me that is worth more than one hundred thousand?" he asked. Even so, Umar said: "I have only restored what is rightfully yours", and without hesitation he handed him sixty *Dirhams* to compensate for his travel expenses.⁽²⁾ Ibn Muṣā states: "'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz did not cease to rectify injustices from the moment he assumed office right up until his death."⁽³⁾

One day, a band of Muslims turned up and quarreled with Rūḥ bin al-Walīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik in the marketplace, upon which they presented him with a testimony to bring legal action against him. 'Umar thereby ordered Rūḥ to return the shops to them without referring to al-Walīd's records, following which Rūḥ stood up and threatened them. One of the men, however, was able to deter it and went to inform 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz about what had happened, because of which 'Umar instructed his chief guard to follow Rūḥ and in the event that he did not return the shops to their owners, he should be beheaded. Fearful for his life, Rūḥ immediately

(1) *Ibid*, p.120.

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, pp. 146-7.

(3) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] by Ibn Sa'ad (5/341).

returned the shops.⁽¹⁾

'Umar once returned a patch of land to a group of desert nomads who had cultivated it only for it to be later seized by al-Walīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik. Upon granting it back to them, 'Umar said: "The Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'Whoever cultivates barren land, it belongs to him.'"⁽²⁾ "Umar showed much love for the *Ahl al-Bayt* (Prophetic Household) and restored all of their rights to them. He once said to Fāṭimah bint 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib (may Allāh be pleased with them): "O daughter of 'Alī! By Allāh, there is no family on the face of the earth that is more beloved to me than your family. You are more to beloved to me than my own family."⁽³⁾

His Dismissal of All Unjust Governors and Commanders:

One of the first tasks 'Umar undertook upon assuming office was to filter out all of the unjust governors and commanders in charge and dismiss them from their posts. Among those dismissed was Khālīd bin ar-Rayyān who had been Sulaymān bin 'Abd al-Mālik's chief bodyguard and the executor of everyone Sulaymān ordered him to behead. In

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Hakm, p. 60.

(2) *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jām'* [The Authenticated Compilation] by al-Albānī, no. 2766.

(3) *Sīrat wa Manāqib 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Life Story and Outstanding Traits of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 131; *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 45.

place of Khālid, 'Umar appointed 'Amr bin Muhājir al-Anṣārī and said to Khālid: "O Khālid! Turn this sword on yourself. O Allāh, I have laid off Khālid bin ar-Rayyān for you. O Allāh! Never exalt him." He then turned to 'Amr bin Muhājir and said: "By Allāh, you will come to know, O 'Amr, that there is no bond between you and I except for the bond of Islām. However, I heard that you recite the Qur'ān much and I have seen you pray in places where you thought nobody could see you; indeed, you pray beautifully. Therefore, take this sword as I have appointed you to be my guard."⁽¹⁾ That was 'Umar's approach to dismissing the unjust and it was with such an attitude that he selected his governors, judges, commanders and so forth.

He searched for the most pious of characters in faith and religious observance. Somebody once criticized one of the governors chosen by 'Umar and joked with him by putting a stick between his own eyes as he bowed in prostration, saying: "I wanted to pretend that I was you", i.e. he wanted the mark of prostration on his face like him. As a sign of a righteous man, this mark is proof of ample prostration and it was on account of this that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz chose him. This is not to suggest that 'Umar would base his judgments on mere assumption, as he would also put that person to the test to see whether he was correct to think so. For instance, he saw a man who prayed a great deal and he wanted to test him to see whether he should appoint him or not and so he sent a man of distinction to him who said: "O so- and –so! You

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p.50.

know my status with the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, so what would you do for me if I made him appoint you to one of the provinces?" The man answered: "I would give you gifts year in and year out." 'Umar's agent went back to report to him and based on that 'Umar decided to discard the man's appointment to office for having failed the test.⁽¹⁾

Usāmah bin Zayd at-Tanūkhī who was in charge of the *Kharāj* (Board of Revenue) in Egypt was among those dismissed by 'Umar for his brutal and excessive penalization of people inconsistent with Allāh's revelation. By way of example, he would chop off hands without first corroborating the conditions for amputation. 'Umar consequently sentenced him to a year in prison within every metropolis during which time he remained shackled and the only time he was released from his chains was for prayer, after which would be put back into them. Thus, he was imprisoned in Egypt for a year and then in Palestine for year, but it was during this time that 'Umar died, and so with Yazīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik's accession to the Caliphate, Usāmah was reinstated to his original post.⁽²⁾

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to Yazīd bin Abī Muslim concerning his removal from office in Africa owing to his disdain and ignorance in the face of authority, however big or small, in an inequitable manner and in contradiction of the truth. On top of that, he would habitually praise Allāh and invoke

(1) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr (1/91).

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 32.

Him whilst ordering his people to carry out punishments at his discretion. He would say: "Glory and praise be to Allāh. O boy! Take him to the spot..." in reference to some location or another, or he would say: "There is no one worthy of worship but Allāh, and Allāh is the Greatest! Take him to the place of...", which he would order with utter maliciousness and brutally. In view of that, 'Umar issued his timely dismissal.⁽¹⁾ Thus, 'Umar undertook an extensive campaign to dismiss unjust governors and appoint the righteous. His *Fiqh* (jurisprudence) on dealing with governors will be elaborated on in due course, by the permission of Allāh, the Sublime.

Compensating All Injustices Committed Against Converts:

Prior to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, converts to Islām had been made to suffer many injustices and it had been the case that the *Jizyah* (tax paid by non-Muslims living under Muslim rule) had been imposed on even those who converted to Islām amongst them, similar to what had happened to the converts in Irāq, Egypt and Khorasān (a historic region that covered parts of modern day Iran, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan) who had been barred from making *Hijrah* (Islāmic Migration). During the era of 'Abd al-Mālik, al-Ḥajjāj inflicted large-scale oppression and brutality on the converts in 'Irāq by demanding from them a full rate of taxation, prohibiting them from making *Hijrah* from their towns, and so on. All this contributed to their uprising and participation in the

(1) *Ibid*, pp. 32-3.

revolution with Ibn al-Ash'ath against al-Ḥajjāj who had done the same to the converts in Egypt and Khorasān.

Therefore, when 'Umar came to power, he abolished all inequitable legislation previously authorized against these converts, on the subject of which he wrote to his officials: "If a Christian, Jew or Zoroastrian among the people of al-Jazīrah (Upper Mesopotamia) embraces Islām from today onwards, then let him share the domain of the Muslims and differentiate the domain that he was previously in, for he is entitled to the same as the Muslims, just as what is upon them is also upon him. Therefore, land from which *Kharāj* is paid cannot be transferred to Muslims, who can lease such land, but in that case, they will be required to pay *Kharāj* from it. They are thereby obliged to allow him to mix freely and support him in his land and home, for the Shade of Allāh is on all Muslims."⁽¹⁾

On the same note, he corresponded with his official in Egypt, Ḥayyān bin Shurayḥ, saying: "Lift the *Jizyah* (tax paid by non-Muslims living under Muslim rule) from anyone who has converted to Islām among the *Ahl adh-Dhimmah* (Non-Muslims living under Muslim rule). Allāh, the Glorious and Majestic, certainly says: [*But if they turn [to Allāh], maintain the prayer, and pay the prescribed alms, let them go on their way, for Allāh is Most Forgiving and Merciful*] (*at-Tawbah*, 9:5). And He says: "*Fight those of the People of the Book who do not [truly] believe in Allāh and the Last Day, who do not forbid what Allāh and His Messenger have forbidden, who do not*

(1) *Ibid*, pp. 78-9.

obey the rule of justice, until they pay the tax and agree to submit] (at-Tawbah, 9:29)." However, 'Umar's official wrote back: "To proceed: Indeed, Islām obliges the *Jizyah*. Al-Hārith bin Nābitah hitherto paid 20,000 *Dinar* to the Central Diwān (Board of Administration" in this case of taxes and revenues). I am therefore of the opinion, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, that you should endorse their compliance with it."⁽¹⁾ In response to his recommendation, 'Umar retorted: "To proceed: Your letter reached me and I have appointed a solider of Egypt to you as I am aware of your weaknesses. I have further given my messenger orders to flog you twenty lashes over your head! Therefore, relieve whoever has converted to Islām from paying the *Jizyah* and may Allāh revile your opinion! Verily, Allāh sent Muḥammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as a guide and not as a tax collector! Upon my life or a life more miserable, let it be that all people enter His *Dīn* (the Religion of Islām)."⁽²⁾ According to the narration of Ibn Sa'ad, 'Umar says: "To proceed: Indeed, Allāh sent Muḥammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as a preacher and not as a tax collector. Should the *Ahl adh-Dhimma* (Non-Muslims living under Muslim rule) hasten to Islām and diminish the *Jizyah* upon receiving my letter, then abandon your letter and accept it (i.e. their conversion to Islām)."⁽³⁾

'Umar's tax collector in Egypt was not the only one who

(1) *Al-Khiṭaṭ* [The Guiding Principles] by al-Maqrīzī (1/78); *Umar wa Siyāsatuḥu fī Rudd al-Maẓālīm* [Umar and His Policy on Compensating the Victims of Injustice], p. 233.

(2) *Ibid.*

(3) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5/384).

sought allowance from 'Umar to exact the *Jizyah* (tax paid by non-Muslims living under Muslim rule) from those who had converted to Islām. The tax-collector appointed to al-Kūfa in 'Irāq, 'Abd al-Ḥamīd bin 'Abd ar-Raḥmān, asked him to take a lump-sum *Jizyah* for the Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians who had converted to Islām. He too received a firm reply from 'Umar, who clearly stated: "You wrote to me to asking me about the Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians of al-Ḥīrah who have embraced Islām and yet they pay a heavy *Jizyah*. You are asking me to exact the *Jizyah* from them even as Allāh, the Majestic, sent Muḥammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as a caller to Islām and not as a tax collector! Therefore, compulsory on the wealth of whoever among those religions accepts Islām is the *Sadaqah* (Alms) and not the *Jizyah*, and he can inherit from his Muslim relatives should he have any and they can inherit from him. However, if he does not have an heir, his inheritance is to be deposited into the *Bayt al-Māl* to be shared amongst the Muslims. In the event that this happens, the money of Allāh that is distributed to the Muslims will be acknowledged in his name and a source of comfort for him."⁽¹⁾

On the same note, 'Umar's agent in Baṣrah, 'Udayy bin Arṭa'ah, wrote: "To proceed: An increasing number of people are entering into Islām and I fear that your fiscal reforms will erode the *Kharāj* (land tax) tax system and deplete the Treasury." 'Umar wrote back: "I understood your letter and,

(1) *Al-Kharāj* [Tax and Revenue] by Abī Yūsuf, p. 142; *Umar wa Siyāsatuḥu fī Rudd al-Mazālīm* [Umar and His Policy on Compensating the Victims of Injustice], p. 234.

by Allāh, glad would I be to see all people become Muslim so that you and I would have to till the soil with our own hands to learn a living.”⁽¹⁾ Additionally, he annulled the ban prohibiting converts to Islām in 'Irāq from migrating that had been enforced by al-Ḥajjāj and in doing so 'Umar granted them their right to live in peace and comfort. Under 'Umar's new reforms, converts living within the Islāmic State began to enjoy the justice and equality felt by the other Muslim citizens.⁽²⁾

Relieving the *Ahl adh-Dhimmah* (Non-Muslims Living under Muslim Rule) from Injustices:

During 'Abd al-Mālik's Caliphate, the *Jizyah* (tax paid by non-Muslims living in the Islāmic State) had been raised for the people of Cyprus, which had initially been conquered by Mu'āwiyah bin 'Abī Sufyān who fixed a peace treaty stipulating a payment of seven thousand *Dinars*, that the people of Cyprus should act in good faith towards the Muslims. This treaty remained in effect right up until the time of 'Abd al-Mālik bin Marwān who increased their payment by a thousand *Dīnār*, an amendment that was enforced under the succeeding calīphs but annulled by 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz who reinstated the original covenant.⁽³⁾ The *Ahl adh-Dhimmah* in 'Irāq had also

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, pp. 99-100.

(2) *Umar wa Siyāsatuḥu fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* [Umar and His Policy on Compensating the Victims of Injustice], p. 234.

(3) *Futūḥ al-Buldān* [The Conquests of Countries], p. 159; *Umar wa Siyāsatuḥu fī Rudd al-*

been levied a heavier *Jizyah* that 'Umar also annulled as part of his general policy to compensate and remedy all injustices which had been administered to the *Ahl adh-Dhimma*, restore their unlawfully seized houses of worship, release their lands and grant them their rights and privileges under the *Sharī'ah* (Islāmic Law).

'Umar's attitude is conveyed in his letter to his official Başrah, 'Udayy bin Arṭa'ah, in which he wrote: "To proceed: "Allāh, Glorified is He, commands the exacting of the *Jizyah* from those who renounce Islām and choose to arrogantly disbelieve at their own clear loss, so impose it on whoever can bear its burden and stand between them and the prosperity of the land; in that lies good for the livelihood of the Muslims and their strength against their enemies. Look at *the Ahl adh-Dhimma* from aforetime who received a pension from the *Bayt al-Māl* of the Muslims once they grew elderly, feeble and incapable of earning. If a Muslim man owning properties grows old and feeble and incapable of earning, he is entitled to receive support from the *Bayt al-Māl* so as to differentiate between death and old age. I was informed of an incident in which the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb, passed by an old man from the *Ahl adh-Dhimma* who was sat begging in the streets. 'Umar went up to him and said: 'We have not done justice to you. We levied the *Jizyah* on you during your youth and we have neglected you in your old age'. He then took the old man by the hand to the *Bayt al-Māl* and provided

him with a pension.”⁽¹⁾

Like 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb, the policies of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz were not only aimed at alleviating people of injustices but also at helping and supporting them. Such was the case when 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to his official in Kūfa saying: “Find out whose land has become diminished due to paying the *Jizyah* and provide them with financial assistance to cultivate their land. Inform them that we do not want payment from them for a year to two years.”⁽²⁾ 'Umar was an ardent advocator of adopting a strategy of mercy and clemency towards the people. In keeping with that, he prohibited the use of torture tactics against the people of Baṣrah to obtain the *Kharāj* tax after his official therein, 'Udayy bin Arṭa'ah, wrote him: “If you accept, some form of punishment should be carried out on the people who choose not to cooperate when it comes to paying the obligatory *Kharāj*.” 'Umar replied: “How strange it is that you should seek my permission to torture human beings as if I were some kind of safe haven for you from the punishment of Allāh, or as if my pleasure can rescue you of Allāh's displeasure! Therefore, once you have received this letter, approach those who pay it with compassion, otherwise administer an oath from them. By Allāh, it is better for them to face Allāh having committed their treachery than for you to face Him after having tortured them. Peace.”⁽³⁾

(1) *Al-Amwāl* [Finance] by Abī 'Ubayd, p. 57.

(2) *Ibid*, p. 320; *Umar wa Siyāsatuḥu fī Rudd al-Maḏālim* [Umar and His Policy on Compensating the Victims of Injustice], p. 241.

(3) *Al-Kharāj* [Tax and Revenue] by Abī Yūsuf, p. 129.

Another injustice inflicted on the *Ahl adh-Dhimmah* (non-Muslims living under Muslim rule) involved the capture of girls and women from Lawātah (said to be modern day Djerba) in North Africa prior to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's accession to power. Concerning the women of Lawātah, Abū 'Ubayd mentions that 'Umar wrote: "Whoever sends you any of those women, do not put a price on them as a price cannot be deemed lawful for her. If one already has any of these women, seek her hand in marriage from her father, otherwise return her to her people." Abū Ubayd states that these women from Lawātah were Berber natives with whom they may have entered a covenant. Ibn Shihāb says: "'Uthmān procured the *Jizyah* from the Berbers but they later began to cause mischief which led to their being taken into captivity." In any case, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote what he did to put an end to the wrongdoing that was taking place against them.⁽¹⁾ Similarly, he restored the unlawfully seized houses of worship of the *Ahl adh-Dhimmah*,⁽²⁾ released their lands and granted them their rights and privileges under the *Shar'iah* that had been exploited by the Muslims for their own personal gain even though it was in contradiction of their treaty.⁽³⁾ Regarding it, he wrote to the official saying: "We believe that you are exploiting the people of the land. Only oppression can be the aim of such a thing."⁽⁴⁾

(1) *Futūh al-Buldān* [The Conquests of Countries], p. 226-7.

(2) *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Siyāsatuḥu fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* [Umar and His Policy on Compensating the Victims of Injustice], p. 245.

(3) *Ibid.*

(4) *Strat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-

By taking measures such as these, 'Umar was able to successfully restore peace, contentment and ease within the state for all parties by way of practically demonstrating that it was possible for them to live safely and comfortably under the shade of Islām which extended its liberality and justice to them, protected their rights and interests, and neither harmed, intimidated or enslaved them. They were granted their mutual, inalienable rights and, equally, they were obliged to observe certain duties stipulated under Islāmic Law and the basic injunctions of the Book of Allāh and the *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition) of His Holy Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).⁽¹⁾

The Establishment of Justice for the People of Samarkand:

Immediately after 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was elected caliph, a delegation of men from Samarkand (the second largest city in Uzbekistan) went to speak to Sulaymān Abī as-Sarrī and said: "Qutaybah has betrayed and wronged us by seizing our town. Allāh has shown us justice and equity, therefore if we are allowed, we would like to send a delegation to the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* to complain of our injustices and if we are within our rights, he will address our needs." Sulaymān correspondingly granted their request and hence a delegation of men represented their case to 'Umar. Consequently, he

Hakm, p. 83.

(1) 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Siyāsatuhi fī Rudd al-Maẓālim [Umar and His Policy on Compensating the Victims of Injustice], p. 245.

wrote to Sulaymān bin Abī as-Sarrī, saying: "Indeed, the people of Samarkand have come complaining to me of the injustices inflicted upon them, stating that Qutaybah has unjustifiably stationed his army in the town in their midst and forced them to leave. Therefore, when my letter reaches you, appoint a tribunal to judge and settle the dispute between Qutaybah and the people of Samarkand. If the judgment of the tribunal goes against the army chief and his men are asked to vacate, they must do so at once and the people may return to the way they were before Qutaybah appeared on the scene."

Sulaymān appointed Jumay'a bin Ḥāḍir as the judge for the enquiry. After it was over, he, although himself a Muslim, passed the judgment that the Muslim army must vacate the town. He also remarked that the commander of the Muslim forces ought to have served an ultimatum of war to the city, and according to the Islāmic Law relating to war, he ought to have cancelled all the treaties with them so that the people of Samarkand could get time to prepare for war, declaring: "Sudden attack on them without warning was unlawful." However, once the army had retired to their army bases, the people of Samarkand saw an opportunity to declare war against the Muslim forces with the aim of taking victory by force and establishing a new treaty of their own. On the contrary, the people of Soghd (a main province of Tajikistan bordering Samarkand) said: "Rather, we are satisfied with what happened and we will not re-declare war" and they tried to appease the people on those grounds. Their scholars said:

"We have mixed and lived side by side with those people. They are peaceful with us and we are with them. Should you decide that we are to return to war, it would be futile and we do not know whom the victory will belong to. We would only be bringing hostility upon ourselves." Satisfied with the outcome of the tribunal, the people of Soghd subsequently left matters as they were and chose not to challenge them.⁽¹⁾

When the people of Samarkand witnessed this state of affairs, they were convinced that this was an unparalleled case in the history of humankind, that is, the state keeping its Commander-in-Chief and the armies under such strict discipline and control, bound by lofty moral principles. Having decided that fighting against the Muslim army would be futile, they otherwise came to regard it as a mercy and blessing. Therefore, they agreed to live with the Islāmic army in Samarkand. The amazing aspect of this incident must be emphasized: that the inhabitants of a city complain to the victorious government and its judges decide the case against the victorious army, ordering it to be vacated therefrom, saying that they are not allowed to live there without the consent of the people of that city. If only the modern nations of the twenty-first century were bound by a strict moral code and lofty principles, as demonstrated by 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, who took the swift and decisive action that he did! His remarkable observance and administration of the *Sharī'ah* (Law) of Allāh is what allowed him to attain the loftiest goals and reach the highest stations. A number of important points

(1) *Tārīkh at-Ṭabarī* [Tabarī's History] (7/472).

can be discerned about 'Umar's high level of justice:

- People understood that it was acceptable to make a complaint, express a grievance and demand their rights on the assurance of a fair ruler, as they knew that their claims were going to be taken seriously and addressed justly. These oppressed people remained silent under the rule of al-Walīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik and Sulaymān. When they witnessed the justice of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, they put their case forth.
- 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz did not ignore their case and furthermore referred them to a legal tribunal as someone who submits to Islām and not his own whims and desires. He could have done what a lot of people in charge do, in sending threatening messages and warnings to the chief claimants and taking measures to have them reprimanded, however, 'Umar was devoted to alleviating injustices and executing justice, which can only be done by referring it to a judiciary and having them pass a verdict on it.
- When they were given insight into 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's letter, the people and their scholars gradually learned that they would be losers in both instances, that is, whether the ruling was against them or if they revolted, and that their welfare rested on keeping to the status quo. In acceptance of this, they stopped suffering injustice and experienced the justice of

Islāmic rule.⁽¹⁾

His Approval of Sufficient Proof in Compensating the Aggrieved:

Bearing in mind the enormity of injustice practiced by the former governors against the common people and the propensity of grievances made on a normal basis, 'Umar made it so it was no longer compulsory for the aggrieved persons to present compelling and convincing evidence to support their claims; on the contrary, he considered even slight proof sufficient. In the event that he knew the claimant's face, he would compensate him without commissioning him to bring any form of proof. According to Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, Abū az-Zinād said: "'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz would compensate the victims of injustice without requesting adequate proof and he was satisfied with even slight proof. If he knew the aggrieved person by face, he compensated him without further ado. As soon as 'Umar learned of the former governors' ill-treatment of the people, he commissioned the *Bayt al-Māl* (Public Treasury) in 'Irāq with compensating the victims, who even put cases forth from as far as the Shām (Levant).⁽²⁾ 'Umar's initiative to facilitate the process of making claims in the best possible way was particularly effective because it saved both time and effort.⁽³⁾ Here, 'Umar lay down an important principle in differentiating between establishing the facts in a normal

(1) *Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [Islāmic History] (15, 16/62).

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 106-7.

(3) *Fiqh Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (2/558).

case from establishing the facts in an administrative case. With regard to the former, the position of compelling and convincing evidence and the corroboration of facts may vary such that in cases where the injustice appears evident, slight proof can be considered adequate for passing a ruling.⁽¹⁾

Lifting Unlawful Taxes:

The quality of goods had diminished due to the unlawful heavy *Makas* (Trading taxes formerly levied during the days of *Jāhiliyyah*) that been illegally imposed on the people, even after having procured the obligatory *Zakāt* (Prescribed Alms) from Muslims and the *Jizyah* (Tax paid by non-Muslims living under Muslim Rule), '*Ushūr* (Import and export duty) and *Kharāj* (Land tax) from the *Ahl adh-Dhimmah* (Non-Muslims living under Muslim rule), which was beyond the people's capacity.

The Umayyads had no accountability to the treasury. To support their lavish lifestyles, they collected enormous taxes from Persia and Egypt. They compelled traders to sell them their merchandise at discount prices. The Governors' appointees received gifts of gold and silver in return for favours. 'Umar reversed those trading taxes and established strict accountability by punishing corrupt officials, as is clear from the narration of Muḥammad bin Qays who said: "When 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz assumed head of state, he alleviated the trading taxes in every land and the *Jizyah* (Tax paid by

(1) *Nizām al-Ḥukm fī ash-Sharī'ah wa at-Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [The System of Government in Islāmic Law and History] (2/565).

non-Muslims living under Muslim rule) from every Muslim.”⁽¹⁾ 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to 'Udayy bin Arṭa'ah ordering him to remove it, stating: “The *Makas* is not a trading tax, rather it is fraud, concerning which Allāh, the Sublime, says: [And to not defraud the people in their property or spread evil in the land] (*ash-Shu'arā'*, 26:183). Therefore, accept *Zakāt* (Prescribed Alms) from whoever pays it from his wealth and for those who do not, Allāh will hold them to account.”⁽²⁾ Similarly, 'Umar wrote to his official over Palestine, 'Abdullah bin 'Awf, saying: “Demolish the *Makas* by carrying it off to the sea and extinguishing it in a single blow.”⁽³⁾ As we established earlier, the *Makas* was the import tax levied on traders within the marketplaces, which had been a practice of pre-Islāmic times. 'Umar was of the opinion that this tax was unjust and so he abolished it,⁽⁴⁾ drawing on the Qur'ānic Verse: “And to not defraud the people in their property or spread evil in the land.” (*ash-Shu'arā'*, 26:183)

Compensating from the *Zakāt* (Prescribed Alms):

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz resolved to give back what belonged to the victims of extortion from the *Buyūt al-Māl* (Public Treasuries), which he did by means of distributing the

(1) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* [The Major Classes] by Ibn Sa'ad (5/345).

(2) *Ibid* (5/383).

(3) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 113.

(4) *Fiqh Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Muḥammad Shaqīr (2/561).

Zakāt obtained by each one for one year.⁽¹⁾ Mālik bin Anas reported on the authority of Ayūb ash-Shakhtiyānī that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz returned what had been illegally appropriated from the victims of extortion and deposited into the *Buyūt al-Māl* (Public Treasuries) by giving back from each *Bayt al-Māl* and commissioning the procurement of the *Zakāt* after the people had been free from paying it for a number of years." He later wrote another letter stating: "I am of the opinion that the return on this money cannot be postponed, therefore do not levy the *Zakāt* except for one year."⁽²⁾ 'Amr bin Maymūn is reported to have said: "During the rule of 'Abd al-Mālik, the governor took money from a poor man by the name of Abū 'Ā'ishah amounting to twenty thousand *Dirham* and deposited into the *Bayt al-Māl*. When 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz came to power, he returned the money to that man's son to compensate for the crime committed against him, upon which he wrote to Maymūn: 'Pay them their money and take the *Zakāt* for this year. However, if the money we took from them is not covered after having levied the *Zakāt* then leave it."⁽³⁾

This is how 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was able to establish justice within his state and he (may Allāh have mercy on him) would teach his governors that justice was the lifeblood of the state in all aspects, as he demonstrated when some of his officials wrote to him saying: "To proceed: Indeed, our city has fallen into ruin. Should the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* want to

(1) *Ibid* (2/566).

(2) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* [The Major Classes] by Ibn Sa'ad (5/342).

(3) *Muṣnaf* [The Classification] by Ibn Abī Shaybah (3/202).

cut us off from funds, this will certainly be our lot." He wrote back to them: "To proceed: I understand your letter and you mention that your city has become ruined. Therefore, upon receiving this letter of mine, fortify your city with justice and oust out all injustice, as that will restore it to peace."⁽¹⁾ He also wrote to some of his officials, saying: "If you are able to carry out justice, excellence and righteousness in the way that your predecessors carried out injustice, hostility and oppression, then do so and there is no might or power except with Allāh."⁽²⁾ He wrote to Abī Bakr bin Ḥazm: "Seek out justice by finding every injustice committed by those before you against a Muslim or one with whom a treaty has been agreed and restore their right to them. If those people have already died, compensate their heirs."⁽³⁾ Due to his eagerness to administer justice (may Allāh bestow mercy on him), 'Umar faced many hardships, difficulties, resistance and obstacles whereby he would pay out money to appease certain individuals so that he could execute the truth, spread justice and eradicate oppression. One day, his son, 'Abd al-Mālik, entered upon him and said: "O father! What prevents you from administering justice as you see fit? As, by Allāh! I would not care if I were put in chains if it enabled you to do what you want!" 'Umar remarked: "O son! It is only because managing the people is a complicated task. Of course I want to revive all just affairs and do that so adeptly that it

(1) *Tārīkh al-Khulafā'* [The History of the Caliphs] by as-Suyūṭī, p. 23; 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz by 'Abd as-Sittār, p. 226.

(2) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* [The Major Classes] by Ibn Sa'ad (5/383-4).

(3) *Ibid* (2/342-3).

eradicates the world's greed with it until the people have an aversion to it and feel alleviated of it."⁽¹⁾

In keeping with this, 'Umar rewarded those who showed good conduct, highlighted some error or pointed out some injustice that the victim was not able to report for himself. He wrote a message that he sent to be read out to all *Hajj* pilgrims at every station and assembly they reached, which read: "To proceed: "Whichever man approaches us for the purpose of rectifying an injustice or orders that Allāh betters him specifically or generally in this world, he shall have a reward no less than one hundred *Dīnār* to up to three hundred *Dīnār* on account of his claim. Following the hardship endured by him, Allāh will have mercy on him by reviving some truth or diminishing some falsity through him or granting him some good."⁽²⁾ As a way of making the people find his justice and mercy agreeable and pleasant so that they would seek his shade, he would say: "By Allāh! I would rather carry out justice for just one day and have Allāh, the Sublime, seize me!"⁽³⁾ He further aspired to enhance the fruits of his justice that had been received by all people of high and low social ranking, which he expressed in his statement: "If I ruled over you for fifty years, I would not have accomplished justice."⁽⁴⁾ His campaign to alleviate wrongdoing meant that 'Umar's justice and equity even extended to animals, which can be

(1) 'Umar bin 'Abd al-Azīz by 'Abd as-Sittār, p. 226.

(2) *Ibid*, p.227.

(3) *Tahdhīb al-Asmā' wa al-Lughāt* [The Refinement of Names of Languages] (2/23).

(4) *Tārīkh Ibn 'Asākir* [Ibn 'Asākir's History] extracted from 'Umar bin 'Abd al-Azīz by 'Abd as-Sittār, p. 227.

seen from the following examples:

Prohibiting Prodding Animals with Iron Rods and Overburdening their Loads:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz advocated treating animals with kindness and not harming or punishing them, as 'Abū Yūsuf says: "'Ubaydullah bin 'Umar informed us that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz forbade the goading of animals with iron rods and overloading their saddles beyond the fixed capacity."⁽¹⁾ He thereby issued orders prohibiting the use of heavy loads on horses and asses, and likewise, the use of iron rods to goad animals by prodding them.⁽²⁾

Fixing the Load of Camels to Six-Hundred Roṭl (a weight equal to approx. 3.202 kg):

Upon hearing that a people from Egypt had been loading their camels more than they could bear, 'Umar decided to write to its governor to fix the maximum load for camels to six-hundred *Roṭl* and demanded that he notify him of their compliance and his implementation of the order.⁽³⁾

(1) *Muṣnaf* [The Classification] by Ibn Abī Shaybah (12/332); *Fiqh Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Muḥammad Shaqīr (2/573).

(2) *Malāmiḥ al-Inqilāb al-Islāmī fī Khilāfat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Characteristics of the Islāmic Transformation during the Caliphate of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Dr 'Imād ad-Dīn Khalīl, p. 71.

(3) *Fiqh Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Muḥammad Shaqīr (2/572).

To push forward the principles of justice and eradicating wrong, 'Umar executed his policies at every level within his state to ensure that justice reached everyone and compassed everything in society and that he combated injustice in every shape and form -- may Allāh have mercy on him.

Equality:

Allāh, the Sublime, says: "*O People, We have created you all male and female and have made you nations and tribes so that you would recognize each other. The most honorable among you in the sight of Allāh is the most pious of you.*" (*al-Hujurāt*, 49:13). The Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Is your Lord not One Lord? There is no difference between an Arab and a non-Arab or a white man and a black man, except for [his level of] *Taqwā* (God-consciousness)."⁽¹⁾ 'Umar began to implement this principle within his state, the first indicator of which is his interest in the principle of equality, which was made evident when he vowed that he and his family would have the same quality of life as the people.⁽²⁾ He asserted: "By Allāh, I wish to begin with myself, and my family who are a part of me until we live just as you live. By Allāh, by Allāh! If I wanted to say other than this to please my tongue, I would know the motives for it."⁽³⁾

(1) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 297.

(2) *Ibid.*

(3) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 112.

In one of his sermons, he said: "There is no one among you who notifies us of his need except that I love to relieve him of it as best as I can."⁽¹⁾ 'Umar adopted the principle of equality between peoples to extend to their rights and duties in all areas of life such that he did not discriminate between people in appointing them to positions and offices, and likewise, he would not give something to someone who did not have the right to have it. He was equal in his treatment of the chiefs and nobles of the Umayyad family and the common people, whereby he prohibited the special allowances and granted the former individuals had previously enjoyed. When they went to confront him about this, he said in return: "My money will not be extended to you and as for this money (i.e. the money belonging to the Muslim's *Bayt al-Māl*), your right to it is the same as that of every Muslim." He based his fiscal policy on equality whereby the *Bayt al-Māl* (Public Treasury) belonged to all Muslims who had an equal share to it and not one group having a monopoly over the rest of the people. The firmness of his adherence to the principle of equality can be seen in the instance when he witnessed some members of the Umayyad family seize a large area of land and close it off so that the public could not gain from it, upon which he said: "The shield you put around applies to all Muslims in general. Its leader is like a Muslim man, the rain that Allāh descends upon it is for His servants and they are all equal."⁽²⁾

(1) *Tārīkh aṭ-Ṭabarī* [Tabarī's History] extracted from: *An-Namūdḥaj al-Idārī al-Mustakḥlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 297.

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-

On the same note, he treated Christians and Jews who accepted Islām in the same way that he treated Muslims, while working towards narrowing, or rather, breaking the disharmony between them, stating: "If a Christian, Jew or Zoroastrian among the people of al-Jazīrah (Upper Mesopotamia) embraces Islām from today onwards, then let him share the domain of the Muslims and differentiate the domain that he was previously in, for he is entitled to the same as the Muslims, just as what is upon them is also upon him. They are thereby obliged to allow him to mix freely and treat him equally."⁽¹⁾ Ibn Sa'ad narrates that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz made the 'Arabs and their non-Arab partisans equal in terms of livelihood, maintenance, aid and grants, while he granted an entitlement of twenty-five *Dīnār* to a manumitted slave.⁽²⁾

In the domain of the judiciary and Islāmic legal practice, suffice it to say that 'Umar was a symbol of struggle in the face of the judge, as described in the following story. A man from Egypt went to see 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and said: "O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*! Verily, 'Abd al-'Azīz – referring to 'Umar's father – took my land illicitly." 'Umar asked: "Where is your land, O 'Abdullah?" "Hilwān", he replied and so 'Umar said: "I know the head of proprietors there. He will arbitrate between us." Accordingly, 'Umar went to the arbitrator who ruled against him, which brought 'Umar to say: "We disbursed money for it." The judge said: "That covers its yield. We have recovered the

Hakm, p. 81.

(1) *Ibid*, p.79.

(2) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5/375).

likes of your expenditure." 'Umar said: "If you pass verdicts like this, I would never charge myself with a matter", and he returned all his property to him.⁽¹⁾

'Umar would attach a lot of weight to the principle of equality between Muslims, even in general matters, such as his urging the people to supplicate and pray for others. He wrote to the Commander of al-Jazīrah (Upper Mesopotamia), saying: "It has reached me that some narrators have created a prayer for their leaders. Rightly return it to the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) by passing by the narrators and ordering them to pray specifically for the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and that their supplication is for the Muslims and Believers in general."⁽²⁾ The importance 'Umar placed on equality extended to the practice of supplication, not pertaining just to anyone, but for the Muslims in general, as Allāh, the Sublime, is Most Worthy of asking.⁽³⁾

He practiced equality between himself and the general public. It had reached him that a man from al-Madīnah had insulted him for some reason or another, but in keeping with his firm principles, 'Umar did not charge him above what he might have charged him with, had the insulted man

(1) *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Siyāsatuhi fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* [Umar and His Policy on Compensating the Victims of Injustice], p. 298.

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 273.

(3) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 299.

been an ordinary person from the *Ummah*. That is what happened in the case in which a man was convicted in the *Masjid* (Mosque) of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) for cutting off the prayer of Abū Bakr bin Muḥammad bin Ḥazm, 'Umar's Governor of al-Madīnah at the time, and drawing his sword on him. As a result, Abū Bakr wrote to 'Umar and upon receiving 'Umar's reply, the letter was read out before them and within the contents of what was said, 'Umar had used abusive language towards the letter and the person it mentioned in it. In view of that, Abū Bakr understood it to mean that he should execute the man and so he wrote back to 'Umar to inform him that he had resolved to execute the man who had cursed him, concerning which 'Umar replied: "If you kill him, your killing is on your own hands, for he did not kill anyone. As for cursing someone, was the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon) not insulted as well? Once you receive my letter, imprison him to protect the Muslims from his evil, implore him to repent, and if he does then let him be on his way."⁽¹⁾

It was not enough for 'Umar alone to adopt the principle of equality, he would further exhort his officials and governors to do likewise. To the Governor of al-Madīnah, he wrote: "Go out to the people and make peace between them in the councils and in public. No man is to have more influence with you than another and do not give special mention to the family of the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, as from now onwards, everyone is equal

(1) *Sirat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 142.

in my eyes. In fact, I now have more reason to suspect the family of the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* of subjugating the people for my deeming them equal."⁽¹⁾ These are but a view compelling examples verifying 'Umar's stance on the principle of equality within his state.⁽²⁾

Freedom within 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's State:

Freedom constituted a fundamental principle at the foundation of 'Umar's governorship, which he carried out with trust and in assurance of all general freedoms of the people within the boundaries of Islāmic *Shar'īah* (Law) without contradicting it. As part of his concern for human freedom, he would inspect the types of freedoms practiced within the state and it so happened that upon his disapproval of certain Islāmic teachings, he decided to return them to the fold of Islāmic teachings he considered appropriate and correct. To elucidate more specifically on the freedoms revived by 'Umar within his state, the following categories can be discerned:

Intellectual and Religious Freedom:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz advocated promoting the principle of freedom of faith and belief within society and his policy

(1) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5/343); *An-Namūdḥaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 301.

(2) *An-Namūdḥaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 301.

with regard to Christians and Jews was complied with loyalty of covenants and agreements, establishing justice for them, alleviating injustice, and non-compulsion or suppression of their beliefs and religion, stemming from the saying of Allāh, the Sublime: *"There is no compulsion in religion. Verily, the Right Path has become distinct from the wrong path. Whoever disbelieves in 'Tāghūt' ('all false deities') and believes in Allāh, and then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that will never break. And Allāh is the All-Hearer, Allāh Knower"* (al-Baqarah, 2:256)

'Umar opened the channels for *Da'wah* (calling to Islām) with the kings of India and other nations and tribes outside the fold of Islām, which shall be alluded to in greater detail later on, by the permission of Allāh. In this regard, 'Umar did not force any Christian or any other non-believer into accepting Islām, but instead he urged freedom of thought in terms of opinion and expression. He exerted great effort in running his state and guiding his officials and subjects so much so that he allowed every claimant to put forth their complaints of injustice and exercise the freedom of speech. In fact, people were free to say whatever they wanted under 'Umar's rule, as we know from the statement of al-Qāsim bin Muḥammad bin Abī Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddīq who declared: "Today, everyone who did not used to speak now speaks."⁽¹⁾ Of course, this was permitted where it did not violate Islāmic Law.

(1) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] by Ibn Sa'ad (5/344).

Political Freedom:

By the same token, 'Umar promoted the resumption of political freedom that had been granted by Islām to Muslims, provided that it did not involve the disobedience of creation to the Creator, even if he was a leader or governor. From the first day of his rule, 'Umar declared the freedom to enjoin good and forbid evil, which the people had previously been denied under former oppressive regimes even though Islām does not condone remaining silent in the face of injustice. One day, 'Umar addressed the people and said: "Is surrendering to a man not in contradiction of the *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition)? There is no obedience to creation in disobedience to Allāh, while you call the one who flees from oppression disobedient, when in fact the former is only disobedient in the face of the oppressor."⁽¹⁾

Proof that 'Umar afforded people the right of political freedom can be seen from the first steps he took following the announcement of his succession to the caliphate when he chose to disown the caliphate and demanded the people to appoint a caliph for themselves instead. Political freedom came into view in two instances: the first with the participation of the people in choosing the leader via the *Ahl al-Hall wa al-'Aqd* (lit. "The People of Decision and Power) concerning the Muslim's oath of allegiance and their satisfaction with

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 240.

it; secondly, with the expression of opinion and advice to the leader, whereby all actions were checked by Islāmic standards and criteria.⁽¹⁾ In both instances, 'Umar exercised complete political freedom to the extent that he allowed the people to appoint him to the caliphate at their own discretion before advising and exhorting to them.⁽²⁾ This will be clarified further on a more appropriate note.

Personal Freedom:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz worked to achieve and uphold personal freedom for individuals of the Islāmic *Ummah* in cases where there appeared to be some constraints in making *Hijrah* (Islāmic Migration), or what is known as the freedom of movement, i.e. to come and go as one pleases. Thus, he took measures to open up the door of *Hijrah* to whoever wanted it, about which he said: "As for *Hijrah*, we open the door to whoever migrates, sells his livestock and moves from the domain of his people to the domain of *Hijrah* and the domain of fighting against our enemies. Whoever does that emulates the *Muhājirīn* (Migrants) concerning what Allāh bestowed upon them."⁽³⁾ In a similar fashion, he wrote to his officials: "Open up the door of *Hijrah* to the people of

(1) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 312.

(2) *Ibid*, p. 212.

(3) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 79.

Islām.”⁽¹⁾ That was 'Umar's stance on the freedom to perform *Hijrah*, that is, in relation to the freedom of movement. His concern for personal freedom stemmed from his recognition of his role as caliph and that the welfare and rights of his subjects rested on his shoulders and ability to grant them. Personal freedom also allowed 'Umar's confidantes to keep him in check on whether he should pursue or refrain from a matter. Of course, this required complete personal freedom, which 'Umar persistently urged.⁽²⁾ Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm relates: "Umar chose his close confidantes, to whom he said: 'I have been burdened with an affair that has engaged me with you. Therefore whoever among you chooses to be freed from it, I free you and whoever chooses to stick by it, I have nothing for you'. At that point, the people began to cry hysterically in despair of him.”⁽³⁾

Freedom of Trade and Commerce:

As for freedom of trade and gain and seeking Allāh's favour on the land and sea, which ties in with economic freedom, 'Umar stressed the necessity of granting people the freedom to invest their wealth and the commercialisation of fair trade on land and sea. Thus, he wrote to his officials:

(1) *Ibid*, p. 78.

(2) *An-Namūdḥaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 310.

(3) *Sirat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 121.

"It is in obedience to Allāh Who revealed in His Book to call all people to Islām (...) and to allow people to pursue their wealth on land and sea without restriction or imprisonment."⁽¹⁾ He also wrote: "As for the sea, it is likened to land, as Allāh, the Sublime, says: [*Allāh, it is He Who has subjected to you the sea, that ships may sail through it by His Command, and that you may seek of His bounty and be thankful*] (*al-Jāthiyyah*, 45:12). Therefore, whoever wishes to trade therein is permitted and it is not for us to intervene between one person and another, since both land and sea belongs to Allāh Who granted them for the utilisation of His servants to seek out His Favour. How then can we interfere between Allāh's servants and their sustenance?"⁽²⁾ In another letter, he wrote: "Open up the bridges and passages for the people to traverse without paying a toll", as the untrustworthy delegates would defy orders by introducing unauthorised fines and fees.⁽³⁾ As for rates and price fixing during 'Umar's time, Abū Yūsuf said: "'Abd ar-Raḥmān bin Shawbān informed us that his father said: 'I said to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz: 'O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*! Why is it that the price of things is high during your time while they were lower under former governments?' He answered: "The people before me used to compel the *Ahl adh-Dhimma* to pay beyond their means and capacity until it appeared that they possessed nothing to sell and their livelihood had been smashed to pieces. I do not burden anyone with more than

(1) *Ibid*, p. 94.

(2) *Ibid*, p. 98.

(3) *Al-Idārat al-Islāmiyyah* [Islamic Management] by Muḥammad Kurd, p. 105.

they can bear'. As such, a man was free to sell his goods at the price that he wanted and so I said: "Would you not rather fix the price?" 'Umar replied: "The price of something has nothing to do with us, only Allāh."⁽¹⁾

'Umar strictly cracked down on the sale of prohibited goods and forbade dealing in them, such as alcohol which he made impermissible to Muslims – both the consumption and dealing of it – due to its illegality under Islāmic Law and the harmful effects drinking it has on the blood and because it leads to the consumption of unlawful money, i.e. obtained through unlawful means.⁽²⁾ 'Umar would say: "Whoever we find drinking a substance after we have already approached him concerning it, we will impose a penalty on his wealth and person and make an exemplary punishment out of him for others."⁽³⁾

'Umar's policy on restoring rights and reviving the spirit of disciplined commercial and economic freedom flourished and bore abundant fruits in the form of a massive influx of business and trade initiatives and the removal of the barriers that had proved to hinder such activities. Inevitably, this led to the growth of trade and consequently a rise in the total yield of income submitted as *Zakāt* (Prescribed Alms), which by its very nature, through the redistribution of wealth into society, led to a rise in the quality of life at the level of

(1) *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 48.

(2) *Ibid*, p. 48.

(3) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 103.

the lower social classes. Not only did this further enhance spending power, but accordingly the consumption of goods and utilisation of services increased, which meant demand and supply improved; the outcome of all of this was economic rejuvenation, an enhanced quality of life at the different levels and enriched prosperity.⁽¹⁾

Notably, freedom within 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's state was warranted and sustained, in addition to having limitations and boundaries. It was because of this that society flourished and advanced towards progress whereby freedom was a basic right for every member of society to enjoy self-determination and the actualisation of capabilities, whilst the negation of freedom from society renders it void of one of its most important components and leaves it members lifeless. On the other hand, Islām represents an internal radiance that ingrains within the human self its connection to Allāh, the Sublime, and thereby elevates that person to a higher, venerated station until he or she becomes thirsty to do good deeds and hastens towards seeking Allāh, the Lord of Earth and Heavens. Thus, freedom within Islāmic society was one of the pillars most brilliantly realised within 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's state that served to reflect its light on the pages of time.⁽²⁾

(1) *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 48; *Siyāsah al-itifāq al-'Ām fīl-Islām* [The Policy on Public Spending in Islām] by 'Awf Muḥammad al-Karāwī, p. 372.

(2) *Al-Mujtam'a al-Islāmī* [Islāmic Society] by Muḥammad Abū 'Ajwah, p. 245.

Part III

His Most Important Traits and Characteristics of Revival

His Most Important Traits:

The charismatic and impressive personality of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz has been described as possessing qualities of a righteous leader, the most prominent of which include: his firm belief in Allāh and His Greatness; his belief in Divine pre-ordainment; his fear of Allāh; his extensive knowledge; his trust in Allāh; his good example, honesty, competence, courage, chivalry and asceticism; his love and acceptance of advice; his humility, clemency and patience; his superior motives and resoluteness; his strong management, justice and problem solving abilities; his ability to plan, direct, coordinate and monitor – and the list of outstanding traits goes on. Due to the blessed qualities granted to him by Allāh, he was able to undertake a project of reformation and by doing so revive the characteristics of the rightly guided caliphate that had unfortunately become extinct amid the mordacious

monarchies. 'Umar was able to overcome many barriers in the course of his journey that crowned his matchless efforts with spectacular results at the level of the individual, society and state. 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's program of revival and reform constituted a beacon of light for those in pursuit of the glory of Islām. Nūr ad-Dīn az-Zangī emulated the steps of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz during his era and was thereby able to achieve great success for the *Ummah* (Community of the Faithful) in its struggle against the Crusaders by the Grace of Allāh. Shaykh Abī Ḥafṣ 'Umar Muḥammad al-Khiḍr (d. 570 AH), a teacher of Nūr ad-Dīn az-Zangī, later compiled a biography on the life of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz for Nūr ad-Dīn az-Zangī to strive to model himself on. The most outstanding qualities embodied by 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz are listed as follows:

His Profound Fear of Allāh, the Sublime:

What distinguished 'Umar the most and stimulated his every endeavor was nothing but his sound faith in the *Ākhirah* (Hereafter), his awe of Allāh and his earnest longing for *Jannah* (Paradise) that allowed him to excel in protecting people, notwithstanding his youth, power, freedom and authority, that is, away from the strong material allurements, temptations of the *Shayṭān* (Satan) and covetousness of the self. He imposed strict discipline on himself and stood firm on the straight path.⁽¹⁾ His yearning for *Jannah* was so great

(1) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p.140.

that his actions were influenced more by the *Ākhirah* than the *Dunyā* (World) in giving testimony to the verse: [O my people! Truly, this life of the world is nothing but a (quick passing) enjoyment, and verily, the Hereafter is the home that will remain forever] (*Ghāfir*, 40:39).

Thus, 'Umar fully embodied his sound *Fiṭrah* (innate sound disposition) and correct doctrine of belief that, for the Muslim, the *Ākhirah* is of greater importance than the *Dunyā*. In his letter to Yazīd bin al-Muhallab, 'Umar wrote: "If my desire lay in the acquisition of wives and gaining money, He Who has granted me those things has not granted better to any of His creation. However, I am fearful of the Day when I will be held to strict account for what I have been afflicted with, which is a great affair except for what Allāh exempts me from and shows me mercy upon."⁽¹⁾ Concerning his profound fear of Allāh, 'Umar's wife, Fāṭimah bint 'Abd al-Mālik, said: "He did not pray or fast more than anyone else but, by Allāh, I never saw anyone more fearful of Allāh than 'Umar. He would invoke Allāh while lying in his bed, shivering like a bird shaking off water out of utter fear, to the point that we would say that the people would not have a caliph in the morning."⁽²⁾ Makḥūl also said: "If I swore to something it meant I truly believed it and I never saw anyone more ascetic or more fearful of Allāh

(1) *Tārīkh at-Ṭabarī* [Ṭabarī's History] extracted from *An-Namūdḥaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p.140.

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 42.

than 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz.”⁽¹⁾ Because of this inherent fear within him, 'Umar would frequently cry and was very easily prone to crying, for instance, a man once entered upon him while 'Umar was lighting a stove, at which point 'Umar said: “Admonish me.” The man replied: “O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*! How will *Jannah* benefit you after you have already entered the *Nār* (Fire) and how harmful entering the *Nār* will be to you after you have entered *Jannah*!” 'Umar then cried until his tears extinguished the fire in front of him.⁽²⁾ In awe of the Day of Judgment, he would supplicate to Allāh and say: “O Allāh! If you know that I fear something other than the Day of Judgment then do not believe my fear in it.”⁽³⁾ It was that particular Day that 'Umar's entire life revolved around and it was about that Day that 'Umar used to say: “You have concerned yourself with an affair that if I were to concern myself with, the stars would fall and be scattered, the mountains would turn to dust and the earth would be cleft asunder. Do you not know that there is no station between *Jannah* and the *Nār*, and that you will be going to either one of them?”⁽⁴⁾

'Umar's outlook on life was absolutely clear, his consciousness centred on immortality, his emotions were influenced by the Day of Reckoning and he was motivated by his view of Heaven and Hell. These things are embedded within those who hold themselves to account and causes them

(1) *Tārīkh al-Khulafā'* [The History of the Caliphs] by as-Suyūṭī, p. 221.

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 90.

(3) *Tārīkh al-Khulafā'* [The History of the Caliphs] by as-Suyūṭī, p. 224.

(4) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 232.

to tremble from fear at the thought of stepping a single foot out of place regarding what Allāh wants.⁽¹⁾ When a leader's consciousness and emotions, in addition to other faith-based characteristics, are all directed at the Day of Judgment, he does not take one step, say one word or carry out any action without it being linked to Allāh, the Majestic. It is important to stress, of course, that these characteristics and traits can in no way be afforded due justice by a modern study on leadership in its understanding of the root of leadership success. The most important characteristics of leadership are in fact the characteristics of the leader, in which case 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz had firm faith in Allāh and the Day of Judgment fuelled by a consuming fear and trepidation.⁽²⁾

Asceticism:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz dedicated his life to understanding the Qur'ān and studying the guidance laid down by the Trustworthy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that led him to assume an attitude that the world of this life was but a test and trial as the testing grounds of the *Ākhirah*. For this reason, 'Umar was liberated from the trappings, adornment and glitter of the *Dunyā* in favour of a life of submission and commitment to his Lord both outwardly and inwardly. He was thereby able to arrive at certain truths

(1) *Malāmiḥ al-Inqilāb al-Islāmī fī Khilāfat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Characteristics of the Islāmic Transformation during the Caliphate of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Dr 'Imād ad-Dīn Khalīl, p. 45.

(2) *An-Namūdḥaj al-Idārī al-Mustakḥṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p.142.

firmly established within his heart that facilitated a life of asceticism in this world. These truths were:

Complete Certainty of Who We Are:

In this world, we are but strangers and visitors passing on our way, as the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Be in this world as though you are strangers and wayfarers."⁽¹⁾

This is the Dunyā (World):

It has no weight or value in the Sight of the Magnificent Lord except that it requires obedience to Allāh, Glorified is He, as the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "If the value of the world was made equal to that of the wing of a mosquito by Allāh, He would not have allowed any *Kāfir* (Disbeliever) even a drink of water from it."⁽²⁾

The End is Near:

The Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "The time between my being sent and the Hour is like the gap between the index and middle fingers."⁽³⁾

(1) *Kitāb az-Zuhd* [The Book of Asceticism] by at-Tirmidhī, p. 2333; an authentic narration.

(2) *Kitāb az-Zuhd* [The Book of Asceticism] by at-Tirmidhī, p. 2320.

(3) *Kitāb al-Fitan wa Ashrāṭ as-Sā'ah* [The Book of Trials and the Portents of the Hour] by Muslim, no. 132-5.

The Ākhirah (Hereafter) is Everlasting:

Due to his understanding of issues such as these, 'Umar lived a life of asceticism in the *Dunyā* (World). Asceticism begins with the abstention of *Harām* (prohibitions), followed by the abstention of *Mubāḥ* (the permitted things), and the highest form of asceticism is to cut oneself off from all favour and possessions.⁽¹⁾ The asceticism of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was built upon the Book and *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition), which led him to abandon everything that did not benefit his *Ākhirah*. Hence, he did not rejoice at his existence as being caliph and he was not upset by losing out on worldly matters. He abandoned everything that preoccupied his attention with attaining the pleasure of this world over what was better for the *Ākhirah* and he desired what Allāh, the Majestic, had to offer him.⁽²⁾ Mālik bin Dīnār said: "The people are saying that Mālik bin Dīnār is an ascetic, while the ascetic is definitely 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz who was given the entire world but disowned it."⁽³⁾ Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm said: "When 'Umar ascended to the caliphate, he became an ascetic in the *Dunyā* by rejecting everything in it, included colourful dishes to the extent that if someone prepared a dish for him he would set it aside and cover it until he was hungry for it, after which he would eat it."⁽⁴⁾ Thus, his only interest in food was to feed

(1) *An-Namūdḥaj al-Idārī al-Mustakḥlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p.148.

(2) *Al-Āthār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Mark of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (1/146).

(3) *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'* [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite] (5/257).

(4) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-

his hunger and sustain his body, as we can see from what he used to spend to feed his family as narrated by Sālim bin Ziyād who said: "Umar used to spend just two *Dirhams* on dinner and supper for him and his family."⁽¹⁾

As for attire, he would only wear ragged clothes and abandoned the showy apparel of haughtiness and arrogance that consumed his forebears, which is why he ordered that they be sold and their yield be deposited into the *Bayt al-Māl* (Public Treasury) for the Muslims.⁽²⁾ Hence, he returned all maidservants and slaves to their rightful owners in cases where they had been seized unlawfully, whilst distributing more slaves among the blind and disabled, all of which formed part of his battle against opulence and extravagance.⁽³⁾

With regards to the asceticism he practiced in relation to marital relations, Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm narrates: "His wife, Fāṭimah, said that he had not performed *Ghusl* (ritual cleansing after sexual intercourse) since he was appointed to the caliphate to the time that he met with Allāh except for three times." It has also been said that he did not perform *Ghusl* right up to his death.⁽⁴⁾ These accounts contradict what is popularly known of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and his ardent love and observance

Ḥakm, p. 43.

(1) *Ibid*, p. 38.

(2) *Al-Āthār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Mark of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (1/155).

(3) *Ibid*.

(4) *Sirat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 50.

of the guidance of the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). It is disqualified that he (may Allāh have mercy on him) abandoned the *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition) by oppressing his wives and not granting them their rights (to marital relations), for if he did leave his wives and abstain from them, this has no relationship with the Islāmic asceticism that was revealed to us by our Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who played an active role within Muslim society. There are some deviant sects who advocate such practices as constituting Islāmic asceticism, on the topic of which they tell many stories that have no logical link to Islām. Their teachings are strange and absurd, to give a few examples:

- Abstention from women and food, which is necessary to show honour
- Whoever marries has allowed the *Dunyā* (World) to enter his house and so they warn against marrying altogether
- A man does not attain the status of the honest and righteous until he leaves his wife as though she were a widow, his children as though they were orphans and seeks refuge in the *Manāzil* (recitation of certain verses of the Qur'ān for protection)
- Whoever is accustomed to the thighs of women will never prosper
- Whoever marries bows down to the *Dunyā*⁽¹⁾

Ridiculous and outlandish concepts such as these are

(1) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] by ash-Sha'rānī (1/34).

incongruous with Islām, which is a religion of moderation and balance. Thus, the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Whoever deviates from my *Sunnah* (Prophetic tradition) is not part of me."⁽¹⁾ To sum up, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz adhered to the Book and *Sunnah* in his observance of asceticism and that many contradictory claims that have implausibly been ascribed to him are unfounded and incorrect based on their inconsistency with the guidance of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

When it came to saving money, 'Umar's attitude was contrary to the occupiers of office in our current day. Upon his succession to the caliphate, 'Umar owned forty-thousand *Dīnār*, while he died owning just four hundred *Dīnār*, if not less.⁽²⁾ Not a single penny of his salary and expenses came out of the Muslim *Bayt al-Māl* (Public Treasury).⁽³⁾ In view of these things, 'Umar was one of the greatest ascetics of his age. He would say: "Indeed, the *Dunyā* does not gladden inasmuch as it harms, it seldom gladdens and dismays a lot."⁽⁴⁾ The renowned Shaykh Abū Ḥafṣ, 'Umar bin Muḥammad al-Khiḍr, mentions 'Umar's asceticism on approximately twenty-eight different occasions,⁽⁵⁾ which gives testimony that

(1) *Faṭḥ al-Bārī* [The Grant of the Creator] consistent with al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* [Authentic Narrations] (9/104).

(2) *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'* [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite] (5/257).

(3) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 186.

(4) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p.151.

(5) *Kitāb al-Jāmi' li-Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Compilation on the Life of 'Umar bin 'Abd

'Umar reached an advanced level of asceticism and bore the characteristics of the ascetics. It is fair to say that the elite of our day would never be able to even come near to 'Umar's disdain and rejection of the material things of this world, despite the fact they ultimately oppress their owners in aspects of life and tie them down to their belongings. People then begin to measure each other by what they own of the world's rubble, whereby we only have to look at the leaders and heads of our materialistic age to see an adequate example of people who in no way bear the characteristics of asceticism. Instead, they satisfy themselves through greed and avariciousness and even as they strive to make *Halāl* (lawful) earnings, they work in subjection to their worldly desires thinking they might attain a station more superior than this world, that 'Umar exerted himself to attaining, namely, the Gardens of Bliss.⁽¹⁾

In conclusion to what we have to say on the topic of 'Umar's asceticism and its impact on his leadership, he once said to his slave, Mazāḥim: "I positively pine for *Hajj* (the Major Pilgrimage to Makkah), so do you own anything?" Mazāḥim answered: "About ten *Dīnār*." He said: "Then what will I do?" So Mazāḥim remained silent for a while and then he said: "O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*! Prepare yourself as seventeen thousand *Dīnār* has been brought to us from the money of the *Banī Marwān*." 'Umar said: "Put it in the *Bayt al-Māl* (Public Treasury) and if it is permissible for us, we would only take

al-'Azīz] (1/366-78).

(1) *An-Namūdḥaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p.151.

what is enough for us and if it is not permissible for us, our affliction is sufficient for us." So Mazāḥim said that when 'Umar saw me with the money, he burdened me with it by saying: "Woe unto you, O Mazāḥim! Nothing is enhanced for you except that Allāh put it there. If I have an acquisitive soul, it will no longer desire status. Therefore, if it is inclined to pursue something more venerable, it might attain a high status on the Day of Judgment after which there will be no other status. In that case, today is spent in pursuit of *Jannah* (Paradise)."⁽¹⁾

Humility:

Allāh, the Sublime, says: [*And the (faithful) slaves of the Most Gracious (Allāh) are those who walk on the earth in humility and sedateness, and when the foolish address them (with bad words) they reply back with mild words of gentleness*] (*al-Furqān*, 25:63). Ibn al-Qayyim states: "This means to walk quietly and to esteem the humble."⁽²⁾ The Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Be humble so that no one will boast over another and so that no one transgresses over another."⁽³⁾ This noble quality was one of the basic traits distinctly embodied by 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz whose asceticism produced refined humility, given that a condition of true asceticism is to be humble before

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Hakm, p. 62.

(2) *Madārij as-Sālikīn* [The Traversers of the Spiritual Path] by Ibn al-Qayyim (2/340).

(3) Muslim, no. 2865.

Allāh.⁽¹⁾ Actually, 'Umar showed humility in all his affairs and interactions as is required of a leader who fears Allāh, longs for Him and expects obedience and loyalty from his subjects.⁽²⁾ Among the many things that illustrate 'Umar's humility is the response he once gave to a man who shouted at him: 'O *Khalīfatullah fil-Arḍ* (Caliph of Allāh on the Earth)!' So 'Umar said to him: "On the contrary! When I assumed the caliphate, my people chose to call me by my name: 'Umar. If you had called out: 'O 'Umar!' I would have answered you. When I designated myself an epithet, I chose to be called Abū Ḥafṣ. Had you called out: 'O Abū Ḥafṣ!' I would have answered you. Had you called me *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* (Commander of the Believers), I would have answered you then. But as for *Khalīfatullah fil-Arḍ*, I am not that, as the Caliphs of Allāh on the Earth were Dawūd (David) (may peace be upon him), the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the like",⁽³⁾ referring to the statement of Allāh: [O Dawūd (David)! Verily, We have placed you as a successor on the earth] (Ṣād, 38:26)

A reflection of his humility can be seen in the fact that he used to prevent the people from standing for him, saying: "O company of people! If you stand when we stand and sit when we sit, it should be that people only stand for the Lord of the Worlds." He would say to his bodyguards: "Do not put

(1) 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz by az-Zahīrī, p. 105

(2) *An-Namūdḥaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p.152.

(3) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 46

my safety first, for it is us that should be keeping you safe.”⁽¹⁾ ‘Umar showed humility even towards his lamp. One night, some people were spending the night with him when his lamp died out and so he stood up to fix it. It was said to him: “O *Amīr al-Mu’minīn*! Can we not help you?” He answered: “Is it harming me? Anyway, it is not good for a man to let his guests do something for him. I stand up while I am ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz and I sit down while I am ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz.”⁽²⁾ On another occasion, he said to his maidservant one day: “O maid, come and fan me.” So she got up and began to fan him but while she was doing that she became drowsy and fell asleep. Alarmed by her reddened face and the sweat pouring off her, ‘Umar began to fan her but when she woke up, she was so startled at what she saw that she put her hands over her face and began to scream. However, ‘Umar calmly said to her: “You are only human like me; and you were caught by heat the same way I was, and I wanted to fan your face in the same way that you fanned mine.”⁽³⁾

He would abstain from talking a lot, despite that he was an eloquent and articulate scholar for fear that he would appear vain and self-important. A man once entered upon him and said to him: “O *Amīr al-Mu’minīn*! The caliphate decorated your predecessors, while you decorate the caliphate, like the saying of the poet:

“If pearl had decorated the beauty of necks,

(1) *Ibid*, pp. 34-5.

(2) *Ibid*, p. 39.

(3) *Akhbār Abī Ḥafṣ* [An Exposition of Abī Ḥafṣ] by al-Ajṛī, p. 86.

Then your beautiful face has decorated the pearl itself."

Thereafter, 'Umar kept away from that man.⁽¹⁾ On another occasion, a man said to him: "May Allāh reward you greatly for Islām." 'Umar replied: "On the contrary! May Allāh reward Islām greatly for me."⁽²⁾ A man once entered upon 'Umar and a room full of people and said: "Peace be upon you, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*!" 'Umar replied: "May your peace prevail."⁽³⁾ That was the personality of the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* who would so humbly lower his wing to the believers and never show arrogance towards a servant of Allāh. His caliphate did not flourish except through humility, clemency and mercy and he did not occupy the position of Caliph except through an unassuming nature and out of submission to the authority of the truth. Thus, he would fix his own lamp, sit on the floor with the people, refuse to have the guards and police from walking in front of him, rebuke those who praised him, grace those in his company with greetings of peace, and he would not allow for people to be discriminated on the grounds of their mounts, food, clothes or drink.⁽⁴⁾

Piety:

Piety was certainly one of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's discernable traits whereby he would abstain from doing what

(1) *Ibid*, p. 84.

(2) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5/147); *Hilyat al-Awliyā'* [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite] (5/331).

(3) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5/384).

(4) 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz by 'Abd as-Sittār ash-Shaykh, p. 123.

was harmful. Moreover, 'Umar intervened in the prohibited and doubtful matters because they were harmful and whoever defends against doubtful matters safeguards his exposition and his religion, whereas those who fall into doubtful matters fall into *Harām* (prohibitions) just as a shepherd who herds on the edges of his pasture is likely to cross over it.⁽¹⁾ In essence, piety means to refrain from doing what is prohibited and steering clear from it, and then moving on to refraining from what is *Halāl* (lawful) and permissible. Proof of 'Umar's acclaimed piety and his exertion to safeguard himself from doubtful matters can be discerned from a narration that states that he enjoyed eating bread with honey and one day he had asked his family to get him some honey as he did not have any. A little later, they brought him the honey and he ate it and enjoyed it. He then turned to his family and asked: "Where did you get it from?" His wife answered: "I sent my servant with two *Dīnār* on Burayd's mule and he bought it for me." He asked: "Did you share it out before you gave me some?" So she bought out a vessel containing some of the honey and when he saw that the honey was worth more than two *Dīnār*, 'Umar gave his wife her money back and returned the rest of the honey to the Muslim's *Bayt al-Māl* (Public Treasury), saying to her: "You brought harm to the livestock of the Muslims to satisfy 'Umar's appetite."⁽²⁾

To depict another illustration of his piety, one narration tells of a boy who used to bring him copper vessels filled with

(1) *Al-Fatāwā* [Legal Judgments] (10/615).

(2) *Akhbār Abī Ḥafṣ* [An Exposition of Abī Ḥafṣ] by al-Ajrī, p. 54.

hot water in which he would perform *Wuḍhū*' (ritual ablution). One day, 'Umar said to the boy: "Do you take these vessels to the Muslims' kitchen to heat up the water and then bring them here to me?" "Yes, may Allāh make you prosper", the boy replied. 'Umar said: "Do you make it corrupt for us? Do you make it corrupt for us?!" He then ordered Mazāḥim to boil the water in the vessels and watched to see how much wood was used to complete the job. He then calculated how many days the boy had brought him water and then returned the total amount of firewood to the kitchen.⁽¹⁾

A similarly example of his piety is that he would never accept gifts from any of his workers or the *Ahl adh-Dhimmah* (non-Muslims living under Muslim rule) for fear that they might be considered as bribes. On the authority of 'Amr bin Muhājir who narrated: "'Umar desired an apple and said: 'If only we had an apple that was sweet in smell and taste'. At that point a man from his family stood up and sent him an apple as a gift but when the messenger arrived with it, 'Umar said: 'How lovely its smell is! Take it back, O boy, and send greetings of peace on so-and-so and say to him that his gift has been received by us as he had wished'. I said: "O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*! He is your paternal cousin and a man belonging to your own family, while you know that the Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to eat from the gifts he was given and not accept charity." 'Umar retorted: "Woe unto you! No doubt, those were presents for the Prophet (may

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 40.

peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), but for me this will be bribery.”⁽¹⁾

He would not allow himself to even smell *misk* (musk) purchased out of the Muslim's money such that he held his nose when rich smelling *misk* was put in front of him and it was said to him: “O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*! It is only a smell.” He said: “It has no use other than to give off a smell!”⁽²⁾ He would in this manner be extremely cautious when spending the wealth of the general Muslims so much so that he would light the lamp bought out of the *Bayt al-Māl* only when he was tending to the Muslims needs, after which he would put it out and light his own personal lamp bought out of his own pocket.⁽³⁾ Many historians have testified to the numerous examples of piety demonstrated by 'Umar who considered desisting from spending the smallest amount of the Muslims' wealth as refraining from doubtful matters, even though he was far from doubtful in his preservation of his religion. Three statements 'Umar applied to himself were: 1) Highlighting areas where he needed guidance so he can follow it; 2) Pointing out his faults so he can address them; and 3) practising what he preached.⁽⁴⁾

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 197.

(2) *Ibid*, p. 200; *Kitāb al-Wara'* [The Book of Piety] by Ibn Abī Dunyā, p. 74.

(3) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/164).

(4) *Al-'Aqd al-Farīd* [The Unique Creed] (4/397); *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/165).

Discipline:

'Umar was pious even in his speech, for instance, when it was said to him: "What do think about the people of *Siffin*?" He answered: "Allāh has cleansed my hands of that blood so I do not like to stain my tongue with it."⁽¹⁾ Not only was 'Umar pious in respect to his food, needs, desires and the Muslims' wealth, but he applied piety to all aspects of his life that showed piety coupled with strong faith, feelings of responsibility and consideration for the *Ākhirah*. In keeping with his outstanding level of piety, 'Umar bought a plot of land for him to be buried in upon receiving a sum of money and thus, he did not take anything from this world, including his grave, for nothing.⁽²⁾

Clemency, Forgiveness and Mercy:

Among the many fine characteristics embodied in the personality of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was his forgiveness of others and the ability to show mercy, as a *Shaykh* (religious leader; elder) from al-Khanasser reported: "'Umar had a son by his wife Fāṭimah who went out to play with two other boys, but when he came in he had been wounded in the head by one of them. 'Umar's son was carried home to his mother and the boy who wounded him was brought with him. Upon hearing all the commotion from another house, 'Umar went outside to

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 195.

(2) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p.156.

see what was happening to find his wife shouting: "He is my son and he is an orphan!" 'Umar asked: "Does he have an endowment?" "No", she replied. So 'Umar said: "Register his name in the posterity." At that point, Faṭimah exclaimed: "May Allāh send him to so and so, and let his son beat him another time!" 'Umar said: "Now you have frightened him."⁽¹⁾

Ibrāhīm bin Abī 'Ablah is reported to have said: "One day, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was extremely infuriated at a man and so at the spur of the moment he ordered that he be fetched, tied up with rope and for the whip to be brought. Suddenly, he said: "Let him be on his way." After a short pause, he then said: "As for me, had I not been angry I would have punished you. Allāh, the Almighty, says: [...those who repress anger and pardon men; verily Allāh loves the *Muḥsinīn* (good-doers).-] (*Āl-'Imrān*, 134) 'Abd al-Mālik said: "'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz stood up before his audience when he saw a man holding some scrolls in his hands, which had led the people to suspect him of wanting the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*. Feared that he might be imprisoned for it, the man threw down his scrolls but they hit 'Umar in the face and wounded him. I later saw 'Umar standing outside in the blazing sun with blood pouring down his face and he did not move from that spot until he read the scrolls. Soon afterwards, he ordered that the man's needs be fulfilled and for him to be let on his way."⁽²⁾

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 207; *Kitāb al-Jāmi' li-Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Compilation on the Life of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (2/423).

(2) *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'* [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite] (5/311).



It has been narrated that a man once put forward a request to 'Umar but 'Umar did not respond to it. He was asked: "What prevents you from him?" He said: "He met with Muljam."⁽¹⁾ On the authority of Ḥātim bin Qadāmah, a man approached 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz while he was giving a sermon and said to him: "I testify that you are among the immoral." 'Umar said: "What do you know? You are a false witness and your testimony is not recognised by us."⁽²⁾

It is narrated that when 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz assumed the caliphate, he went out to the *Masjid* (mosque) in the middle of the night with his bodyguard. On their way, 'Umar tripped over a man who was sleeping on the floor and so the man shouted to 'Umar: "Are you crazy?" 'Umar replied "No", at which point 'Umar's guards grabbed hold of the man but 'Umar intervened saying: "No. He only asked me if I was crazy and I said no."⁽³⁾ Another narration states that a man approached 'Umar while he was on the *minbar* (pulpit) to ask him for something and so 'Umar got angry at him, saying: "O you who wished to provoke me with the *Shayṭān* (Satan) to do something to you today that I would not even consider doing tomorrow! Go and repent to Allāh for me and for you."⁽⁴⁾ It is said that a boy who was crying went to see Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and so the latter asked: "What is the matter with

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 208.

(2) *Kitāb al-Jāmi' li-Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Compilation on the Life of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (2/424).

(3) *Ibid.*

(4) *Ibid.*

you?" He answered: "So-and-so, the slave, hit me." As such, he was brought to 'Umar who asked: "Did you hit him?" "Yes", he replied. 'Umar then said: "Go, for I never punish someone who answers honestly. Go!" and he did not speak to him.⁽¹⁾ Examples of 'Umar's kindness, patience and mercy are so abundant that the aforementioned accounts represent just a slight glimpse into the extent of his fine, unparalleled qualities.

Patience:

'Umar (may Allāh have mercy on him) was an exemplary model of patience and gratitude. It is narrated that when he died, 'Abd al-Mālik bin 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz stayed with him right up until he was placed in his grave, at which point he said: "Do not put him in too deep, as the higher part of the land is better than what is below it."⁽²⁾ It is also narrated that when his son, 'Abd al-Mālik, his brother, Suhī bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, and his slave, Mazāḥim, died, a man from the people of the *Shām* (Levant) said: "By Allāh, a severe calamity has befallen the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*! His son, Abd al-Mālik, has died and, by Allāh, I never saw a son be of more use to his father than him. The *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* was then afflicted by the death of his brother and, by Allāh, I never saw a brother be of more use to his brother than him." He then remained silent at the mention of Mazāḥim and so 'Umar said: "Do not leave Mazāḥim out, as, by Allāh, he was not the lowest of the three in my sight. May Allāh have mercy on you, O Mazāḥim! May

(1) *Ibid.*

(2) *Ibid* (2/427).

Allāh have mercy on you, O Mazāḥim! By Allāh, I was granted much of this *Dunyā* (World) and you were the finest minister in the affairs of the *Ākhirah* (Hereafter).”(1)

Hafṣ bin ‘Umar said: “When ‘Abd al-Mālik bin ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz died, he father began to praise him at his grave and so Maslamah said: ‘Do you think that you would have appointed him to the caliphate if he had lived?’” He said: “No.” Maslamah said: “But you are praising him with such praises.” He said: “It is because I fear that he might exalt me out of love as a father exalts his son out of love.”(2) In one of his sermons, ‘Umar stated: “Nobody is afflicted with a calamity and says: ‘To Allāh we belong and to Him we shall return’ except that Allāh compensates him with something better than what was taken from him.” He went on to say: “Satisfaction is scarce and patience is the pillar of the believer.” He also said: “He who acts without knowledge causes more corruption than good, and he who does not consider his speech to be part of his actions sins repeatedly. Satisfaction is scarce, and the true believer should rely on his patience. Allāh never bestowed a blessing upon one of His servants and then took it away from him, giving him patience in return for that which was taken away, except that the replacement was better than what was taken away from him.”(3) ‘Umar showed great patience throughout his life for the sake of the caliphate, about which he would say: “By Allāh, I did not assume this position of mine

(1) *Ibid.*

(2) *Ibid* (2/428).

(3) *Ibid.*

except out of fear that someone might establish it against the people's wishes and that my obedience in what I do would deliver to it what it deserves, i.e. the caliphate. Therefore, I am patient until Allāh decrees His will or grants some victory."⁽¹⁾

Resoluteness:

'Umar possessed resoluteness and certainty long before he applied it to the affairs of the Muslims and the caliphate, but he best conveyed these qualities in connection with the governors and heads of state. His ability to be decisive, control situations and his firmness to not disregard what he thought was necessary for the general welfare and in the interests of the Muslims took on many forms and applied in all circumstances, for instance, his decisiveness with the Umayyad nobles and commanders and those who wanted to drive a wedge between the Muslims, spread *fitnah* (trials; discord), spill blood, and so forth. The prime indicator of his strict resolution emerged when taking his stance with the Umayyad family to whom he said: "Hand over what you possess and do not seek refuge in me over what I hate, or I will cause you to do what you hate." None of them responded, however, and so he said: "Say something", at which point a man among them said: "By Allāh! We will not surrender the money that was given to us by our fathers so as to afflict our children with poverty and accuse our fathers of infidelity until you take off our heads!" 'Umar remarked: "By Allāh, had you

(1) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlāṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p.144.

not sought my help in what I have rightfully demanded of you, I would have humiliated you and abased your faces at an instant. However, if I did not fear that *Fiṭnah* (trials; discord) would ensue, I would seize and grant everyone his right, by the will of Allāh.”⁽¹⁾

‘Umar always took care of matters, for example, he received a letter from the *Banī Marwān* (tribe) one day that made him swell with anger. He then said: “Verily, a day [or it said, a slaughter] will come to the *Banī Marwān* (tribe) on which I will turn to Allāh, as that slaughter will be carried out by my own hands!” When they heard he had said that, they stopped in their tracks as they were aware of ‘Umar’s rigidity and that if he said he was going to do something, it meant he would do it.⁽²⁾

As for those who tried to create discord between the Muslims and rebel against them, ‘Umar adopted a strategy of dialogue and discussion. These rebels were specifically the *Kharijites* who revolted against the Umayyad family under the leadership of the *Kharijite* named Shawdhab in the year 100 AH. Thus, ‘Umar aimed to suppress what they were pushing for by showing them that if they had a right to their claims, he would take them into account, otherwise they would have to agree to join the rest of the people. At that particular time, ‘Umar’s measures showed resoluteness and rigidity in the face of bloodshed and corruption, whereupon he wrote to his

(1) *Al-‘Aqd al-Farīd* [The Unique Creed] (5/173).

(2) *An-Namūdḥaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhḥaṣ min Idārat ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz], p.158.

official over 'Irāq, saying: "Do you take action until they have spilled blood or caused corruption on the earth? If they do that then look for a good, decisive man to mediate between them and send an army with him after having entrusted him with what I have ordered him to do herein."⁽¹⁾ This was how 'Umar acted with decisiveness, that is, by taking strict measures and stances even in sensitive matters carrying significant repercussions. Nevertheless, 'Umar would play a positive and indispensable role in smoothing out matters and executing what he strived to accomplish of justice, harmony and the marks of a rightly-guided caliphate.⁽²⁾

Justice:

At the top of all 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's outstanding traits and qualities was definitely his phenomenal ability to be just and execute justice throughout his state with such vigour and sincerity that the scholars unanimously agreed, and continue to agree, that he was one of the "*Imāms of Justice*", "*Rightly-Guided Caliphs*" and an "*Imām Mahdī*" (Guided Leader)."⁽³⁾ Perhaps 'Umar's prime motive for being just was rooted in his belief that justice was one of Allāh's universal laws and in his utter certainty that justice was a fruit among the fruits of faith and a characteristic of the believers who cherished the laws of

(1) *Tārīkh at-Ṭabarī* (7/459).

(2) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p.163.

(3) *Al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah* [The Beginning and the End] extracted from *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p.163.

truth. It might have also stemmed from 'Umar's longstanding desire to suppress the injustice suffered by the people under former Umayyad caliphates and governors. Most of all, one of the most important reasons for 'Umar's eagerness to observe that justice was being carried put was because Allāh commands that justice and righteousness be done and that these form the general foundations for legislating the divine laws and injunctions.

As his love for the spread of Islām grew so did his love for justice and the revival of its values,⁽¹⁾ as can be seen from the following example of his just character that additionally sheds a vivid light on all the previous allusions to the character of this fine man. A *Dhimmī* (non-Muslim man living under Muslim rule) from Ḥimṣ (ancient Emesa, city in central Syria) approached 'Umar and said: "O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*! May I ask you about the Book of Allāh, the Majestic?" "What about it?" He asked him. He replied: "al-'Abbās bin al-Walīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik violated my land", while al-'Abbās was sitting there and so 'Umar turned to him and said: "O 'Abbās! What do you have to say?" He answered: "I was allotted it by al-Walīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik who wrote down the deeds to it for me." So 'Umar said: "The Book of Allāh is more worthy of being followed than the deeds of al-Walīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik. Therefore, return his loss to him, O 'Abbās" and he did.⁽²⁾

Al-Ḥakm bin 'Umar ar-Ra'īnī testifies to 'Umar's stance

(1) *An-Namūdḥaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], pp.163-4.

(2) *Akhbār Abī Ḥafṣ* [An Exposition of Abī Ḥafṣ] by al-Ajṛī, p. 58.

on justice, saying: "I witnessed Maslamah bin 'Abd al-Mālik provoking the inhabitants of Diyar Ishāq at the time when 'Umar was in an-Nā'ūrah (situated 8 miles from Aleppo), on which occasion 'Umar said to Maslamah: "You do not recline on cushions and your opponents are here in front of me, however, assign whichever one of your opponents you like otherwise the people will kneel at my discretion." As such, he appointed a slave of his to be his opponent and their dispute was settled in an-Nā'ūrah.⁽¹⁾ Of course, these are but a few of the many examples taken from the books written specifically on the subject of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's justice.

Invoking and Supplicating to Allāh and Receiving an Answer to His Prayers:

'Umar would supplicate and invoke Allāh profusely. Of the many things he would say was: "O Lord! You created me and shall cause me to die. You made a promise to me of reward for what you enjoined on me and threatened me with punishment for what you forbade me. You gave me mastery over an enemy, calmed my chest and allowed my blood to flow through my veins. Indeed, the most severe offense allures me and the most righteous action frustrates me, yet they will not be ignored unless You ignore them and they will not be forgotten unless You forget them. Desires are set up in front of me and doubts face me and unless You deter their schemes from me I will be debased. O Allāh! Make the most triumphant authority over me Your Authority so that I

(1) *Sirat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 91.



may remember You abundantly and be among the sinless to you. There is no might or power except by You.”⁽¹⁾ He would also say: “O Allāh! Reform the good of the *Ummah* of Muḥammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). O Allāh! Destroy whoever seeks the destruction of the *Ummah* of Muḥammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).”⁽²⁾ Another supplication he would make was: “O Allāh! Envelope me in good health until life bids me farewell, finish me off with forgiveness until no sin can harm me and ward off every fright from me in place of *Jannah* (Paradise) until I receive Your Mercy, O Most Merciful of All!”⁽³⁾ He would say: “O Allāh! Certainly, I obeyed you in the most beloved of things to you and that is *Tawḥīd* (the doctrine of the “Oneness of Allāh) and I did not disobey you in the most despised of things to you and that is *Shirk* (Polytheism; Idolatry), therefore forgive me in what lies between the two.”⁽⁴⁾ Another supplication he would say was: “O Allāh! I seek refuge in you from blasphemously altering Your Favour or disbelieving in it after it has perished or forgetting it to the point that I do not commend it.”⁽⁵⁾ A supplication he would often make was: “O Allāh! Make me pleased with Your Plan and bless me in Your Decree such that I no longer love hastening something

(1) *Kitāb al-Jāmi’ li-Sīrat ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz* [A Compilation on the Life of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz] (1/341).

(2) *Ibid* (1/342).

(3) *Ibid* (1/343).

(4) *Sīrat ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz* [The Biography of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 230.

(5) *Kitāb al-Jāmi’ li-Sīrat ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz* [A Compilation on the Life of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz] (1/343).

You have postponed or postponing something You have hastened.”⁽¹⁾

Reports assert how ‘Umar’s supplications had been answered, for instance, Ibn al-Ḥakm narrates that Ibn ar-Rayyān had been al-Walīd bin ‘Abd al-Mālik’s executioner and so when ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz assumed the caliphate, he said: “I recall his arrogance and pride.” He then said: “O Allāh! I have humiliated him for you so do not raise him up.” Never had a noble lost his reputation to the point of never being mentioned like him.”⁽²⁾

‘Umar had been informed about the lack of water in Makkah and so prior to his entering the city while making the *Hajj* pilgrimage, he made a supplication and Allāh answered his prayer by causing it to rain. This took place at the time when he was the Governor of al-Madīnah.⁽³⁾ Likewise, ‘Umar supplicated for Ghīlān al-Qadrī when he saw him, saying: “O Allāh! Let Your servant, Ghīlān, be honest otherwise may he be crucified”, and it happened that he was later crucified during the caliphate of Hishām bin ‘Abd al-Mālik.”⁽⁴⁾

(1) *Ibid* (1/344).

(2) *Sīrat ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz* [The Biography of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz] by Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 30.

(3) *Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah* [The Beginning and the End] (1/183).

(4) *Ash-Sharī‘ah* [Islamic Law “] by Ājūrī (1/438).

The Indicators of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Revival

Looking at the statements of the scholars and historians interested in the revivalist movement, there is no dispute that they unanimously agree on the fact that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was the first *Mujaddid* (Reviver; Renewer) in Islām.⁽¹⁾ The first person to ascribe this title to him was Imām Muḥammad bin Shihāb az-Zuhri, followed by Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal who said: "It is narrated in the *Hadīth* (Prophetic narration) that at the turn of every century Allāh will send a person to rectify the religious affairs of this *Ummah*. We saw that the *Mujaddid* of the first century was 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz."⁽²⁾ There is no doubt that 'Umar befitted the role of the person alluded to in the *Hadīth*. He was a diligent, determined and energetic scholar who worked day and night to revive the *Sunan* (Prophetic traditions), remove any extraneous elements from Islām and restore it to purity.⁽³⁾

Ibn Ḥajar al-Asqalānī says: "The congruity of qualities required for renewal is not confined to one type of good quality or deed and it is certainly fair to say that all good qualities have not been embodied by a single individual as they had been in the person of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, who came at the turn of the century bearing all the fine qualities

(1) *'Awn al-Ma'būd* (11/393) by 'Azīm Ābādī; *Jāmi' al-Aṣūl* (11/322).

(2) *Sīrat wa Manāqib 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Life and Outstanding Traits of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 74.

(3) *Al-Mujaddidūn fil-Islām* [Revivers in Islām] by aṣ-Ṣa'dī, p. 57; *Mawjiz Tārīkh* [A Concise History] by al-Mawdūdī, p. 63.

and more. Ahmad later attributed the *Hadīth* in reference to him being the *Mujaddid* of the first century and ash-Shāfi‘ī as the *Mujaddid* of the second century. While the latter was characterized by many beautiful qualities, he did not concern himself with enjoining *Jihād* and ruling with justice.”⁽¹⁾

While there are some scholars who are of the opinion that only the *Mahdī* (Guided One) at the end of times fully befits the person of a *Mujaddid*, and therefore do not apply this status to the likes of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz who did not emerge within the Muslim *Ummah* as an “Absolute *Mujaddid*” up until the present day, ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz almost achieved complete renewal through his cessation of hereditary rule and revival of an elected caliph by the process of *Shūra*.⁽²⁾ Whether ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz deserves to be ascribed the title of an “Absolute *Mujaddid*” or not, the revivalist reforms he made, the enormous effort he exerted to resume Islāmic life, restore its purity and clarity as it was at the time of the Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, places him at the head of the *Mujaddidūn* (Revivers; Renewers) who appeared over the ages until our present day. Of course, this status was helped by his position as the head of a strong, vast, extensive caliphate, which allows us to better grasp the extent of the revivalist reforms embarked on by this caliph and the renewal he brought about.

(1) *Fath al-Bārī* [Grant of the Creator] (13/295).

(2) *Mawjiz Tarīkh Tajdīd ad-Dīn* [A Brief History of the Revival of the Religion] by al-Mawdūdī, p. 69.

One could delve into the degree of deviance and perversity that had occurred within Islāmic life, or the change and transformation the Islāmic caliphate had undergone; however, we would probably not even skim the surface of the actual reality if we were only to confine the perversity of that time to the system of government from which resulted in nothing other than injustice and corruption. As for public life, the light of prophecy continued to shine and the Religion (of Islām) was the supreme authority in the hearts of the people.⁽¹⁾

‘Umar’s Reforms and Acts of Renewal

Shūrā (Consultation):

We have already mentioned that upon ‘Umar’s first encounter with the people, he began by praising and glorifying Allāh, and said: “O people! I have been burdened with the responsibilities of the caliphate against my own will and without your consent. I thereby remove the oath of allegiance to me that is on your necks so that you are at liberty to elect whom you like.” However, the audience cried out with one voice that he was the fittest person for the high office and said: “We have chosen you, O *Amīr al-Mu’minīn*, and we are pleased that you have blessed and honoured our good affair.”⁽²⁾ With the commencement of his rule, ‘Umar’s first act was one of renewal whereby he freed the people from the

(1) *‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz* by an-Nadwī, p. 10.

(2) *Sīrat wa Manāqib ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz* [The Life and Outstanding Traits of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 65.

stifling monarchy and therefore did not force the people into accepting him. On the contrary, he put the affair in their hands by reintroducing *Shūrā* (Consultation) amongst them.⁽¹⁾

Fidelity in Rule and Delegating Trustees:

There is a long list of positive evidence suggesting that 'Umar sought to attain his goal of reaching the highest station, given that he perceived the magnitude of responsibility and the weight of the burden from the moment he received the caliphate. He would say to whoever asked him why he looked sad: "Anyone in my position would feel sad. There is no one in the *Ummah* except that I want to extend his rights to him without him even writing to me about it or requesting it from me."⁽²⁾ He would say: "I am not better than you, although I bear a heavier load than you do."⁽³⁾

He would demand that his agents and officials choose associates who were beneficial and religious, as whoever they delegated would be entrusted with the affairs of the Muslims. Thus, he wrote to one of his agents: "Do not charge any affair of the Muslims to anyone other than the one who is known for consulting with them, giving ample attention to them and performing loyally."⁽⁴⁾ 'Umar's stringent fiscal policy with regards the Muslims' funds was not only a personal sentiment

(1) *At-Tajdīd fī Fikr al-Islāmī* [Renewal in Islāmic Thought] by Dr 'Adnān Muḥammad, p. 79.

(2) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5/586).

(3) *Ibid.*

(4) *Tārīkh at-Ṭabarī* [Ṭabarī's History] extracted from *At-Tajdīd fī Fikr al-Islāmī* [Renewal in Islāmic Thought] by Dr 'Adnān Muḥammad, p. 81.

but he further enjoined it on his agents and officials. To Abī Bakr bin Ḥazm, he wrote: "Use less ink and shorten the gaps between your lines, for I hate to exhaust the Muslims' funds on what is of no direct benefit to them."⁽¹⁾

He placed compassionate policies on his subjects, granted them a peaceful and comfortable existence and stopped them from begging and making humiliating pleas by sharing out grants to the poor and needy.⁽²⁾ To the poor of Baṣrah, he allocated thirty *Dirham* per person and he gave fifty to the chronically ill.⁽³⁾ Furthermore, he commanded his officials to equip whoever wanted to perform the *Hajj* (Major Pilgrimage) duty.⁽⁴⁾ On that subject, he wrote to his officials: "Set up inns for the Muslims who pass through your country and allow them to stay for a day or two and tend to their riding animals. Let whoever has some weakness stay for two days and two nights and if he has discontinued his journey then let him stay until he is ready to return to his country."⁽⁵⁾ Charitable dispensaries were also opened. Even travelling expenses were arranged by the government for needy travellers.

During his time, 'Umar consolidated the availability of *Zakāh* (obligatory charity) so much so that 'Umar bin Asyad said: "By Allāh! 'Umar did not die before making it so that

(1) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5/595).

(2) *Tārīkh at-Ṭabarī* [Ṭabarī's History] extracted from *At-Tajdīd fī Fikr al-Islāmī* [Renewal in Islāmic Thought] by Dr 'Adnān Muḥammad, p. 81.

(3) *Tārīkh at-Ṭabarī* [Ṭabarī's History] (7/474).

(4) *Ibid.*

(5) *Ibid* (7/472).

he would bring us a vast amount of money and say: 'Put this wherever you see fit'. It was also said about his fairness and justice to the people that if a person was to donate a large sum for the poor, his money would be returned to him untouched because nobody would be found to take it. People were satisfied in his days and it was said "Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz has fulfilled the needs of the people'."⁽¹⁾ The security of the Muslims was considered far above any amount of money, concerning which 'Umar wrote to his officials: "Pay the ransoms of Muslim captives even if that exhausts all funds."⁽²⁾

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's caliphate still constitutes historical proof for all those who doubt the possibility of the establishment of an Islāmic economic system and is a radiant example that the application of divine Islāmic *Sharī'ah* (Law) ensures people's happiness in the *Dunya* (World) and the *Ākhirah* (Hereafter).⁽³⁾

The Principle of Justice:

The principle of justice was of crucial importance to 'Umar, which it seems he rightly inherited from his grandfather from his mother's side, 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allāh be pleased with him). It is no surprise then that he had pressed onto

(1) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5/588).

(2) *Sīrat wa Manāqib 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Life and Outstanding Traits of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 120.

(3) *Khāmis al-Khulafā ar-Rāshidīn: 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Fifth Rightly-Guided Caliph: 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], pp. 41-2.

coins the phrase: "Allāh commands faithfulness and justice."⁽¹⁾ He demanded that no capital punishment be carried out on a person without his knowledge⁽²⁾ whereby he wrote to his official, al-Jurāḥ bin 'Abdullah al-Ḥakmī, the Governor of Khorasān: O son of Umm Jurāḥ! Do not kill or flog a believer except in truth and be wary of being held to account as you are going to The One Who knows the treachery from within and from Whom the heart conceals nothing. Therefore recite a book that leaves out neither the major nor the minor to be reckoned with."⁽³⁾

He acted fairly with the *Ahl adh-Dhimma* (Non-Muslims living under Muslim rule) and protected them as well as their places of worship, from being attacked or violated, about which he wrote to his officials: "Do not tear down a single church, synagogue or fire-temple."⁽⁴⁾ He lifted the *Makas* (trading taxes illegally levied during pre-Islāmic times) and removed the '*Ushūr* (import tax) and other taxes that had been imposed under former governments. As a result, he liberated the spirit of free trade on land and sea and freed it from the injustices that were being committed by the *Banī Umayyad* (tribe) and al-Hajjāj.⁽⁵⁾

(1) *Sīrat wa Manāqib 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Life and Outstanding Traits of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 98.

(2) *Tārīkh at-Ṭabarī* [Ṭabarī's History] (7/474).

(3) *Ibid* (7/464).

(4) *Ibid* (7/477).

(5) *Sīrat wa Manāqib 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Life and Outstanding Traits of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, pp. 107-8.

His Revival of the Principle of Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil:

The caliphate was restored to serve its true purpose of guarding the *Dīn* (Religion of Islām) whereby 'Umar gave impetus to this principle, raised his banner and elevated his affairs such that the Guardian and the Expediter (names of Allāh) made not only 'Umar, but equally his officials, accomplish great things out of true fear of Allāh and in seeking His pleasure in every action. One factor that helped him to be this way was the fact that he was an honourable *Tābi'ī* (second and third generation follower) and *Imām* of *Ijtihād* (independent legal ruling).⁽¹⁾ 'Umar bin Maymūn even went so far as to say: "The scholars and 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz were fellow students."⁽²⁾ 'Umar's good faith and sound *'Aqīdah* (creed) had a positive impact on his reforms and renewal, as it was based on these that he was able to dispel heretic tendencies and *Bid'ah* (innovation) and act harshly in the face of falsehood,⁽³⁾ which shall be elaborated on in more detail later, Allāh willing. In reference to 'Umar, Imām al-Awzā'ī says: "If you see a nation murmuring about something concerning their religion without the public, then know that they are on shaky grounds."⁽⁴⁾ He used to think that his life would be worthless were it not utilized for reviving the *Sunnah*

(1) *At-Tajdīd fī Fikr al-Islāmī* [Renewal in Islāmic Thought] by Dr 'Adnān Muḥammad, p. 85.

(2) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5/518).

(3) *At-Tajdīd fī Fikr al-Islāmī* [Renewal in Islāmic Thought] by Dr 'Adnān Muḥammad, p. 86.

(4) *Sīrat wa Manāqib 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Life and Outstanding Traits of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 83.

(Prophetic Example) or eradicating *Bid'ah* (innovation).⁽¹⁾

Naturally, then, 'Umar showed a great interest in people's religion and ethics, regarding which he wrote to his officials: "Avoid being busy at the correct times for prayer, for he who loses sight of them is in the greatest loss in the sight of Islām."⁽²⁾ These letters, sermons and admonitions provide the greatest insight into how he advocated strong faith, straight supervision and fear of a Day on which people will stand before the Lord of the Worlds. Consequently, 'Umar's personality and his fair policies made a sound impression the life of the public, their tendencies, mentalities and aspirations.⁽³⁾ This is verified by what at-Ṭabarī says in his *History* in which he compares the era of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz to the eras of former rulers, stating: "Al-Walīd liked construction and manufacturing and the people of his time were the same whereby they would talk to each other about construction and manufacturing. Sulaymān next assumed the caliphate and he like food and women more, upon which the people would ask each other about marriage and female-slaves. When 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz came to power, the people would meet and one man would ask another: 'What are you doing tonight? How much of the Qur'ān will you memorise? When will you complete it? How much of this month have you fasted?'"⁽⁴⁾

(1) *At-Tajdīd fī Fikr al-Islāmī* [Renewal in Islāmic Thought] by Dr 'Adnān Muḥammad, p. 86.

(2) *Sīrat wa Manāqib 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Life and Outstanding Traits of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 221.

(3) *At-Tajdīd fī Fikr al-Islāmī* [Renewal in Islāmic Thought] by Dr 'Adnān Muḥammad, p. 86.

(4) *Tārīkh at-Ṭabarī* [Ṭabarī's History] extracted from *At-Tajdīd fī Fikr al-Islāmī* [Renewal in Islāmic Thought] by Dr 'Adnān Muḥammad, p. 87.

‘Umar did not stop at establishing the *Dīn* (Religion of Islām) within his state but he further directed his attention to non-Muslims who he called to enter into Islām. Thus, he sent messengers to the kings of India and beyond, promising them that they could enjoy what the Muslims enjoyed and similarly they would have the same duties as the Muslims. A large number of them subsequently chose to accept Islām and adopted the names of the Arabs.⁽¹⁾ Perhaps the most splendid deed ‘Umar rendered in the service of Islām was the codification of the Islāmic sciences and especially the science of *Ḥadīth* (Prophetic Narrations). A chapter will be dedicated to this in due course, by the will of Allāh. Most importantly, all of these pivotal acts and reforms were realised throughout the brief period of ‘Umar’s caliphate. Thus, he became the jewel of the *Ummah* (Community of Believers) and a beacon of light guiding its recipients on the paths of renewal and reform.⁽²⁾

The Criteria and Qualities of a Mujaddid (Reviver; Renewer)

It is possible to define the fundamental criteria and qualities that should be present in the person of the *Mujaddid* that can herein be traced from the biography of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (may Allāh have mercy on him).

(1) *Khāmis al-Khulafā ar-Rāshidīn: ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz* [The Fifth Rightly-Guided Caliph: ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz], p. 30.

(2) *At-Tajdīd fī Fikr al-Islāmī* [Renewal in Islāmic Thought] by Dr ‘Adnān Muḥammad, p. 87.

He must be known to have sound 'Aqīdah (doctrine of faith):

This is because one of the specific tasks of renewal is to restore Islām's pureness and precision from all extraneous elements. Evidently, this is an unfeasible task unless the *Mujaddid* himself is following the path of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), the noble *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions) and the victorious sect out of an indicated seventy-three sects whose 'Aqīdah is in keeping with the teachings and practices of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).⁽¹⁾ This condition was certainly met by 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and this claim will be quantified when discussing his doctrinal impacts in this study, Allāh willing.

He must be a diligent scholar qualified to issue independent legal rulings:

This condition was realised by 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz who confronted the problems that arose during his time while striving to provide Islāmic legal solutions to them. In reality, the practice of *Ijtihād* (deriving independent legal rulings) is not difficult for one who has mastered some of the books of *Uṣūl al-fiqh* (the fundamentals of jurisprudence), which is why some have attempted to set conditions that are almost impossible to fulfil, such as requiring the *Mujtahid* (issuer of independent rulings) to have an all-round knowledge of all

(1) *Ibid*, p. 46.

the sciences including grammar, language and rhetoric, the Islāmic law sciences of *Tafsīr* (Qur'ānic Exegesis), *Hadīth* (Prophetic Narrations) and *Uṣūl al-fiqh* (the fundamentals of jurisprudence), the sciences of the Qur'ān, the *Sīrah* (biography), speech and pronunciation, and so many more complicated stipulations.⁽¹⁾ While it is true that the practice of *Ijtihād* (deriving independent legal rulings) is quite easily accomplished by the perceptively competent person, it is important for us to note that the *Mujaddid* is required to have a comprehensive understanding of Islāmic law and to be capable of deducing informed rulings to apply to the prevalent circumstances as a jurist of that day and age.⁽²⁾

According to al-Manāwī: "The *Mujaddid* must be a person who stands up for the Truth, assists the *Sunnah* (Prophetic Example), rejects the corrupt and innovated practices of his day, possesses the power to deduce facts and theories, and to discern criteria, guidance, proofs and requirements from an attentive heart and vigilant soul."⁽³⁾ In the words of al-'Aẓīm Ābādī: "Indeed, a *Mujaddid* (Renewer) of the Religion is required to be knowledgeable in the religious sciences, externally and within his inner self. He assists the *Sunnah* (Prophetic Example) and suppresses *Bid'ah* (innovation in religion)."⁽⁴⁾ Al-Mawdūdī maintains: "Of the

(1) *Kawn al-Ma'mūd* (11/392).

(2) *At-Tajdīd fī Fikr al-Islāmī* [Renewal in Islāmic Thought] by Dr 'Adnān Muḥammad, p. 46.

(3) *Fayḍ al-Qadīr* by al-Manāwī (1/14).

(4) *'Awn al-Ma'būd* (11/391); *At-Tajdīd fī Fikr al-Islāmī* [Renewal in Islāmic Thought] by Dr 'Adnān Muḥammad, p. 48.

specifics a *Mujaddid* is required to have are: a pure mind, acute discernment, unadulterated thinking, an exceptional capacity to demonstrate the ideal way between excess and neglect, and the observance of moderation between the two, the ability of abstract reasoning to address the current situation, and courage and bravery to confront the prevalent perversity of that time.”⁽¹⁾ On the topic of the *Mujaddid*’s role, he states: “*Ijtihād* (issuing legal independent rulings) in the Religion.” By this he means that the *Mujaddid* is required to comprehend all faculties of the Religion and give direction to the developed, urban settings of his time by way of forging a path for the introduction of expression and amending old customs to simultaneously ensure the establishment of the Islāmic spirit and the attainment of its aims. Islām is thereby perceived as a viable global system in leading an advanced and sound civilisation.

His renewal includes the field of thought and behaviour in society:

The reason for this condition is because the rectification of perversity is one of the distinctive roles a *Mujaddid* must carry out and it is a fact that perversity emerges from behaviour just as it emerges from thought. Then again, it is probably more accurate to say that most behavioural perversity is founded on intellectual perversity, which is why the *Mujaddid* rectifies ideas and concepts to decontaminate them from the

(1) *Mawjiz Tārīkh Tajdīd ad-Dīn* [A Brief History of the Revival of the Religion] by al-Mawdūdī, p. 52.

doubt and suspicion that has crept in. Therefore, he aims to revive useful knowledge and reconciles that with the correct understanding of Islām to then disseminate it amongst the people by teaching it, authoring books and spreading it via other available means. Next, he turns to reforming behaviour in people, evaluating their morals, refining their beings, annulling any traditions in contradiction to the *Sharī'ah* (Islāmic law), declaring war against *Bid'ah* (innovation), superstition, the evils rampant in people's lives, and confronting all shapes and forms of corruption, especially the corrupt leader or ruler. Thus, the *Mujaddid* combines together word and deed, knowledge and action. The predecessors elaborated on this condition further by stating that a *Mujaddid* is a person who supports the *Sunnah* (Prophetic Example) and subdues *Bid'ah* (innovation in religion).⁽¹⁾

His benefits prevail over the people of his time:

The *Mujaddid* is a man working within a particular period and context, spanning the centuries of time, and so it is necessary then that he be a beacon of light illuminating the people and guiding them to the right way, at least until a new *Mujaddid* is sent. This means that the knowledge of the *Mujaddid* must prevail and benefit the people of his age in order that his efforts at reform and renewal leave a significant impact on their thought and behaviour. Mainly, the most prominent way to achieve this is through educating

(1) 'Awn al-Ma'būd (11/391); *At-Tajdīd fī Fikr al-Islāmī* [Renewal in Islāmic Thought] by Dr 'Adnān Muḥammad, p. 48.

them to be students and loyal companions so that they might continue on his revivalist path, publish his books, spread his ideas, establish intellectual schools and follow his footsteps in the way of reform and renewal.⁽¹⁾

The Saying of the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): "At the turn of every century, Allāh will send a person to rectify the religious affairs of this Ummah" (2)

This *Hadīth* highlights one of the graceful ways in which Allāh preserves the *Dīn*, whatever might have accumulated over time, and Allāh guarantees His guidance and love for the *Ummah* by sending devout *Mujaddidīn* to bring it back to life again and awaken it from sleep. To the Muslim, this *Hadīth* offers definite hope for the future of Islām, no matter how bleak it may seem or how rampant the forces of evil might be, as its light will shine even in the darkest of nights.

Today, we urgently need to emphasise the meaning of this and spread it amongst the people as a means of combating the massive wave of despair and hopelessness felt by the vast majority who have given in to submissive passiveness and servitude due to the belief that it is the end of time and so there is no use in exerting any effort to renew and restore Islām, which has been left behind in

(1) *At-Tajdīd fī Fikr al-Islāmī* [Renewal in Islāmīc Thought] by Dr 'Adnān Muḥammad, p. 48.

(2) *Silsilat al-Aḥādīth aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* [The Chain of Verified Prophetic Narrations] (2/151).

place of the pervading disbelief. Additionally, it is believed that the minor signs of the Hour have become manifest and we are now awaiting the major signs that will shortly be succeeded by the establishment of the Hour. People who maintain this view refer to certain *Aḥadīth* as proof, although they interpret them to mean something other than what was intended.⁽¹⁾ For example, the use the *Hadīth* narrated by Anas bin Mālik (may Allāh be pleased with him) cited in al-Bukhārī which states: "No time will come upon you but the time following it will be worse than it until you meet your Lord."⁽²⁾ Another *Hadīth* states: "Islām came as a stranger and shall return as a stranger as it began. So give glad tidings to the strangers."⁽³⁾ The reality of the matter is that they forget that it is not permissible to take these *Aḥadīth* out of context without considering all the other related *Aḥadīth* that give hope and glad tidings to the *Ummah*, for instance, the *Hadīth*: "My *Ummah* is like the rain, I do not know whether the first of it is better or the last."⁽⁴⁾ And there will be a nation apart and a time apart, as Ibn al-Qayyim mentions,⁽⁵⁾ which explains the brilliant, gleaming periods witnessed by Islāmic history such as those of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz,⁽⁶⁾ Nūr ad-

(1) *At-Tajdīd fī Fikr al-Islāmī* [Renewal in Islāmic Thought] by Dr 'Adnān Muḥammad, p. 55.

(2) *Al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Fitan* [The Book of Trials], no. 6541.

(3) *Muslim, Kitāb al-Imān* [The Book of Faith], p. 208.

(4) *Sunan at-Tirmidhī*, no. 2795.

(5) *Madārīj as-Sālikīn* [The Traversers of the Spiritual Path] by Ibn al-Qayyim (3/196).

(6) *At-Tajdīd fī Fikr al-Islāmī* [Renewal in Islāmic Thought] by Dr 'Adnān Muḥammad, p. 56.

Dīn, Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn, Yūsuf bin Tāshifīn, Muḥammad al-Fātiḥ and others.

It is essential to point out here, then, the *Hadīth* on renewal that we seek to explain is in agreement with those *Aḥādīth* that convey the good news to the *Ummah* of the return of Islām to life. Needless to say, the information of these reports is undoubted as it was conveyed by the infallible, truthful Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Based on the certainty of what these narrations tell us, it follows that it is necessary to reawaken the Muslims to strive hard to realise the victory of Allāh for this *Dīn* and love for His people, as this is the *Sunnah* of Allāh in the scheme of cause and effect.⁽¹⁾

“Allāh will send to this Ummah...”⁽²⁾

The sent one in question does not only have his own concerns but, more than that, he lives for the sake of the *Ummah* and is therefore inherently determined and resolute to address the needs of his *Ummah* in the best way he can, regardless of whether that means he does not stop day and night in order to achieve his aim of rescuing it from degradation and returning it to pure, original Islām. Patiently, he overcomes any obstacles and threats that may come in his way, for elevating his *Ummah* and restoring its glory are its ultimate objectives.⁽³⁾

(1) *Ijtihād li-Tajdīd* [The Independent Rulings of Renewal] by 'Umar 'Ubayd Ḥasanah, p. 7.

(2) *Silsilat al-Aḥādīth aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* [The Chain of Verified Prophetic Narrations] (2/151).

(3) *At-Tajdīd fī Fikr al-Islāmī* [Renewal in Islāmic Thought] by Dr 'Adnān Muḥammad, p. 57.

“At the turn of every century...”⁽¹⁾

The literal wording of the *Hadith* states: “At the *head* of every century”, which could imply at the very beginning of it, just as it could mean at the end of it.⁽²⁾ There is a difference of opinion among the scholars as to what is meant by “head” in this context whereby some maintain it means the beginning of the century and others maintain it means the end,⁽³⁾ such as Ibn Ḥajar,⁽⁴⁾ aṭ-Ṭibī,⁽⁵⁾ and al-‘Azīm Ābādī.⁽⁶⁾ The latter opposed the views of the Imāms, az-Zuhri and Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal, along with other scholars and historians, who agreed that the *Mujaddidīn* appear at the beginning of the century, namely, ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (may Allāh have mercy on him) at the start of the first century and ash-Shāfi‘ī (may Allāh have mercy on him) at the start of the second. ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz died in the year 101 of the Hijrah calendar at the age of forty and after having ruled for two and half years whilst ash-Shāfi‘ī died in year 204 AH.⁽⁷⁾ In the view of the former scholars who claim the *Mujaddidīn* appear at the end of the century, it is not plausible to count ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz as the *Mujaddid* of the first century given that he was not born at the start of that century, let alone be its *Mujaddid*, and they say the same applies to ash-Shāfi‘ī who was not born at the start of the second century, and so

(1) *Silsilat al-Aḥādīth aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* [The Chain of Verified Prophetic Narrations] (2/151).

(2) *‘Awn al-Ma’būd* (11/386).

(3) *Ibid.*

(4) *Fath al-Bārī* (13/295).

(5) *‘Awn al-Ma’būd* (11/389).

(6) *Ibid* (11/387).

(7) *Ibid.*

could not have been its *Mujaddid*.⁽¹⁾

Is it a requisite for the death of a Mujaddid to occur before the end of the century?

Some scholars stipulate that in order for a person to be ascribed the title of a *Mujaddid*, his death must occur at the turn of the century. This is a likely opinion given that the word *ba'ath* (sent) in the *Hadīth* could be applied to mean dispatch, manifest, death, capture or disappearance. Nevertheless, the *Hadith* alludes to the fact that the *Mujaddid* appears at the end of the century, his reforms and acts of renewal have been made manifest, and his goodness and benefit have become widespread. As a result, it is not necessary for his death to occur shortly before the end of the century or for him to still be alive at the turn of the next century.⁽²⁾

Is the Mujaddid of the century one person or multiple people?

The saying of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) indicating that "he renews the religion of the *Ummah*" has raised the question, in both the past and present, whether the word "he" mentioned in the *Hadīth* signifies an individual from the *Ummah* through whom Allāh will revive the Religion, or whether it could extend to individuals and groups. Many of the scholars are more inclined towards the first opinion that the *Mujaddid* is one person, including as-

(1) *At-Tajdīd fī Fikr al-Islāmī* [Renewal in Islāmīc Thought] by Dr 'Adnān Muḥammad, p. 58.

(2) *Ibid*, p. 61.

Suyūṭī who conveys this view to the masses in his poem on the *Mujaddidīn*, stating:

“His being is one and he is celebrated,
As the *ḥadīth* and the people have professed.”⁽¹⁾

On the other hand, scholars of the opposite view maintain that the word “he” is linguistically used in the general sense⁽²⁾ to apply to both one person and a group.⁽³⁾ Exponents of this view include Ibn Ḥajar, Ibn al-Athīr, adh-Dhahabī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Manāwī and al-‘Aẓīm Ābādī.⁽⁴⁾ Throughout the course of this study, it should become apparent that the *Hadīth* effectively alludes to the general sense of the word, since history has beheld the presence of more than one *Mujaddid* at the “head” of all centuries in the past, and because the enormity of the task of renewal is not restricted to certain aspects of the Religion but all of them. Furthermore, the expanse of the Muslim *Ummah* is so vast and wide that it makes it difficult for the provision of one person alone. Instead, multiple people or groups are more capable of carrying out extensive, complete renewal if they work together.⁽⁵⁾

The Mujaddid renews “the Religion of the Ummah” and not the Religion itself:

One must contemplate the saying of the Messenger

(1) *‘Awn al-Ma’būd* (11/394).

(2) *At-Tajdīd fī Fikr al-Islāmī* [Renewal in Islāmic Thought] by Dr ‘Adnān Muḥammad, p. 61.

(3) *Ibid.*

(4) *Ibid.*, pp. 62-3.

(5) *Ibid.*, p. 65.

(may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to grasp the proper meaning of a *Mujaddid*, as when he (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "He renews the religion of the *Ummah*", the implication here is that the *Mujaddid* will bring the *Dīn* (Religion of Islām) in relation with the *Ummah* and he did not say "renew the Religion for the *Ummah*." Revealed by Allāh to the Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who faithfully taught its doctrines, acts of worship, morals, regulating the servants' relations with their Lord and so forth, the Religion was firmly established according to the way that Allāh originally sent it, without change or renewal. As for the religion of the *Ummah*, or in other words, the relations of the *Ummah* with the Religion in terms of the extent of their adherence to it and how they interpret it and apply it on the earth, it can be renewed to return the people to the level that they should be on in the context of their relationship with the Religion.⁽¹⁾

(1) *Min Ajal Şahwat Islāmiyyah* [Towards an Islāmic Awakening] by al-Qaraḍāwī, pp. 26-7.

Part III

The Importance 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz Attached to the Creed of the *Ahl as-Sunnah*:

'Umar laid a lot of emphasis on the doctrine of belief followed by the *Ahl as-Sunnah* (People of the Prophetic Example) and urged that it be taught and disseminated to the masses. Numerous sayings attributed to him in connection to the teachings of the *Ahl as-Sunnah* found their place in authoritative Islāmic sources and books referring to creed, *Tafsīr* (exegesis), *Fiqh* (jurisprudence) and so on. In the course of compiling his Master's thesis, Professor Ḥayāt bin Muḥammad bin Jibrīl collected together many of these sources traced to 'Umar, although in his exposition of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's life story, he failed to shed sufficient light on this important aspect of his life, which drove his devotion to raise the awareness of the people by educating them on the correct doctrine of belief as it came down in the Book of

Allāh, the Sublime, and in the *Sunnah* (Prophetic Example) of the Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The most important issues of creed 'Umar spoke about are given below:

Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyyah (the Oneness of Allāh)

Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyyah forms the basis of Islām, or more accurately, it is the basis of every divine religion that was sent to all the messengers and revealed in all of their books. It is what every messenger, from Ādam (peace be upon him) to our Prophet, Muḥammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), called to as the true purpose for the creation of *Jinn* (jinn; a species created like humans but from smokeless fire as opposed to clay) and humans. Allāh, the Sublime, says: [And I (Allāh) created not the Jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me Alone.] (*adh-Dhāriyāt*, 56) The pious forebears of this *Ummah* (may Allāh have mercy on them) laid great emphasis on this particular doctrine of "Oneness", one of whom was of course 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz.⁽¹⁾ Before we can elaborate on the contributions he made on this topic of *Tawḥīd*, it is first important to convey what is essentially meant by *Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyyah*. It is therefore defined as "the understanding that none has the right to be deified and worshipped except Allāh Who has no partner."⁽²⁾ Some researchers have defined it as "the Oneness of Allāh in the

(1) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/199).

(2) *Sharḥ al-'Aqīdah aṭ-Ṭaḥāwīyyah* [An Explanation of aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī's Creed] (1/29).

actions of worshippers, which is expressed through unity of requesting and meaning such that all worship is for Allāh Alone Who has no partner. He Alone deserves to be loved, feared, trusted in, implored and asked of and closeness to Him through acts of worship, whether with body or wealth, should be without associating anyone or anything to Him.”⁽¹⁾ A plethora of traditions have been cited on the authority of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz relating to issues pertaining to *Du'ā'* (supplication), fear, hope, trust and gratitude:

***Du'ā'* (Supplication):**

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz passed by a man who was playing with a pebble in his hand whilst saying: “O Allāh! Marry me to the *Huwr al-'Ayn* (Maidens of Paradise).” 'Umar therefore approached him and said: “What a wretched suitor you are! Could you not at least throw down that pebble and be sincere in your supplication to Allāh?!”⁽²⁾ In another tradition, 'Umar asserts that the conditions of *du'ā'* are sincerity and presence of heart, which is consistent with the Book and *Sunnah* (Prophetic Example). Allāh says: “So call (you, O Muḥammad, (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and the believers) upon Allāh making (your) worship pure for Him (Alone)...” (*Ghāfir*, 40:14). Likewise, the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Supplicate to Allāh with confidence that He will answer you and know that Allāh

(1) *Al-'Aqīdah* [The Doctrine of Belief] (1/200).

(2) *Hilyat al-Awliyā'* [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite] (5/287); *Sīrat wa Manāqib 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Life and Outstanding Traits of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 84.

does not answer the prayer of one whose heart is absent."⁽¹⁾

In a supplication, 'Umar used to say: "O Allāh! Certainly, I obeyed you in the most beloved of things to you and that is *Tawḥīd* (the doctrine of the "Oneness of Allāh) and I did not disobey you in the most despised of things to you and that is *Shirk* (Polytheism; Idolatry), therefore forgive me in what lies between the two."⁽²⁾ Here, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz used his obedience and *Tawḥīd* to request Allāh's forgiveness. Sure enough, he also beseeched Allāh in the name of some good deed like the three people who got stuck in the cave according to the *Hadīth* narration.⁽³⁾ This story speaks of three people who sought deliverance from Allāh by beseeching Allāh in the name of good deeds that they performed on account of their good faith. In the Qur'ān, Allāh says: "O Lord! Verily, we have heard the call of one (Muḥammad, may peace of Allah be upon him) calling to Faith: 'Believe in your Lord', and we have believed. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins, expiate from us our evil deeds, and make us die (in a state of righteousness) along with the 'Abrār' (pious believers).] (*Āli 'Imrān*, 193) Thus, they demonstrated real faith and certainty in supplication, examples of which are plentiful."⁽⁴⁾

When an earthquake hit the Shām (Levant), 'Umar bin

(1) *Sunan at-Tirmidhī* (5/483); *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan al-Albānī*, no. 2766.

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 242.

(3) Muslim, no. 2743.

(4) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/219).

'Abd al-'Azīz wrote: "To proceed: Certainly, this tremor is for something Allāh wishes to admonish His servants for." He had also written to the people of the major provinces telling to evacuate their cities on such a day of such a month and whatever he owned at that time he gave away in charity.⁽¹⁾ Allāh, the Sublime, says: *"Indeed, whoever purifies himself (by avoiding polytheism and accepting Islāmic Monotheism) shall achieve success. And remembers the name of his Lord and prayers (the compulsory five prayers and additional optional prayers)." (al-A'lā, 87:14-5).* On that occasion, they said as Ādam (Adam) (upon him peace) said: *"They said: 'Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If You forgive us not and bestow not upon us Your mercy, we shall certainly be of the losers."* (al-A'rāf, 7:23). And as Nūh (Noah) (upon him peace) said: *"Nūh (Noah) said: 'O my Lord! I seek refuge in You from asking You that of which I have no knowledge. And unless you forgive me and have mercy on me, I would indeed be of the losers"* (Hūd, 11:47). And as Yūnus (Jonah) (upon him peace) said: *"None has the right to be worshipped but You (O Allāh), Glorified are You (above all that evil they associate with you)! Truly, I have been of the wrongdoers)." (al-Anbiyā', 21:87)* Accordingly, 'Umar exhorted his people to resort to Allāh, give in charity, seek His forgiveness and go out to prayer at the time when the Shām was struck by an earthquake.⁽²⁾

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Hakm, p. 64; *Hilyat al-Awliyā'* [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite] (5/304-5);

(2) *Al-Athār al-Warīdah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported State-

Maymūn bin Mahrān said: "I was with 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and he was crying uncontrollably at the thought of death and His Lord. I said to him: 'Why are you crying over death when Allāh has granted great good, revived *Sunan* (prophetic traditions) and eradicated *Bid'ah* (innovations in religion) through your hands?' He answered: 'Should I not be like the righteous slave who when Allāh came to his aid and settled his affairs said: [*My Lord! You have indeed bestowed on me of the sovereignty, and taught me something of the interpretation of dreams – the (Only) Creator of the heavens and earth! You are my 'Walī* ('Protector, Helper, Supporter, Guardian, God, Lord) in this world and in the Hereafter. Cause me to die as a Muslim (the one submitting to Your Will) and join me with the righteous." (Yūsuf, 12:101) Thus, he requested death on account of his faith and asked to emulate the *Sāliḥīn* (Righteous) in his supplication to Allāh, which is in fact a supplication practiced by the prophets and an utterance of the righteous. 'Umar (may Allāh have mercy on him) would also supplicate to Allāh for fear of *Fitnah* (trials; discord) in the *Dīn*, especially following the death of his closest confidants, his son, 'Abd al-Mālik, his slave, Mazāḥim, and his brother, Suhīl, which we know from various narrations.⁽¹⁾

ments of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/220).

(1) *Al-'Aqd al-Farīd* [The Unique Creed] (4/396); *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/224).

Thankfulness:

Yahyā bin Sa'īd is reported to have said: "It reached me that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz said: 'The remembrance of blessings is to give thanks for them.'"⁽¹⁾ 'Umar also said: "Testify to the Favour of Allāh, the Sublime, by giving thanks to Him for it."⁽²⁾ He wrote to some of his officials, saying: "I advise to have *Taqwā* (fear; obedience; consciousness) in Allāh and I urge you to give thanks for what you have beneficently been granted of His blessings. To give thanks extends His blessings and to cease (giving thanks) is to deny them."⁽³⁾ 'Umar would frequently exhort showing gratitude to the Creator, Glorified is He, for His Graces and Favours, as the Book and *Sunnah* (Prophetic Example) enjoins, as Allāh says: "...and be grateful to Allāh if it is, indeed, He Whom you worship" (*al-Baqarah*, 2:172) And He says elsewhere: "And be grateful to Me (for my countless Favours on you) and never be ungrateful to me" (*al-Baqarah*, 2:152) Giving thanks also implies the enhancement of blessings, as Allāh says: "And (remember) when your Lord proclaimed: 'If you give thanks (by accepting faith and worshipping none but Allāh), I will give you more (of My Blessings); but if you are thankless (i.e. disbelievers), verily my punishment is indeed severe.'" (*Ibrāhīm*, 14:7) The many stories relating 'Umar's attitude towards Allāh's Favours upon His servants confirm

(1) *Muṣnaf* [The Classification] by Ibn Abī Shaybah (8/240).

(2) *Kitāb ash-Shukr Lillāh Ta'ālā* [The Book of Gratitude to Allāh, the Sublime] by Ibn Abī Dunyā, p. 81.

(3) *Dhamm ad-Dunyā* [Vilification of the World] by Ibn Abī Dunyā, p. 81.

his adherence to the way of the *Salaf* (Pious Forebears) and the depth of his faith.⁽¹⁾

Trust:

Al-Ḥakm bin 'Umar said: "'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz had three-hundred guards and three-hundred law-enforcers. I saw him say to his guards: "Indeed, your job is to act as my barrier, therefore whoever undertakes that role shall receive a wage of ten *Dinar* and whoever wishes to may return to his family."⁽²⁾ When 'Umar left al-Madīnah, his slave, Mazāḥim, looked up at the sky and the moon was in the phase of *Dabrān* (when the star between Pleiades and Orion follows Pleiades); it was as if it were a pessimistic omen about what was happening. Mazāḥim said: "However, I hated the thought of saying that to 'Umar so instead I said: 'Have you seen how perfect the moon is tonight?'" 'Umar replied: 'O Mazāḥim! It is as if you wanted to show me that the moon is in the phase of *Dabrān*. O Mazāḥim! We are not leaving because of the Sun or the Moon but we are leaving because of Allāh, the One, the Subduer."⁽³⁾ 'Umar displayed firm trust in belief of their being legitimate reasons for what was happening, and that trust was his dependence in Allāh Who does things for particular reasons. Essentially, the foundations of this belief lie at the heart of *Tawḥīd* (the doctrine in the Oneness of Allāh), as

(1) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/230).

(2) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5/136).

(3) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Manāqibihī* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and His Outstanding Traits] by Ibn al-Ḥakm, p. 32.

Allāh says: "And put your trust (O Muḥammad, (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the Ever Living One Who dies not, and glorify His praises, and Sufficient is He as the All-Knower of the sins of His slaves." (al-Furqān, 25:58)

Trust in Allāh is the greatest reason the requester can obtain and the one afflicted by misfortune can rebuke, as a person who denies reasons is unable to trust, whereas someone who has complete trust does not rely on reasons and his heart has no relationship with them; instead, the condition of this person's heart is founded on Allāh and the rest of the body is governed by the heart.⁽¹⁾

Fear and Hope:

According to Yazīd bin 'Ayāḍ bin Ja'dibah: "'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote the following to Sulaymān bin Abī Karīmah: 'The worthiest servant is the one who honours Allāh and fears being afflicted by Him with the like of what has been afflicted upon me. No one is more accountable or contemptible for disobeying Allāh than me and I am not able to stand it. I fear that my position will lead me to my own destruction except if Allāh should show me His mercy. It has reached me that you want to advance forth (fight) for Allāh's Cause and so I wanted to ask of you, O brother, once you have assumed your position, to supplicate to Allāh to sustain me with the *Shahādah* (Declaration of Faith), for my situation is dire and extremely dangerous. I therefore ask Allāh Who has afflicted

(1) *Madārīj as-Sālikīn* [The Traversers of the Spiritual Path] by Ibn al-Qayyim (2/125).

me with what I have been afflicted with to bestow His mercy on me and pardon me.”⁽¹⁾

In the days that saw the demise of 'Umar's son, brother and slave, Rabī' bin Sabrah said to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz: “O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*! I have never seen a man suffer a greater calamity across a successive number of days than yours. I never saw a son like yours, or a brother like yours, or a slave like yours.” After an hour had passed, 'Umar then said to Rabī': “What did you say to me, O Rabī'?” So I repeated it to him and he said: “No, by He who decreed their deaths, I do not want anything other than what Allāh wanted for them.”⁽²⁾ According to Qatādah, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to his successor: “In the name of Allāh, the Gracious, the Merciful. From the servant of Allāh, 'Umar, the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* (Commander of the Faithful), to Yazīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik, peace be upon you. Verily, I praise Allāh to you, of Whom there is no one worthy of worship but He, and to proceed: I am writing to you as I am holding on to my last breath. I am aware that I responsible for whom I appoint and answerable to the King of the World and Hereafter from Whom I cannot conceal my knowledge of it or of anything. He says: “*Then surely We shall narrate to them (their whole story) with knowledge, and indeed We have not been absent.*” (*al-A'rāf*, 7:7). Should the Merciful be

(1) *At-Tabaqāt* [The Classes] (5/394-5); *al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/240).

(2) *Al-Ma'rifah wa at-Tārīkh* [Knowledge and History] by al-Baswī (1/610); *al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/240).

pleased with me then I have succeeded and been saved from an extended terror but if He is displeased with me then woe unto me for what awaits me! I ask Allāh, besides Whom there is no one worthy of worship but He, to save me from the *Nār* (Fire) by His Mercy and to grant me the fate of His Pleasure and *Jannah* (Paradise).”(1)

From what we have spoken about of 'Umar's combining faith of fear and hope, it certainly proves that his beliefs were in keeping with the *'Aqīdah* (doctrine of faith) of the *Salaf* (Pious Forebears) in demonstrating the middle path of the believer between safety from Allāh's Wrath and despairing at the Spirit of Allāh. As such, the *Salaf* would fear their Lord and hope for His Mercy⁽²⁾ in observance of what Allāh, the Sublime, says: "*Those [angels] they pray to are themselves seeking a way to their Lord, even those who are closest to him. They hope for His Mercy and fear His Punishment. The punishment of Your Lord is much to be feared*" (*al-'Isrā'*, 17: 57). Allāh commends people who possess fear and hope, saying: Is one who is obedient to Allāh, prostrating himself or standing (in prayer) during the hours of the night, fearing the Hereafter and hoping for the Mercy of his Lord (like one who disbelieves?)" [*az-Zumar*, 39:9]

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Belief in the Most

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and His Outstanding Traits] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 244.

(2) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/245).

Beautiful Names of Allāh:

‘The Most Beautiful Names of Allāh’ are the Names of Allāh (specifically, attributes) that describe Allāh in the perfect sense of the word such that it has no defect and nothing resembles it.⁽¹⁾ Of course, these Names are ascribed to Allāh by Himself as described in the Qur’ān and *Sunnah*, amongst other places, and which demand praise and glorification in their own right.⁽²⁾ Every reciter of the Qur’ān and the *Aḥadīth* knows that Allāh, Glorified is He, calls Himself by Names and that the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) referred to His Lord by His Names. It is also a well-known fact that the *Salaf* (Pious Forebears) testified to the Names that Allāh and His Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) called Him, as nobody knows Allāh more than Allāh, and after Him, the Messenger of Allāh (peace and blessings upon Him). Allāh’s Names are the Most Beautiful of all names as they are suggestive of His Being and Attributes. They are absolute, beyond comprehension, not restricted to number, not created and it is not permissible to disbelieve in any of them.⁽³⁾ Within his letters and sermons, it is clear that ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz would frequently mention some of these Names and that ‘Umar’s doctrine of belief was the doctrine of Truth that is verified by the Book and *Sunnah*.

(1) *Manhaj Ahl as-Sunnah wa Manhaj al-Ashā'irah fī Tawḥīd Allāh* [The Way of the People of Prophetic Tradition and the Way of the Ash'arites on the Doctrine of the Oneness of Allāh] by Khālīd ‘Abd al-Laṭīf (2/391).

(2) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah ‘an ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz fī al-Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/304).

(3) *Ibid* (1/287).

The *Ahl as-Sunnah* (People of Prophetic Tradition) later standardised and set the rules around the Names of Allāh, the Sublime, which might have possibly been deduced from the statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz (may Allāh have mercy on him). Some of these rules are as follows:

- **The Names of Allāh are Eternal:** 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz said: "Indeed, the greatest ignorance attached to Allāh is to claim that knowledge came after creation when, in fact, Allāh Alone never ceases to be All-Knowing of everything and All-Witnessing of everything, before He creates a thing and after He creates a thing."⁽¹⁾ 'Umar clarified that Allāh has Most Beautiful Names, of which are the All-Knowing and the All-Witnessing, and that these are all Eternal; this is the belief of the *Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* (People of Prophetic Tradition and Community).⁽²⁾
- **Allāh's Names are 'Tawqīfiyyah':** This means there is no place for logic in them so it is compulsory to restrict them to that which came in the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* and not to add to them or deny any of them because the mind (logic) is incapable of comprehending that which is deserving to Allāh from names. So naming

(1) *Hilyat al-Awliyā'* [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite] (5/348); *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/304).

(2) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/305).

Allāh with that which He did not name Himself is speaking without knowledge about Allāh.

- **Allāh's Names belong to Him Alone** - Allāh has Names and Attributes which belong to Him Alone, such as the Creator, the Provider, the One God, etc. These are characteristics that a created being cannot acquire. Allāh's perfect attributes that exist in Him include *al-Qādir* (the All-Powerful), *al-'Alīm* (the All-Knowing), *al-Ḥakīm* (the Most Wise) and so on. In keeping with the *Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah*, it is compulsory to believe in all the attributes that have been narrated from Allāh or from the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in a manner that befits Allāh, whilst also believing that He does not resemble any of His creation in any of His attributes, just as He does not resemble them in Essence. It is therefore not permissible to add to, distort, falsify or deny any of Allāh's Names or Attributes, neither is it permissible to ascribe them to other than Allāh.⁽¹⁾ Indeed, Allāh, the Sublime, says: *[And (all) the Most Beautiful Names, so call on Him by them, and leave the company of those who belie or deny (or utter impious speech against) His Names. They will be requited for what they used to do.] (al-A'rāf, 7:180)*

There is ample mention of Allāh's Names and

(1) *Ibid* (1/306).

Attributes in the letters and sermons of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, such as *Allāh*, *'Azza wa Jall* (Mighty and Majestic), *ar-Rabb* (The Lord), *ar-Raḥmān* (The All-Compassionate) *ar-Raḥīm* (The Merciful), *al-Malik* (The Absolute Ruler) *al-Khabīr* (The All-Aware), *al-Karīm* (The Generous), *al-Ḥayy* (The Ever Living One), *ar-Raqīb* (The Watchful One), and the list goes on.⁽¹⁾ At this juncture, it seems fitting to expound on some of these Names:

1) The Meaning of ar-Rabb (the Lord):

'Umar would say: "O *Rabb* (Lord)! Make my mind beneficial to me."⁽²⁾ *Ar-Rabb* is one of the Most Beautiful Names of Allāh, as Allāh says: "A fair land and an Oft-Forgiving Lord" (*Saba'*, 34:15). *Ar-Rabb* is the owner who has full authority over his property and linguistically means the master or the one who has the authority to lead. All of these meanings are correct for Allāh. When it is alone, the word *Rabb* is used only for Allāh, as for other than Allāh, it can be used to say *rabb ad-dār*, meaning "the master of the house."⁽³⁾ *Ar-Rabb* is therefore not said in the absolute sense (i.e. without limitations) except for Allāh, the One,

(1) *Ibid* (1/279-306).

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Manāqibihi* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and His Outstanding Traits] by Ibn al-Hakm, p. 68; *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/281).

(3) *Ishtiqaq Asmā Allāh al-Ḥusnā* [The Etymology of the Most Beautiful Names of Allāh] by az-Zajājī, pp. 32-3; *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/281).

the Master of His slaves Who rectifies the affairs of all creatures.⁽¹⁾

2) The Meaning of *al-Ḥayy* (the Ever Living One):

A friend of 'Umar's had passed away and so he went to pay his condolences to the bereaved family who began to scream and cry in front of him. 'Umar therefore said to them: "It was not this friend of yours who used to provide for you, for the One Who provides in Ever-Living and does not die."⁽²⁾ *Al-Ḥayy* is one of Allāh's Most Beautiful Names, as He says: "*None has the right to be worshipped but He, the Ever-Living One Who sustains and protects all that exists.*" (*al-Baqarah*, 2:255). Allāh's Life was never non-existent and it will not disappear. "Life" in reference to Allāh is understood in the perfect sense and always with complete Knowledge, Power, Hearing, Sight, and so on.⁽³⁾

3) The Meaning of *al-Wāḥid al-Qahār* (the One, the Subduer):

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz said to his slave, Mazāḥim: "O Mazāḥim! We are not leaving because of the Sun or the Moon but we are leaving because of Allāh, The One,

(1) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/281).

(2) *Hilyat al-Awliyā'* [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite] (5/330); *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/288).

(3) *Ishtiḳāq Asmā Allāh al-Ḥusnā* [The Etymology of the Most Beautiful Names of Allāh] by az-Zajājī, p.102;

The Subduer.”⁽¹⁾ These are among Allāh’s Most Beautiful Names Who says: [On the day when the earth will be changed to another earth and so will the heavens, and they (all creatures) will appear before Allāh, the One, the Subduer] (*Ibrāhīm*, 14:48). The meaning of *Al-Wāḥid* *Al-Qahār* singles out His Unique Greatness, Names, Attributes and Actions and He is the One Subduer of the Worlds that are at His disposal and devisal and wherein nothing moves or lives without His permission.⁽²⁾

4) The Meaning of *al-'Alī al-'Aẓīm* (the Highest, the Magnificent):

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz concluded the letters he wrote to the army generals with the words: “There is no might or power except with Allāh, the Highest, the Magnificent.”⁽³⁾ Allāh says: “And He feels no fatigue in guarding and preserving them. And He is the Most High, the Magnificent” (*al-Baqarah*, 2:255). *Al-'Alī* itself indicates the Most High above His Throne, the Most High in His Supremacy over all creation, the Most High in His Power to possess the most perfect attributes.⁽⁴⁾ *Al-'Aẓīm* alludes to His Greatness, Power and Might. His is all that is in heaven and all that is on earth; and Most Exalted and

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Manāqibihī* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and His Outstanding Traits] by Ibn al-Ḥakm, p. 27.

(2) *Tafsīr* [Qur'ānic Exegesis] by as-Sa'adī, p. 428.

(3) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Manāqibihī* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and His Outstanding Traits] by Ibn al-Ḥakm, p. 32.

(4) *Tafsīr* [Qur'ānic Exegesis] by as-Sa'adī, p. 110.

Tremendous is He. ⁽¹⁾

The above represent a mere handful of the many instances in which 'Umar mentions Allāh's Names in his letters and speeches.

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Belief in the Attributes of Allāh, the Exalted:

The Attributes of Allāh, the Majestic, constitute attributes used in the perfect sense when referring to the Divine Being, such as Knowledge, Wisdom, Hearing, Seeing, Hands, Face, etc. The only things that may be attributed to Allāh are the attributes we have knowledge of based on what Allāh says about Himself in His Book and *Sunnah* of His Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The correct *Tawhīd* (doctrine of the Oneness of Allāh, the Majestic) concerning His Attributes is essentially to describe Allāh only through confirmed and verified descriptions, in other words, to confirm what He and His Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) say about Him and, likewise, to deny what He and His Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) denied and refuted about Him. ⁽²⁾ Consequently, the way of the *Salaf* (Pious Forebears) was to adhere to this practice without adding, taking away, falsifying or changing anything from what has been confirmed. In point of fact, Allāh vilifies those who deny any of His Names or *Ayāt* (Signs;

(1) *Ibid.*

(2) *Aqwāl at-Tābi'in fī Masā'il at-Tawhīd wa al-Īmān* [The Sayings of the Early Pious Followers on Issues of the Oneness of Allāh and Faith] (3/874).

Verses; Proofs), as He says: *"And (all) the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allāh, so call on Him by them, and leave the company of those who belie or deny (or utter impious speech against) His Names. They will be requited for what they used to do."* (al-A'rāf, 7:180) And He says: *"Verily, those who disbelieved in the Reminder (i.e. the Qur'ān) when it came to them (shall receive the punishment)"* (Fussilat, 41:40). Therefore, their way was to affirm that Allāh's Names and Attributes resemble creation in no way, as Allāh Alone is Perfect Who says: *[Nothing is like Him]* in response to likening or comparing things to Him, just as He says: *[He is All-Hearing, All-Seeing]* in response to denying or distorting the Truth.⁽¹⁾

Traditions related on the authority of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz substantiate his attestation to the Attributes Allāh ascribes to Himself of His Being, Face, Knowledge, Power, Supremacy, Will, Closeness, Anger, Pleasure, Mercy, and so on.⁽²⁾ Evidence of this is given below:

(1) *Majmū' al-Fatāwa* [Collection of Legal Rulings] (3/8).

(2) *Al -Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/313-359).

1. Being (Self):

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz corresponded with aḍ-Ḍaḥak bin 'Abd ar-Raḥmān, saying: "To proceed: Verily, Allāh, the Majestic, made Islām that which pleases Himself and whichever of His servants honours it, accepts no world other than it."⁽¹⁾ His statement here pronounces the Attribute of Being in accordance with the Book and *Sunnah*, as Allāh says: "And Allāh warns you against Himself." (*Āli 'Imrān*, 3:28). The Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said in praise of his Lord: "I cannot praise You as You have praised Yourself."⁽²⁾ The Book and *Sunnah* declare Allāh's Being or Self is Divine and Sacred.⁽³⁾ Allāh's Being is therefore characterised by His Attributes and is not intended to refer to a self or being defined by specific characteristics and attributes. Allāh does not resemble His creatures — neither in His Self nor in His Attributes.⁽⁴⁾

2. The Face of Allāh, the Sublime:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote a letter to the *Kharijites* in

(1) *Strat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Manāqibihi* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and His Outstanding Traits] by Ibn al-Ḥakm, p. 86; *Al -Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/313).

(2) *Muslim*, no. 486.

(3) *Al -Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/314).

(4) *Al-Fatāwā* [Legal Opinions] extracted from *Al -Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/314).

which he stated: "I swear to you by Allāh, even if you were my first born sons I would spill your blood for which I would solicit Allāh's Face and the Abode of the Hereafter."⁽¹⁾ Attributing a Face to Allāh is a *muḍāf* (construct state) depicting an attribute denoting possession, as opposed to "the *Ka'bah* (House) of Allāh) which is obviously not an Attribute of Allāh but takes the same construct in the non-possessive sense, as confirmed in the Book and *Sunnah*, as Allāh says: "*who remain steadfast through their desire for the Face of their Lord.*" (*ar-Ra'ad*, 13:22). The Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) asked Allāh a question that was not permissible concerning looking at the Face of His Lord, saying: "I ask you for the pleasure of looking at Your Face."⁽²⁾

3. The Power of Allāh, the Sublime:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to some of his officials: "To proceed: If you allow your power over the people to lead to their oppression, just remember the Power of Allāh over you in administering to what is put to them and that what He administers to you is everlasting."⁽³⁾ In refutation of the *Qadariyyah* (a theological movement in early Islām which held that humans have complete control over their own destiny), 'Umar wrote: "Allāh is Supreme in His Power and I refute

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Manāqibihī* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and His Outstanding Traits] by Ibn al-Ḥakm, p. 75.

(2) Verified by al-Albānī in *Saḥīḥ Sunan an-Nisā'ī* [An-Nasā'ī's Authentic Traditions] (1/280-1).

(3) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 125.

anyone whose knowledge invalidates that.”⁽¹⁾ The previous examples confirm 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's endorsement of attributing Power to Allāh, the Sublime, which is one of the Attributes affirmed in the Qur'ān, as Allāh says: "*Allāh has Power over everything*" (*al-Baqarah*, 2:20). In keeping with the *Sunnah*, a *ḥadīth* (Prophetic narration) relates Abī Mas'ūd al-Badrī hit his boy and so the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "*Know, Abī Mas'ūd, that Allāh has more Power over you than you have over this boy.*"⁽²⁾

'Umar's Prohibition on Taking Graves as Places of Worship:

On the authority of Ismā'īl bin Abī Ḥakīm who said that he heard 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz saying: "The last thing the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said was: "May Allāh destroy the Jews and Christians who have taken the graves of their prophets as places of worship so that two religions will not last (or he said, will not join) in the land of the 'Arabs."⁽³⁾ Ḥasīn narrated that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz forbade the building of tombs or anything like that over grave sites."⁽⁴⁾ Another *ḥadīth* asserts that 'Umar (may Allāh have mercy on him) proclaimed the warning of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah

(1) *Hilyat al-Awliyā'* [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite] (5/347).

(2) *Muslim*, no. 1659.

(3) *Al-Bukhārī*, no. 1330; *Muṣnaf 'Abd ar-Razzāq* (10/359-60).

(4) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 346.

be upon him) to his *Ummah* against taking graves as places of worship as the Jews and Christians had done and further declaring that the Muslim is prohibited from imitating those who have gone astray from the message of the Qur'ān and angered Allāh, stating that using graves as places of worship and building over them was undoubtedly forbidden by the pious predecessors of this *Ummah*.⁽¹⁾

At the time when al-Walīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik commissioned 'Umar, who was then his official in al-Madīnah, with the project of constructing the Prophet's Mosque (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) involving the annexation of the apartments of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), including the apartment of 'Ā'ishah (may Allāh be pleased with her) wherein the graves of the Prophet (peace and blessing upon him) and his two *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions) were situated, it was 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz who ensured that the far end of the grave site was limited to one corner so as not to make it so the direction of prayer faced the Prophet's grave (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), which he did by knocking down one of the walls of the house and giving it five corners.⁽²⁾

The purpose of his careful planning of the mosque was to consciously and wisely preclude the practice of *Shirk* (Associating partners with Allāh in worship) from taking place, as the people during the time of his governorship of

(1) *Al -Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/264).

(2) *Ibid* (1/265).

al-Madīnah would have witnessed. There is no dispute that the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) forbade taking his grave or the grave of anyone as a place of worship for fear of the reverence of it becoming exaggerated so much so that it might even lead to *Kufr* (Disbelief), as was the case for many a bygone nation.⁽¹⁾ Even though the 'Aqīdah of his time was pure and sound in contrast to that of later days, 'Umar's ban on building over graves was based on his correct understanding of the *Sunnah* and proper observance of the Prophetic path, the way of the *Ṣaḥābah* and the jurisprudence of Allāh whereby he ordered for nothing to be built over the Prophet's grave (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) lest it be taken as a place of worship. Thus, 'Umar took decisive action before the matter got out of hand and in doing so he definitely reiterated what is narrated in the authentic *ḥadīth* reported in Muslim on the authority of Jābir bin 'Abdullah (may Allāh be pleased with them) who said: "The Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) forbade plastering over graves, sitting on them and erecting structures over them."⁽²⁾

The Concept of Faith according to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz:

'Udayy bin 'Udayy said: "'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote the following to me: '*Imān* (Faith) includes *Farā'id* (duties), *Sharā'i*

(1) *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-Sharḥ an-Nawawī* [Nawawī's Explanation of Muslim's Authenticated Traditions] (2/185).

(2) *Muslim*, no. 970.

(legal laws), *Hudūd* (Allāh's ordinances between lawful and unlawful things) and *Sunan* (ways and acts of worship). Whoever acts on all of these things completely, has complete faith and whoever does not act on them completely, his faith is incomplete. As long as I live, I shall continue to tell you about these things until you learn (act on) them. And should I die, I am not anxious to have your company'.⁽¹⁾ On the authority of Ja'far bin Burqān who said: "'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to us, saying: 'Indeed, the bonds of the Religion and the pillars of Islām are to believe in Allāh, establish the prayer and give the *Zakāh* (prescribed alms); therefore, pray on time.'⁽²⁾ 'Umar explained that Faith includes duties, i.e. compulsory obligations such as prayer, *Hajj* (Major Pilgrimage), fasting, and so on; *Sharā'i*, i.e. doctrines of belief, such as belief in Allāh, His Angels, and so on; *Hudūd*, i.e. prohibitions, such as consuming alcohol, fornication, and so on; and *Sunan*, i.e. recommended acts, such as removing harmful objects from the road and so on; all of which are entailed in Faith.⁽³⁾ The above narration transmitted by 'Umar is substantiated by the Qur'ān, *Sunnah* and the sayings of the *Salaf* (Pious Forebears).

(1) *Fath al-Bārī* [The Grant of the Creator], in accordance with *Ṣāḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* [The Authentic Traditions of al-Bukhārī] (1/45)

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Manāqibihi* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and His Outstanding Traits] by Ibn al-Ḥakm, p. 72; *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqidah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/543).

(3) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqidah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/545).

According to the people of truth, *Imān* (Faith) comprises of the statement of the tongue, belief in the heart and the action of the limbs.⁽¹⁾ The greatest proof that faith includes the statement of the tongue is Allāh's saying: "Say (O Muslims): *'We believe in Allāh and that which has been sent down to us and that which has been sent down to Ibrāhīm (Abraham)...*'" (*al-Baqarah*, 2:136). The saying of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also states: "I have been commanded (by Allāh) to fight the people until they proclaim: 'None has the right to be worshipped but Allāh'. Whoever says it, he will save his life and property from me, except for cases of the law, and their account will be with Allāh."⁽²⁾ Proof that belief in the heart is part of faith can be found in the statement of Allāh: "*The believers are only those who, when Allāh is mentioned, feel a fear in their hearts...*" (*al-Anfāl*, 8:2). Lastly, that action of the limbs forms part of faith is corroborated by the verse: "*And Allāh would never make your faith (prayers) be lost*" (*al-Baqarah*, 2:143). In fact, the occasion of revelation for this verse was when the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was asked: "Did you see those who died whilst they were praying towards Jerusalem?" So Allāh revealed the Verse: "*And Allāh would never make your faith (prayers) be lost.*" (*al-Baqarah*, 2:143). Contained in this Verse is testimony to that fact that Allāh termed their praying towards Jerusalem as an act of faith and so if this has been confirmed for prayer, it means it also

(1) *Ibid* (1/544).

(2) *Muslim*, no. 32.

extends to all other acts of obedience.⁽¹⁾

In a letter, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote: "I ask by Allāh's Abundant Mercy and Favour to enhance the guidance of the guided and to bring those in error to seek repentance for it in place of their wellbeing."⁽²⁾ That Faith fluctuates up and down, and enhances and decreases, is testified to in the Book, *Sunnah* and the sayings of the *Salaf*. Allāh says: [*And when His Verses (this Qur'ān) are recited to them, they (i.e. the Verses) increase their Faith*] (*al-Anfāl*, 8:2). The Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also said: "He who is not faithful cannot have belief."⁽³⁾ Of the sayings attributed to the *Ummah*'s pious predecessors is that of al-Bukhārī who said: "I have met more than a thousand scholars from the major cities and I have never come across anyone who differs on the opinion that Faith includes speech and action and that it increases and decreases."⁽⁴⁾

Belief in the Last Day:

This topic demands a lot of attention, as it covers a vast array of details and events based on what we know from

(1) *Al-I'tiqād* [Belief] by al-Bayhaqī, pp. 95-6; *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/545).

(2) *Muslim*, no. 32.

(3) *Al-Īmān* [Faith] by Ibn Abī Shaybah, p. 5; authenticated by al-Albānī; *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/553).

(4) *Al-Bukhārī* in *Faṭḥ al-Bārī* [Grant of the Creator] (1/47).

Allāh and His Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), beginning with what takes place after death to the torture and bliss of the grave, the summoning and resurrection, what happens on the Day of Judgment, reward and punishment, Paradise and Hellfire, and so on. On these issues, 'Umar spoke about the following points:

1. The Torture and Bliss of the Grave:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz said to a man: "O so and so! Yesterday, I read a *Sūrah* (chapter of the Qur'ān) that speaks of a visit: "*The mutual rivalry (for piling up worldly things) diverts you Until you visit the graves (i.e. till you die)*" (*at-Takāthur*, 102:1-2). How long might the visitor linger before he is commissioned to either *Jannah* (Paradise) or the *Nār* (Fire)?"⁽¹⁾ On one occasion, he said during a sermon: "See you not that you are in the loins of the dead, to be taken by those who remain after you, until all matters return to the Best of Inheritors?"⁽²⁾ In a sermon he delivered in *Khanāsser*, he said: "Every day you dispatch to Allāh, at all times of the day, someone who has died, his term having come to an end. You bury him in a crack in the earth and then leave him without a pillow or a bed. He has parted from his loved ones, severed his connections with the living, and taken up residence in the earth, whereupon he comes face to face with

(1) *Hilyat al-Awliyā'* [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite] (5/317); *al-Kitāb al-Jāmi' li-Sīrat 'Umar* [The Complete Biography of 'Umar] (1/336).

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, pp. 259-69.

the accounting. He is mortgaged to his deeds – he needs his accomplishments, but not the material things he left on earth.”⁽¹⁾

Here, his speech reiterates the belief of the *Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah* (the People of Prophetic Tradition and the Community) in the punishment and bliss of the grave in reference to what the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* maintains, as Allāh says: "*Allāh will keep firm those who believe, with the word that stands firm in this world (i.e. they will keep on worshipping Allāh Alone and none else), and in the Hereafter*] (*Ibrāhīm*, 14:27) The authentic *Aḥadīth* further testify to the punishment of the grave.⁽²⁾ Allāh says: "*The Fire, they are exposed to it, morning and afternoon*" (*Ghāfir*, 40:45)

2. Belief in *Mi'ād* (Resurrection) and that Allāh Will Come Down to Judge:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz gave a sermon in *Khanāsser* in which he said: "People! Verily, you were not created in vain, neither were you left without purpose. Indeed, you have an appointed time on which Allāh – the Most High – will come down to judge you. Wretched and ruined will be the one who is left out from the Mercy of Allāh and is denied a Garden whose width is that of the heavens and earth. Know you not that no one will be safe tomorrow save the one who is wary and fearful of today, and sells the transitory for what will remain, the little for the plenty, and fear in exchange for

(1) *Ibid.*

(2) *Ar-Rūḥ* [The Soul] by Ibn al-Qayyim, p. 144.

security [in the Hereafter]?"⁽¹⁾ To some of his officials, 'Umar wrote: "When all servants shall be returned to their Lord, they will be divided up between those who did bad and those who did good."⁽²⁾ Jarīr bin Ḥāzim is reported to have said that he read a letter addressed to 'Addi written by 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz in which he said: "Know that one judges another until he himself is cleared of all charges and therefore it is necessary for all judging to be postponed until the Day of Judgment."⁽³⁾ 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to 'Udayy bin Arṭa'ah, saying: "I remind you of a night that will deliver the Hour and whose morning will be the Resurrection. So be wary of a night and be wary of morning that is going to be hard on the *Kāfirīn* (Disbelievers)."⁽⁴⁾ To some of his soldiers, he wrote: "I advise you to have *Taqwā* (consciousness; fear; obedience) in Allāh and hold fast to obeying Him. Whoever desires *Jannah* (Paradise) and wants to escape the *Nār* (Fire), turn to Allāh now in these days when repentance is acceptable and sins are forgivable before the appointed time is decreed, upon which nothing else can be offered to Allāh, no ransom will be accepted for the deeds you bear and no trick can help deceive what you secretly hid inside. All people will have their deeds returned to them and they will be spilt up into ranks.

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Manāqibihī* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and His Outstanding Traits] by Ibn al-Ḥakm, p. 42.

(2) *Dhamm ad-Dunyā* [Vilification of the World] by Ibn Abī Dunyā, p. 81.

(3) *Fī az-Zuhd* [In Asceticism] by Hināf as-Sirrā (1/299-300; *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/448).

(4) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 115; Abū Ḥafṣ al-Malā' (1/206).

Therefore, whoever obeys Allāh, repent for that day, and woe unto him who disobeys Allāh, the Majestic."⁽¹⁾

Belief in the bodily resurrection of the dead, the fulfilment of Allāh's divine plan for creation, and the judgment of the soul, after which the righteous are rewarded with the pleasures of *Jannah* (Paradise) while the unrighteous are punished in *Jahannam* (Hell) are all articles of faith in accordance with the correct *'Aqīdah* of the *Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah*. 'Umar testified and advocated these beliefs that undisputedly constitute some of the most important and distinguishing articles of faith in Islām. A significant portion of the Qur'ān deals with these beliefs, with many *ahadith* elaborating on their themes and details. It also emphasises the inevitability of resurrection, judgment, and the eternal division of the righteous and the wicked. Allāh, the Sublime, says: "*Allāh Alone originates the creation, then He will repeat it, then to Him you will be returned.*" (*ar-Rūm*, 30:11) He says: "*Then (again), surely you will be resurrected on the Day of Resurrection.*" (*al-Mu'minūn*, 23:16) To the deniers of resurrection, He says: "*Does not man see that We have created him from 'nuṭfah' ('mixed drops of male and female discharge'). Yet behold! He (stands forth) as an open opponent. And he puts forth for Us a parable, and forgets his own creation. He says: 'Who will give life to these bones after they are rotten and have become dust?'*" Say (O Muḥammad,

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, pp. 115-6; Abū Ḥaṣṣ al-Malā' (1/266).

(may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): 'He will life to them then Who created them the first time!' And he All-Knower of every creation'" (Yā-Sīn, 36:77-9) And Allāh says: [Does man think that he will be left neglected (without being punished or rewarded for the obligatory duties enjoined by Lord on him)? Was he not a 'nuṭfah' emitted (poured forth)? Then he becomes an "alaqah" ('a clot'); then (Allāh) shaped and fashioned (him) in due proportion. And made him of two sexes, male and female. Is not He (Allāh Who does that) Able to give life to the dead? (Yes! He is Able to do all things!)" (al-Qiyāmah, 75:36-40) The *hadith* also verify to these beliefs, such as that reported by Ibn 'Abbās (may Allāh be pleased with them) from the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who said: "Allāh said: 'The son of Ādam tells a lie against me though he has no right to do so, and he abuses Me though he has no right to do so. As for his telling a lie against Me, it is that he claims that I cannot recreate him as I created him before; and as for his abusing Me, it is his statement that I have offspring. No! Glorified be Me! I am far from taking a wife or offspring!'"⁽¹⁾ 'Umar is included as one of the transmitters of these traditions.⁽²⁾

(1) *Al-Bukhārī*, no. 3093.

(2) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/452).

3. *Al-Mizān* (Balance; Scales):

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz said: "Do you not see the state of the dead? His face has been lost, his memory forgotten and his house abandoned, as if he had never lived amongst his brothers. Be fearful of a day when not even as much as the weight of a mustard seed will be hidden on the *Mizān* (Balance) of deeds."⁽¹⁾ He also said: "I seek refuge in Allāh from ordering you to do something that I have not applied to myself that might diminish my outcome and expose my shortcomings in the reckoning of the Scales."⁽²⁾

Baḥdal ash-Shāmī is reported to have said on the authority of his father, who was a companion of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, that he said: "I saw 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz reading the Verse: "*And We shall set up Scales of Justice on the Day of Resurrection.*" (*al-'Anbiyā*, 21:47) When he finished reciting it to the end, he began to lean on one side to stop him from falling to the floor."⁽³⁾ Thus, after the resurrection from the graves and the journey to Allāh along with His descent as befits Him, Glorified is He, judgment will take place through the setting up of the *Mizān* (Scales), which will weigh up the deeds of all servants. This series of events

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 255.

(2) *Hilyat al-Awliyā'* [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite] (5/291); *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 232-44.

(3) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 248.

is in line with the *Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah*.⁽¹⁾ According to Ibn Ḥajar, Abū Ishāq az-Zujāj said: "The *Ahl as-Sunnah* unanimously concur on the belief in the *Mīzān* and that the deeds of servants are going to be weighed up on the Day of Judgment on these Scales. In the view of the Mu'tazilah and others who deny belief in the *Mīzān* by claiming: "It is an expression of justice", they contradict the Book and the *Sunnah*, as Allāh has informed us of the setting up of Scales for the weighing of deeds whereby they will be witnesses to themselves."⁽²⁾ Furthermore, these Scales are precise, with no adding or taking away, as Allāh says: "*And We shall set up Balances of justice on the Day of Resurrection, and then none will be dealt with unjustly in anything. And if there be the weight of a mustard seed, We will bring it. And Sufficient are We to take account.*" (*al-Anbiyā*, 21:47)

4. *Al-Ḥawḍ* (The Pool in Paradise):

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to the chief of Damascus to ask Abī Salām what he had heard from Thawbān, the slave of the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) concerning the *Ḥawḍ* (The Pool in Paradise) and if he can verify it then to send him on a mount to deliver the news.⁽³⁾ Another narration states: "'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz

(1) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/457).

(2) *Fath al-Bārī* [Grant of the Creator] (13/538).

(3) *Al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah* [The Beginning and the End] extracted from *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/462).

summoned Abī Salām al-Ḥabshī to be brought to him and upon his arrival, the latter said: "That was certainly burdensome for me." 'Umar remarked: "We did not want that at all but I have been informed that you heard a *ḥadīth* from Thawbān about the *Ḥawḍ* and I wanted to hear it directly from your mouth." At that point, he began: "I heard from Thawbān that he heard the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) say: "My *Ḥawḍ* (Pool in Paradise) is from 'Āden to 'Ammān in length.⁽¹⁾ Its water is whiter than milk and sweeter than honey and its drinking goblets are as numerous as the stars in the sky. The one who drinks from it will never feel thirsty again and the first to arrive there will be the poor among the *Muhājirīn* (Emigrants)."⁽²⁾ In light of this, there is absolutely no question that belief in the *Ḥawḍ* belongs to the creed of the *Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah* on the basis of the explicitness of the texts relating on it and their frequency.

5. Aṣ-Ṣirāṭ (The Bridge):

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to a brother of his, saying: "O brother! You have travelled a great deal and stayed in one place for much less. Just remember, O brother, the origins and places of destination, for it was revealed to the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the Holy Qur'ān that you are among those who will arrive [at

(1) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/463).

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 37.

the *Ṣirāṭ*], whilst it does not state that you would be among those who depart from and escape it. Be wary of letting the *Dunyā* (World) deceive you, for it has a dwelling that is not a dwelling and money that is not money."⁽¹⁾ This narration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz (may Allāh have mercy on him) testifies to his belief in the *Ṣirāṭ*, that is the narrow bridge which every person must pass on that crucial Day to enter Paradise. Below this path are the fires of *Jahannam* (Hell), which burn the sinners to make them fall. It is said that it is as thin as a hair and as sharp as the sharpest sword. Those who performed acts of goodness in their lives are transported across the path in speeds according to their deeds leading them to the *Hawḍ* (Pool in Paradise). Thus, some will pass at the speed of lightning, others at the speed of wind, and others yet as if they are walking on sand but who will get burnt to make them fall into the flames of Hell.⁽²⁾ The Book and *Sunnah* substantiate the crossing of the *Ṣirāṭ*, as Allāh says: "There is not one of you but will pass over it (Hell); this is with your Lord, a Decree which must be accomplished" (*Maryam*, 19:71). Allāh also says: "Then We shall save those who used to fear Allāh and were dutiful to Him. And We shall leave the *Ẓālimūn* (polytheists and wrongdoers) therein (humbled) to their knees (in Hell)." (*ibid*: 72)

On the same note, the Prophet (may peace and blessings

(1) *Ibid*, p. 257.

(2) *Sharḥ aṭ-Ṭaḥāwīyyah* [At-Tahawīyyah's Explanation], p. 470; *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqā'idah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/468).

of Allah be upon him) said: "By Him in Whose Hand is my soul! The Fire will not roar at any of those who pledged their allegiance under the tree." So Ḥafṣah said: "O Messenger of Allāh! Does Allāh not say: *"There is not one of you but will pass over it (Hell); this is with your Lord, a Decree which must be accomplished]" (Maryam, 19:71)* So he replied: "Did you hear the part where He says: *"Then We shall save those who used to fear Allāh and were dutiful to Him. And We shall leave the Ḍālimūn (polytheists and wrongdoers) therein (humbled) to their knees (in Hell)" (ibid: 72)* This indicates that arriving at the Fire does not imply entering it and that deliverance from evil does not mean obtaining it. The believers will pass over the Fire on the Bridge then Allāh will save those who feared him and scatter the evildoers therein. From the *ḥadīth*, we know that "arrival" means to arrive at the Bridge.⁽¹⁾ It is also true to say that it means to arrive at the Fire, in other words, the arrival of the *Kuffār* (Disbelievers) as the people of the Fire, which absolutely does imply their entering it in this case, as Allāh says: *[He will go ahead of his people on the Day of Resurrection, and will lead them into the Fire, and evil indeed is the place to which they are led.] (Hūd, 11:98)* Of course, the second type of arrival is that of the Monotheists who must cross over⁽²⁾ the *Ṣirāt*, which is what 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was alluding to in his letter.

(1) *Ibid*, p. 471.

(2) *Al-Qiyāmah al-Kubrā* [The Greatest Resurrection] by al-Ashqar, p. 278.

6. *Al-Jannah (Paradise) and an-Nār (Hellfire):*

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz cried, so Fāṭimah cried too, then the whole family began to cry, while none of them knew what the others were crying for. Once they had all calmed down, Fāṭimah asked: "O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*! What causes you to cry?" He answered: "I recalled, O Fāṭimah, the departing of the people from in front of Allāh; one group will go to *Jannah* (Paradise) and the other group to the Blaze", at that point he exclaimed and collapsed.⁽¹⁾ Sufyān is reported to have said: "One day, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz sat in silence whilst his companions were talking around him, so they said to him: 'Why are you not speaking, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*?' He replied: 'I was thinking about how the people of *Jannah* will visit one another therein and about how the people of the *Nār* will scream', and then he began to cry."⁽²⁾

'Umar wrote to some of his soldiers saying: "Know that the poverty and afflictions suffered by a servant who is pleasing to Allāh and on his way to *Jannah* in this world are not harmful to him, whilst a servant who displeases Allāh and is on his way to the *Nār* will not be benefited by the luxuries and comfort of this world. The people of *Jannah* shall discover the deception of what they thought harmed them in their lives on this earth, just as the people of the *Nār* shall taste the reality of what they thought were blissful luxuries in their lives but how they

(1) *Ar-Riqqah wa al-Bakā'* [Sensitivity and Crying] by Ibn Abi Dunya, p. 76.

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p.

certainly are not!"⁽¹⁾ Al-Faḍl bin Rabī' said that he heard Fuḍayl bin 'Ayyād say: "I was informed that an official of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz once complained to him and so 'Umar wrote to him: 'My brother! I recall the everlasting duration the people of the *Nār* will abide and so beware of your departing from Allāh, as that will be the last promise and the end of hope." Upon reading 'Umar's letter, he rushed through the land to see 'Umar, who said at his arrival: "What brings you here?" He answered: "My heart has been wrenched by your letter. I will never go back to governing until my meeting with Allāh, the Sublime."⁽²⁾

'Umar's belief in *Jannah* and the *Nār* was according to what the Book of Allāh and the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) say, in the words of Allāh: "Verily, the *'Abrār* ('pious believers of Islām') will be in Delight (Paradise)." (*al-Infīṭār*, 82:13) And Allāh says: [But whoever comes to Him (Allāh) as a believer and has done righteous deeds, for such are the high ranks (in the Hereafter). 'And (Eden) Paradise (everlasting gardens) under which rivers flow, wherein they shall abide forever, and such is the reward of those who purify themselves (by abstaining from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which Allāh has forbidden and by doing all that Allāh has ordained)."] (*Ṭa-ha*, 20:75-6) Concerning this, the Messenger ((may peace and blessings of Allah be upon

(1) *Ibid*, pp.250-1; *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/473).

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 124-5; *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/474).

him) said: "When any one of you dies, he is shown his seat (in the Hereafter) morning and evening; if he is amongst the inhabitants of Paradise (he is shown the seat) from amongst the inhabitants of Paradise and if he is one from amongst the denizens of Hell (he is shown the seat) from amongst the denizens of Hell, and it will be said to him: 'That is your seat until Allāh raises you on the Day of Resurrection (and sends you your proper seat).'"⁽¹⁾

7. The Believers Will See their Lord in *Jannah*:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to some of his Commanders-in-Chief: "I advise you to have *Taqwā* (consciousness; obedience) of Allāh, to be steadfast in His Commands, to uphold what He has entrusted you with of His Religion and His Book. Verily, with *Taqwā*, the friends of Allāh are saved from His Wrath, they realise His Supremacy, stand with⁽²⁾ His prophets, their faces are glowing and they see their Creator."⁽³⁾ This was what 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz believed, whereby seeing Allāh in *Jannah* was one of the greatest blessings after the blessing of success and favour. In describing the believers on that Day, Allāh, the Sublime, says: "*Some faces that Day shall be 'Nāḍirah*' ('shining and radiant'). Looking at their Lord

(1) *Muslim*, no. 2866.

(2) In *Hilyat al-Awliyā'* [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite], *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī and Abū Ḥafṣ al-Malā' it says "accompanied" instead of "agreed with."

(3) *Ar-Rudd 'alā al-Jahmiyyah* [Refuting the Jahmites] by ad-Dārimī, p. 103; *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/479).

(Allāh)." (*al-Qiyāmah*, 75:22-3) He also says: [*For those who have done good is the best (reward, i.e. Paradise) and even more (i.e. having the honour of glancing at the Countenance of Allāh).*" (*Yūnus*, 10:22) Şuhayb is reported to have said that when this Verse was said to the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), he said: 'Once the people of *Jannah* enter *Jannah* and the people of the *Nār* enter the *Nār*, a caller cries: 'O people of *Jannah*! You have an appointment with Allāh in which He wishes to reward you!' So they will say: 'And what is that reward? Has He not already made our faces bright, made our scales heavy, entered us into *Jannah*, and pushed us away from the *Nār*?' Then the *Hijāb* (cover; partition; veil) will be removed and they will look at their Lord. By Allāh! Allāh has not granted them anything more beloved to them than to look at their Lord, the Majestic."⁽¹⁾

Adherence to the Book, Prophetic *Sunnah* and the *Sunnah* of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs

Following the Book and Sunnah:

At the time of 'Umar's accession to the caliphate, he wrote: "Verily, I advise you to have *Taqwā* (consciousness; obedience) of Allāh, to hold fast to His Book and to emulate the *Sunnah* (Example; Tradition) and guidance of His Prophet

(1) *Muslim*, no. 297.



(may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).⁽¹⁾ It is not for a person to have an opinion or command regarding the Book of Allāh and the *Sunnah* but instead to enforce it and endeavour towards it...⁽²⁾ That which myself and the rest of the *Ummah* of Muḥammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) have been ordered to do is to follow the Book of Allāh and the *Sunnah* of His Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and to desist from inclining towards desires and wayward deviation. To pursue other than these two things (i.e. the Book of Allāh and the *Sunnah*) is neither noble nor dignified in this world and the Hereafter. This is certainly the most fitting way for you, for I would sooner die than to bring you to follow other than the Book of your Lord and the *Sunnah* of your Prophet who lived in utter compliance with it and Allāh caused him to die in utter compliance with it. Now it has come to me and I am anxious to adhere to it; truly, the most contemptible people in my eyes are those who attempt to disagree with any part of that *Sunnah*.⁽³⁾ 'Umar also said: "Verily, Allāh imposed *Farā'id* (duties) and set *Sunan* (traditions; acts of worship) to see who affords them

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- (1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Hakm, p. 65; *Kitāb al-Jāmi' li-Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Compilation on the Life of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (1/284).
- (2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Hakm, p. 68; *Kitāb al-Jāmi' li-Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Compilation on the Life of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (1/287).
- (3) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Hakm, p. 71; *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2/601).

their rights and who abandons them.”⁽¹⁾

On the same note, he said: “If only every time I governed you by the Book of Allāh, and acted upon it myself, and every time I governed you by a *Sunnah* one of limbs dropped off until it eventually ended with my departure (death)!”⁽²⁾ He wrote to the Kharijites: “Indeed, I call you to (follow) the Book of Allāh and the *Sunnah* of His Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).”⁽³⁾ And he said: “The Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) left his *Sunnah* and governorship after him was carried out in accordance with the *Sunnah*, adherence to the Book of Allāh and reliance on the *Dīn* of Allāh. It is not for anyone to change or replace, neither should they hold an opinion in contradiction of it. Whoever is guided by it is guided and whoever seeks its help is victorious, whilst the one who abandons it and follows a path of other than the believers, Allāh will give him his due and grant him the worst fate in *Jahannam* (Hell).”⁽⁴⁾ These are but a few examples confirming ‘Umar’s adherence to the Book and *Sunnah*, the effort and energy he spent in applying it, even if that led to him losing his own limbs and

(1) *Sīrat ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz* [The Biography of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz] by Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 39.

(2) *Sīrat ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz* [The Biography of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz] by Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 130; *Al-Athār al-Wāridah ‘an ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz fi al-Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2/602).

(3) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah ‘an ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz fi al-Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2/602).

(4) *Sīrat ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz* [The Biography of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz] by Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 40.

his own death. 'Umar's approach derived from what lies at the heart of the Religion, about which Allāh says: [*But no, by your Lord, they can have no Faith, until they make you (O Muḥammad, (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept (them) with full submission*] (*an-Nisā*, 4:65). The Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "O people! I have left you with that which you can find refuge in; therefore never err from the Book of Allāh and my *Sunnah*."⁽¹⁾

Adhering to the Sunnah of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs:

Hājib bin Khalīfah al-Barjamī is reported to have said: "I saw 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz as he was delivering a sermon to the people at the time when he was Caliph and he said: "Is not the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his Companions a religion for us to adopt and attain? There is no other *Sunnah* that we could wish for."⁽²⁾ 'Umar wrote to Sālim bin 'Abdullah bin 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb saying: "From 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz to Sālim bin 'Abdullah: I have been burdened with the affairs of this *Ummah* without having taken counsel on it and against my own will. Thus, should this letter reach you, write down the

(1) *Muwatta' Mālik* (3/93); and al-Ḥākim (1/93).

(2) *Hilyat al-Awliyā'* [*The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite*] (5/298); *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wa al-Ḥakm* [Compilation of the Science and Governance], p. 288.

Sīrah (life story; example) of 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb concerning the people of his era and I will follow his way to support me in this (i.e. running the caliphate), peace."⁽¹⁾

Az-Zuhri narrated: "A man said to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz: 'I divorced my wife while I was drunk.' At first, 'Umar was of the opinion that the man should be flogged and separated from his wife until Abān bin 'Uthmān informed him (on the authority of his father): 'It is not compulsory for the *Majnūn* (possessed; insane) or drunkard to get divorced'. So 'Umar said: 'You are telling me that this was narrated by 'Uthmān bin 'Affān?' And so, he flogged the man and returned his wife to him."⁽²⁾ 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz said: "The Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) left his *Sunnah* and governorship after him was carried out in accordance with a *Sunnah*, adherence to the Book of Allāh and reliance on the *Dīn* of Allāh. It is not for anyone to change or replace, neither should they hold an opinion in contradiction of it. Whoever is guided by it is guided and whoever seeks its help is victorious, whilst the one who abandons it and follows a path of other than the believers, Allāh will give him his due and grant him the worst fate in *Jahannam* (Hell)."⁽³⁾ His statement here shows that 'Umar consciously observed the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) and his Rightly-Guided

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 108.

(2) *Ibid* (4/31); *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2/637).

(3) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Hakm, p. 40.

Caliphs in restoring the features and characteristics of the guided caliphate, following their guidance, holding fast to their *Sunan* (examples; traditions) and reverting to their sayings in times of strife and for governing the people under his rule; not only did he apply this to his caliphate but similarly to his daily worship and dealings. Thus he primarily paid attention to the first and second caliphs, Abū Bakr and 'Umār, on the premise that reverting to their *Sunnah* was reverting to the *Sunnah* of the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and next to the third caliph whereby he applied what he heard directly, and lastly, he adhered to the *Sunnah* of the fourth caliph in his dealing with the Kharijites such that 'Umar wrote to them concerning battles and judged cases involving their wealth, children and captives in keeping with the judgment of the Fourth Caliph, 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib (may Allāh be pleased with them all).⁽¹⁾

In sum, 'Umar believed that anyone who moved away from the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his Rightly-Guided Caliphs (may Allāh be pleased with them) had gone outside the path of the Believers and was from a destructible sect. He also believed that everything the Rightly-Guided Caliphs did was in accordance with the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) given that they would have acted on what he ordered them to do and there is no *Wājib* (duty) in the Religion except for what he made a duty,

(1) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2/637).

no *Harām* (prohibition) except that which he prohibited, no *Mustaḥab* (recommended thing) except that which he said was recommended, no *Makrūḥ* (disliked thing) except that which he said was disliked and no *Mubāḥ* (allowed) except that which he allowed. Following the *Sunnah* of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs in creed and rulings is the way of the *Salaf* (Pious Forebears), as the Qur'ān testifies: [*And whoever contradicts and opposes the Messenger (Muḥammad, (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) after the right path has been shown clearly to him, and follows other than the believers' way, We shall keep him on the path he has chosen, and burn him in Hell – what an evil destination*] (*an-Nisā'*, 4:115) Regarding this, the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "You must follow my *Sunnah* and that of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs. Hold fast to it and adhere to it. Avoid newly invented matters [in religion], for every newly invented matter [in religion] is an innovation, and every innovation is an error."⁽¹⁾ Hudhayfah (may Allāh be pleased with him) said: "We were sitting the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who said: 'I do not know how much longer I will remain with you, so take these two as an example (to follow) after me', and he pointed to Abū Bakr and 'Umar."⁽²⁾

Clinging to the Fiṭrah (Natural Disposition):

Ja'far bin Ruqān is reported to have said: "A man went

(1) *Sunan at-Tirmidhī* (5/44); an authentic *Ḥadīth*.

(2) *Sunan at-Tirmidhī* (5/601); *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan at-Tirmidhī* by al-Albānī (3/200).

to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and asked him about something related to heretic tendencies, to which 'Umar gave the response: 'You should follow the religion of the young man in the Book and the religion of the Arab man and leave everything else'.⁽¹⁾ [So, set (O Muḥammad, peace be upon him) your face towards the religion '*Ḥanīf*' (worshipping none but Allāh Alone), Allāh's '*Fiṭrah*' (i.e. Islāmic Monotheism) with which He has created mankind] (*Ar-Rūm*, 30:30). The Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) said: "No child is born except on the *Fiṭrah* and then his parents make him Jewish, Christian or Magian (Zoroastrian), as an animal produces a perfect young animal; do you see any part of its body mutilated?" Abū Hurayrah (may Allāh be pleased with him) then said: "Allāh's *Fiṭrah* with which He created mankind. There is to be no change to the creation (Religion) of Allāh."⁽²⁾

A sound *Fiṭrah* therefore recognises its Creator, loves Him, is humble before Him and is sincere towards His Religion in which it finds strength. For this reason, the *Fiṭrah* acknowledges the Religion's Laws as effective, since it identifies and infers these Laws as constituting an elaborate culmination of the details brought by the messengers who conveyed and reminded the people of them, whilst acknowledging the causes for opposing the inherent *Fiṭrah* to be the obstruction of its impact.⁽³⁾

(1) *Al-Mathār al-Warīdah* 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2/819).

(2) *Al-Bukhārī*, no. 1358.

(3) *Shifā' al-'Alīl*, pp.629-30.

His Position in relation to the Ṣaḥābah (Companions) and the Disagreement between them:

'Abd ar-Raḥmān bin al-Qāsim narrated from his father who said: "I was pleased by 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's statement when he said: 'I would not have liked for the Companions of the Messenger (peace and blessings upon them) to have not disagreed, as had they all unanimously concurred on one view, the people would have been constricted whereas the *Imāms* (leaders) were exemplary such that if a man followed the speech of one them, it was sufficient."⁽¹⁾ Abū 'Umar (may Allāh have mercy on him) said that he applied this approach to *Ijtihād* (issuing independent rulings).⁽²⁾ 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was asked about what happened in the Battle of Ṣiffīn and so he said: "Allāh stopped that blood from touching my hands and I hate to stain my tongue with it."⁽³⁾ Muḥammad bin an-Naḍr is reported to have said: "The disagreement between the Companions of Muḥammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was mentioned in the presence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and so he said: 'It is an affair Allāh removed

(1) *Jāmi' Bayān al-'Ilm* [Declaration of Knowledge] (2/901-902); *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/410).

(2) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/410).

(3) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5/394); *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/412).

from your hands that your tongues are executing instead.”⁽¹⁾ Like the pious predecessors and scholars, ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz emphasised highlighting the virtues of the Companions of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), for Allāh says: “*Indeed, Allāh was pleased with the believers when they gave the ‘bay‘ah’ (‘pledge’) to you (O Muḥammad, (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) under the tree, He knew what was in their hearts, and He sent down ‘as-sakīnah’ (‘calmness and tranquillity’) upon them, and He rewarded them with a near victory*” (*al-Faṭḥ*, 48:18)

The position of the *Ahl as-Sunnah* is to not mention any of the Companions of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon them) except in a commendable manner and to refrain from commenting on what ensued between them, as they are the most deserving and worthy people of being excused and are considered as having the most excellent beliefs.⁽²⁾ Ibn Ḥajar said: “The *Ahl as-Sunnah* are agreed on the obligation to forbid defaming any of the Companions on account of what happened between them as if to say one was more correct than the other. They did not fight in those battles except on the basis of *Ijtihād* (independent reasoning) and in that case it has been verified that one group will be rewarded one reward and the other will be rewarded two.”⁽³⁾ The above statements made by ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz clarify his beliefs

(1) *Ibid* (5/382); *Al-Athār al-Wāridah ‘an ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz fī al-‘Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (5/382).

(2) *Ath-Thamr ad-Dānī fī Taqrīb al-Ma‘ānī: Sharḥ Risālah Abī Zayd* [The Close at Hand Fruits in Getting Closer to Meanings: An explanation of Abī Zayd’s Treatise], p. 23.

(3) *Faṭḥ al-Bārī* [Grant of the Creator] (13/34).

on the Companions and that they are in keeping with the *Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah*.

His Position in relation to the Ahl al-Bayt (Family of the Prophet, (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him):

Ibn al-Qayyim states that the scholars differ in their definitions and designations of the *Ahl al-Bayt*, which have been categorised as below:

1. They include those who were exempt from accepting charity, whose designations differ between:
 - They were the *Banū Hāshim* and *Banū al-Muṭṭalib* (tribes);
 - They were specifically the *Banū Hāshim* (tribe);
 - They were the *Banū Hāshim* and the majority of their descendants.
2. The family of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) includes his wives and children;
3. His family includes his followers until the Day of Judgment;
4. His family are the *Atqiyā'* (Pious) among his *Ummah*.⁽¹⁾

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allāh have mercy on him) then gives preference to the first statement that the family of the Prophet

(1) *Jalā' al-Afhām fī aṣ-Ṣalāt wa as-Salām 'alā Khayr al-An'ām*, p.109.

(may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) includes those who were forbidden from taking charity.⁽¹⁾ According to the view of the *Shī'ah* (Shi'ites), the family of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is considered as referring to 'Alī, Fāṭimah, Al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn, and the latter two's descendants, although this contradicts the authentic sources and goes against both language and convention. Reason being that the phrase *Ahl al-Bayt* is used in the Holy Qur'ān in the context of addressing the wives of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) where Allāh says: [And stay in your houses, and do not display yourselves like that of the times of ignorance, and perform the 'Ṣalāt' (prayers), give the 'Zakāt' (prescribed alms) and obey Allāh and His Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Allāh wishes only to remove 'ar-Rijs' (evil deeds and sins) from you, O members of the family of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and to purify you with a thorough purification." (al-Aḥzāb, 33:33). An in-depth refutation of the Shi'ite Imamate based on this verse can be found in my book on the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib.

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz acknowledged the material and moral rights of the *Ahl al-Bayt* to whom he afforded ample provision without holding back too much or being excessive.⁽²⁾ Along these lines, he rectified the wrongs that had been done

(1) *Ibid*, pp.110-9; *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/428).

(2) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/429).

to them and instead treated them with utter benevolence, in the material and moral sense. Juwayriyyah bint Asmā' narrated: "I heard Fāṭimah bint 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib mention 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and she could not have spoken more nicely about him. She went on to say: 'I entered into his presence in the days when he was the Governor of al-Madīnah, upon which dismissed every single guard and attendant until just he and I remained in the house. He then said: 'O daughter of 'Alī! By Allāh, there is no *Ahl al-Bayt* (family) on the face of the earth more beloved to me than yours and you (all) are more beloved to me than my own family'." ⁽¹⁾

'Abdullah bin Muḥammad bin 'Aqīl bin Abī Ṭālib narrated: "The first allocation of funds 'Umar would make would be sent to us, the *Ahl al-Bayt*, whereby he gave our women the same as what our men would give them and he gave our children the same as what our women would give them. He therefore gave the *Ahl al-Bayt* three thousand *Dirhams* and wrote to us: 'I have given you what remained to be given to you of all your rights'." ⁽²⁾ Ḥusayn bin Ṣāliḥ is reported to have said: "The people were talking about ascetics in the presence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz during which they mentioned the names of some individuals until 'Umar interrupted and said: 'The most ascetic person in the world was 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib (may Allāh be pleased with him)'." ⁽³⁾ Like the others among the *Salaf* (pious

(1) *Aḥ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5/388).

(2) *Ibid* (5/392).

(3) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 292.

predecessors), 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz actively afforded the rights of the Prophet's *Ahl al-Bayt* to them in compliance with the command on the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who said: "My *Ahl al-Bayt*, I remind you, in the name of Allāh, about my *Ahl al-Bayt*."⁽¹⁾ Ibn Taymiyyah said: "It is among the basic principles of the *Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* to love the *Ahl al-Bayt* of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and to respect their rights in fulfillment of the Prophet's requests (peace and blessings upon them). The family of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has rights that must be granted. Allāh has allocated to them a share of the *Khums* (fifth of the war booty) and *Fay'* (conquered land and property), and He has enjoined that blessings be sent upon them along with the Messenger of Allāh (peace and blessings upon them)."⁽²⁾ The rights mentioned here by Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allāh have mercy on him) are those observed by 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz who fulfilled all aspects of these demands stated in Islāmic law. As such, he returned the garden of Fadak, located in the north of al-Madīnah, and granted them a fifth of the *Khums* and their share of *Fay'*.⁽³⁾

Furthermore, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz (may Allāh have mercy on him) paid attention to the material and moral rights of the family of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of

(1) *Muslim*, no. 2408.

(2) *Al-Fatāwā* [Legal Opinions] (3/407).

(3) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/433).

Allah be upon him) by vigilantly complying with, and similarly refraining from, Allāh's commands concerning them and ardently following the *Salaf* (Pious Forebears)⁽¹⁾ (may Allāh be pleased with them). As for the books of history that suggest the Umayyad rulers preceding 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz were accustomed to slandering 'Alī, this claim, according to Ibn Sa'ad, is untrue, on the topic of which he says: "'Alī bin Muḥammad informed us that Lūṭ bin Yaḥyā said: 'The Umayyad rulers preceding 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz would slander the man (may Allāh be pleased with him) and upon 'Umar's assumption of the caliphate, he stopped the practice and abstained from doing it. An elegy about 'Umar reads:

"You came to power and you refused to insult 'Alī, harm the innocent

And follow the ways and comments of the criminals;

You spoke the honest truth and moreover

You demonstrated signs of guidance through speech;

And so, you were truthful in what you said

But you also did what you said and so every Muslim was satisfied."⁽²⁾

However, this narration is unfounded, as 'Alī bin Muḥammad was a weak narrator and his *Shaykh*, Lūṭ bin Yaḥyā once narrated a weak tradition, about whom Yaḥyā bin Ma'īn said: "He was not reliable." Likewise, Abū Ḥātim

(1) *Ibid* (1/435).

(2) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5/147).

said: "He is abandoned in *Ḥadīth*." In *al-Mizān*, ad-Daraqatnī says: "His reporting is weak and he cannot be relied on."⁽¹⁾ In general, his narrations are ascribed to weak, deceased or anonymous transmitters.⁽²⁾

The Shiite label Mu'āwiyah (may Allāh be pleased with him) as the instigator behind the slandering of 'Alī (may Allāh be pleased with him) to the extent that they curse Mu'āwiyah on the pulpits of the mosques. Not only is this claim absolutely baseless but, even more so, researchers have exposed the disgrace of their calumny without even having subjected it to thorough criticism and analysis. Rather, historians have stumbled upon a plethora of inexplicable suspects that leave no room for discussion because of the absurdity of their logic. It suffices to say that these narrations we are referring to here are not verified as authentic and so we cannot rely on the accounts given in the books of ad-Damīrī, al-Ya'qūbī or Abī al-Farj al-Aṣḥfahānī. More precisely, the correct history is contrary to what those writers would suggest happened.⁽³⁾ In view of Mu'āwiyah's respect and admiration for the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, 'Alī, and his sanctified *Ahl al-Bayt* (Family), it makes no sense that he would curse 'Alī on the pulpits of the Umayyads and so reason would have it that it is not worth disputing. Alternatively, if we return to the history books contemporary with the Umayyads, we find that no such thing is mentioned therein, ever, whilst such claims are found in the

(1) *Al-Mizān* (3/419).

(2) *Difā'an 'an as-Salafiyyah*, p. 187.

(3) *Al-Ḥasan wal-Ḥusayn*, by Muḥammad Ridā, p. 18; *Kalām al-Muḥaqq*, by Dr. Aḥmad Abū ash-Shabāb.

book written at the time of Abbasids with the aim of discrediting the Umayyad's reputation in the eyes of the masses. The lies forged by the likes of al-Mas'ūsī and other Shi'ite historians later crept into the books of the *Ahl as-Sunnah* despite them being false narrations. It follows that this is a problem in need of rectification. Their chains of narration need to be repaired from damage and their text matter from remonstrance, which is a well-known fact to analysts and researchers.

It goes without saying that Mu'āwiyah was far from what they ascribe and allege about him, as his merit is verified in the *Dīn* as being praiseworthy in the sight of the *Ummah*, esteemed by some of the *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions) and commended by the finest *Tābi'īn* (second or third generation followers), all of whom witnessed the merit of his religion, knowledge, justice and clemency among many other outstanding traits.⁽¹⁾ Without question, it is Mu'āwiyah's right (may Allāh be pleased with him) to be championed for being poles apart from what is claimed about him inciting the people to curse 'Alī (may Allāh be pleased with him) on the pulpits. Quite the reverse, examples of Mu'āwiyah's patience and mildness are so replete he is considered an exemplar for the generations.⁽²⁾

Scandals and forgery of this kind have been dealt with in extensive detail in my book entitled *Khāmis al-Khulafā' ar-Rāshidīn: Al-Ḥasan bin 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib* [The Fifth Rightly-Guided Caliph: Al-Ḥasan bin 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib], in which the

(1) *Al-Intiṣār li-Ṣuḥub wal-Āl* (Victory for Friends and Family) by ar-Raḥīlī, p.367.

(2) *Khāmis al-Khulafā' ar-Rāshidīn: Al-Ḥasan bin 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib* [The Fifth Rightly-Guided Caliph: Al-Ḥasan bin 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib], p. 303.

relationship between Mu'āwiyah and the children of 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib, once he had secured the caliphate for himself, is portrayed to show that there was nothing but friendship, love, respect and honour between them. In the general sense, it further conveys the regulation of his contemporary society as being in line with the *Sharī'ah* (Islāmic Law) and their anxiousness to adhere to it, making them anything but slanderers and foul abusers. Given that the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) forbade insulting the dead *Mushrikīn* (idolaters), what then for someone who insulted the righteous *Awliyā'* (Friends) of Allāh? 'Ā'ishah (may Allāh be pleased with her) directly narrated the *Ḥadīth*: "Do not abuse the dead, for they have reached the result of what they have done."⁽¹⁾

'Umar's Stance on the Kharijites, Shi'ites, Qadariyyah, Murjites and Jahmites

The Kharijites:

This group first emerged during the caliphate of 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib (may Allāh be pleased with him), specifically, in the year 37 AH following the Battle of Ṣiffīn, which was indecisive and resulted in the two parties agreeing to an arbitration, which was equally indecisive. In my book on the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib, the details and phenomena surrounding

(1) *Al-Bukhārī*, no. 6515.

this group are documented in greater detail, however, what we are interested in at present are the Kharijites’ extreme doctrines, which include:

- Declaring ‘Alī bin Abī Ṭalib and ‘Uthmān bin ‘Affān (may Allāh be pleased with them) *Kuffār* (Disbelievers), as well as the arbitrators, Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī and ‘Amr bin al-‘Āṣ (may Allāh be pleased with them);
- Advocating dissidence from an unjust leader, whilst some went as far as claiming that there was no need for an *Imām* at all;
- Believing that the act of sinning is analogous to *Kufr* and that every grave sinner (one who had committed a major sin in Islām) was regarded as a *Kāfir* (Disbeliever) unless he repents, otherwise he is bound to eternal life in Hell.⁽¹⁾

These three principles formed the core beliefs of the Kharijites who were not in disagreement over the principles themselves but there was some disagreement on the application of them amongst the group.⁽²⁾ In detailing the consensus of opinions reached by the Kharijites, Abū Al-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī says: “The Kharijites agreed that the infidelity of ‘Alī bin Abī Ṭalib (may Allāh be pleased with him) should be ruled, although they differed on whether

(1) *Wasṭiyyah Ahl as-Sunnah bayna al-Furuq* [The Middle Path of the People of Prophetic Example of All the Groups], p. 291.

(2) *Ibid*, p. 291.

his infidelity constituted *Shirk* (believing in other than Allāh) or not. They concurred that anyone who had committed a *Kabīrah* (Major sin in Islām) was a disbeliever for breaching the rules of the Qur'ān; this was with the exception of the *Najadāt* sect, whose name can be traced to Najdah bin 'Āmir al-Ḥanafī, who did not propound this doctrine. Thus, the Kharijites agreed that Allāh, the Sublime, eternally punished the committers of grave sins (except for the accomplices of Najdah, as we just mentioned).⁽¹⁾ On that, al-Muqaddisi says: "The essence of their school of thought (i.e. the Kharijites) was denouncing 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib (may Allāh be pleased with him) as an infidel, disowning 'Uthmān bin 'Affān (may Allāh be pleased with him), declaring sinning an act of disbelief and dissenting from the unjust leader."⁽²⁾

The Kharijites persisted in their fight against the Umayyad State and were at times victorious until they were critically overcome by the State that shattered their stronghold. As soon as 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz arrived on the scene, his approach was to enter into negotiations with the Kharijites and only used force to suppress them when necessary. 'Umar would vilify heated argumentation and confrontation and instead opted for discussion and debate. Thus, he said: "Whoever makes his religion the object of argumentation will frequently change it."⁽³⁾ And he said: "Successful is he who restrains

(1) *Al-Maqālāt* [Discourses] (1/167-8).

(2) *Al-Bud'a wal-Tārīkh* [The Onset and History] (5/135); *Wasṭiyyah Ahl as-Sunnah bayna al-Furuq* [The Middle Path of the People of Prophetic Example of All the Groups], p. 292.

(3) *Al-Maqālāt* [Discourses] (1/167-8).

argumentation, anger and greed.”⁽¹⁾ Accordingly, ‘Umar (may Allāh have mercy on him) forbade fruitless argumentation in place of which he promoted discourse as the best means for settling disputes. It is no surprise that that there are many famous sayings attributed to ‘Umar from his dealings with the Kharijites and their disputes and in that manner he invalidated their arguments through proof and by clarifying the truth for them. Furthermore, his approach serves as proof of his love for the *Sunnah* and adherence of the *Salaf* (Pious Forebears) (may Allāh have mercy on them).⁽²⁾

His Stance on the Kharijites’ Dissension from Him:

Hishām bin Yaḥyā al-Ghasānī narrated from his father that ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz wrote to him concerning the Kharijites stating: “If their plan is to travel through the land without causing any corruption on the Muslim communities or on any of the *Ahl adh-Dhimma* (Non-Muslims living under Muslim Rule) and without cutting off from the way of the Muslims then they can go wherever they want. However, if their plan is to fight, then by Allāh, even if my first-born sons were to turn against the Muslim community, I would spill their blood for which I would solicit Allāh’s Pleasure and the

(1) *Sīrat ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz* [The Biography of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 291; *Al-Athār al-Wāridah ‘an ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz fi al-Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/671).

(2) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah ‘an ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz fi al-Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/693).

Abode of the Hereafter.”⁽¹⁾ Another narration states: “I swear by Allāh! Even if you were my first-born sons and you wanted us to publicly spread what we are verging on, I would pour your blood forth seeking Allāh's Face and the Abode of the Hereafter. Indeed, He says: [*That home of the Hereafter (i.e. Paradise), We shall assign to those who rebel not against the truth with pride and oppression in the land nor do mischief (by committing crimes). And the good end is for the 'Muttaqūn' ('Pious')*] (*al-Qaṣaṣ*, 28:83) This is my advice to if you want it and in the event that you suspect me then present what it is you suspect exactly with advisors. May peace, blessings and mercy of Allāh be upon you.”⁽²⁾

'Umar's strategy and approach can be discerned from the above account relating to his correspondence with the Kharijites and despite their rejection of him as the rightful caliph, he was not stirred by them but instead wrote to them to warn them against breaking off from the community who were the people of truth. Allāh commands unity and forbids dissent, and He made the unity of the *Ummah* a proof. Thus, if the people are agreed on a leader, they are obliged to obey him and not dissent from him, whilst He did not command disobedience or to make open displays of *Kufr* (Disbelief).⁽³⁾

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Hakm, p. 75; *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 99-100.

(2) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2/695).

(3) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2/695).

'Umar's choice of strategy and words elucidates the way of the *Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah* in dealing with the Kharijites who were in fact the first group to break off from the community in Islāmic history, but this did not faze 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz despite their repudiation of him as the true caliph. Thus, he did not send assault upon assault against them but rather granted them the opportunity to come back to the truth in the same manner that the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib, did in dealing with the Kharijites when they repudiated him.⁽¹⁾

His Dialogue with the Kharijites:

'Umar's stance in general and his stance with the Kharijites in particular is elucidated by those who wrote to him and to whom he wrote back requesting a dialogue with them if they were prepared to do so, which he found that some of them were. Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm says: "'Umar wrote to the Kharijites: 'From 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, to this party, to proceed: I advise you to have *Taqwā* (consciousness; fear) in Allāh Who says: [*And whosoever fears Allāh and keeps his duty to him, He will make a way for him to get out (from every difficulty). And He will provide him from (sources) he could never imagine. And whoever puts his trust in Allāh then He will suffice him. Verily, Allāh will accomplish his purpose. Indeed, Allāh has set a measure for all things*] (aṭ-Ṭalāq, 65: 2-3) Your letter has reached me and that which you wrote to Yaḥyā bin Yaḥyā and Sulaymān bin Dawūd. Verily, Allāh says: "*And who does more wrong that the one who invents*

(1) *Ibid* (2/696, 687).

a lie against Allāh, while he is being invited to Islām? And Allāh guides not the *Ẓālimūn* (Transgressors; Polytheists)." (aṣ-Ṣaff, 61:7) And He says: "Invite (mankind, O Muḥammad, (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to the way of your Lord (i.e. Islām) with wisdom (i.e. with Divine Revelation and the Qur'ān) and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better. Truly, your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His path, and He is the Best Knower of those who are guided." (an-Naḥl, 16:125). And He says: "So, be not weak and ask not for peace (from the enemies of Islām) while you are having the upper hand. Allāh is with you, and he will never decrease the reward of your good deeds." (Muḥammad, 47:35)

Verily, I call you to Allāh and Islām, to establish the *Salāh* (prescribed prayers), give the *Zakat* (prescribed alms), and to enjoin good and forbid evil, Allāh willing – and there is no power or might except with Him. I call you to support what did not result in the spilling before your days that was without force or revulsion. I remind you by Allāh that you are like us in the Book of the Allāh and the *Sunnah* of His Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and that we invite you to them both. This is our sincere advice to you and should you accept it then that is what we had wished for, but if you reject it on the grounds of its contents then let your advisors present your dispute to us. In that event, it will not be considered as taking from the right of Allāh, as the righteous servant said to his nation: "But if you turn away, then I fear for you the torment of a Great Day (i.e. the Day of Resurrection)" (Hūd,

11:3), And He says: "Say (O Muḥammad, (may peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him): 'This is my way; I invite to Allāh with sure knowledge, I and whosoever follows me (also must invite others to Allāh, i.e. Islāmic Monotheism with sure knowledge). And Glorified and Exalted is Allāh (above all that they associate as partners with Him). And I am not of the 'Mushrikīn' (Polytheists; Idolaters).'" (Yūsuf, 13:108)⁽¹⁾

The narration reports then after the Kharijites had read 'Umar's letter, they sent two men to speak to him instructing them that if he complies with them then they were to do the same, otherwise if he refuses then Allāh lies ahead of him. Thus they sent a slave of the *Banī Shaybān* by the name of 'Āṣim and one of their own men from the *Banī Yashkur*, who as they entered upon 'Umar said: "Peace by upon you" and sat down. 'Umar responded: "Inform me of the reason for your coming out here and why it is that you are hostile towards us." 'Āṣim, who was incidentally Abyssinian, said: "We are not hostile towards you in your endeavours to establish justice and excellence but inform us about the assumption of your role, do you have the satisfaction and consent of the Muslims or is it that their leadership is just presented to them?" He said: "I do not question them about leadership neither do I impose anything on them against their will. A man entrusted me with a covenant I never asked him about either in secret

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Hakm, pp. 79-80; *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 99; *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2/701).

or in public; nevertheless, I undertook the matter and no one ever denied me or disliked me because of it except for you (lot), even though you consider contentment to be in justice and fairness towards the people. If I infringe the truth or deviate from it then you are not required to obey me."

The two Kharijite ambassadors said: "Between us and you is a matter that if you grant it to us, you are from us and we are from you, but if you forbid us, we are not from you and you are not from us." 'Umar asked: "What is it?" They answered: "I have seen that you have gone against the actions of your *Ahl al-Bayt* (Family) and pursued an alternative path in the name of redressing grievances. If you claim to be on the path of guidance and that they have gone astray, then surely you should disown and condemn them. That is what will either bring us together or divide us." 'Umar then said: "I know or assume that you do not want from this world but that it is the *Ākhirah* (Hereafter) you desire, although you have made an error in your choice of path. I ask you about a matter and, by Allāh, you must be honest with me in what you really believe." They said: "We will." So 'Umar continued: "Do you not consider Abū Bakr and 'Umar your predecessors and among those who you follow and testify to for salvation?" They said: "Of course." So he said: "Do you know that the Arabs apostatized after the passing of the Prophet (peace and blessings upon them) and so Abū Bakr fought against them, spilt their blood, took their families captive and seized their wealth?" They replied: "That is what he did." So 'Umar said: "And do you know that when 'Umar assumed the caliphate

after him, he returned those captives to their clans?" They said: "This is what he did." Then 'Umar asked: "So did Abū Bakr disown 'Umar, or vice versa?" They answered: "No." He went on: "Then do you disown either of them?" Again, they answered in the negative, at which point 'Umar asked: "So tell me about the people of Nahrawān. Are they not your predecessors and amongst those you follow and testify to for salvation?" They answered: "Of course." 'Umar said: "Then do you know that when the people of Kūfah went out to them, they took them by their hands, did not make them feel unsafe, did not spill their blood and did not seize their money?" They replied: "That is what happened." He went on: "Do you know that when the people of Baṣrah went out to them in the company of 'Abdullah bin Wahab ar-Rāsibī⁽¹⁾, the people massacred them without much ado and then turned their attentions to 'Abdullah bin Khabbāb, the Companion of the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), who they butchered along with his slave maid with her child in her womb. They then moved on to some 'Arabs belonging to the *Banī Qaṭiyyah* tribe killing their men, women and boys and even throwing their children into pots and boiling them?" They answered: "That is what happened." 'Umar said: "Did the people of Kūfah disown the people of Baṣrah or vice versa?" They answered: "No." So 'Umar said: "Do you reprimand any of the two groups?" They said: "No." 'Umar said: "Tell me, do you consider the *Dīn* (i.e. Islām) to

(1) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2/703).

be one or two?" They said: "One, of course." He said: "Then, is there something that makes you unable to be content with me?" They said: "No." He asked: "How is it that you are able to follow Abī Bakr and 'Umar while both of them followed their Companion even those their approaches differed? Or how were the people of Kūfah able to follow the people of Baṣrah, and vice versa, despite their differing on the most significant matters like blood, women and money, yet you claim to be unable to accept me without first cursing my *Ahl al-Bayt* and disowning them? If cursing sinners was an obligation, it would be necessary for us to do so. So tell me, O spokesman, when do you vow to curse *Fir'awn* (Pharaoh) if you say that cursing is important?" He answered: "I never mentioned when I would do that." 'Umar remarked: "Woe unto you! Then you are able to leave cursing *Fir'awn*, yet you claim that you cannot accept me except after cursing my *Ahl al-Bayt* and disowning them? Woe unto you, you ignorant people! You wanted something but you are in error and you accept from the people what the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) refused them, while you refuse them what he (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) allowed them. You make the one who felt scared before the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) feel safe while you scare the one who felt safe with the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)." They answered: "We do not do that." 'Umar said: "On the contrary! You decided to do that now. Do you know that the Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) sent a message to the people who

worshipped Awthān calling them to renounce Awthān and declare that there is no one worthy of worship but Allāh and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh, whereby whoever complied, his blood was spared and he was granted protection? This was an example for the Muslims to go by, or do you challenge that?" "Not at all", they answered. 'Umar then said: "Are you, then, not reprimanding those who denounced Awthān and declared that there is no one worthy of worship and that Muḥammad is His messenger and servant? Are you not cursing them, murdering them and declaring their blood lawful whilst joining with those who decline that from among the Jews and Christians whose blood you deem unlawful and to whom you grant protection?" So the Abyssinian replied: "I do not need to be shown any more proof than what you have already given. I declared that you are on the truth and that I am clear of those who contest you." He then said to ash-Shaybānī: "And what do you say?" He answered: "You could not have said or described things better; however, I hate to instruct the Muslims on matters that I do not have proof for until I refer to them, as perhaps they have some proof that I am not aware of." So he said: "You know best." 'Umar then ordered that the Abyssinian be granted a gift and he stayed with him for fifteen days, after which he died. Ash-Shaybānī rejoined his people and was killed alongside them.⁽¹⁾

Another narration tells of two Kharijite men entering upon

(1) *Ansāb al-Ashraf* [The Descendants of Nobles] (8/211-15); *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2/704).

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and saying: "Peace be upon you, O human!" 'Umar replied: "Upon you peace, O humans!" They then said: "Obedience to Allāh has the most right to be abided by." 'Umar said: "Whoever ignores that is wayward." They said: "Money not belonging to the State between the rich?" He said: "They are forbidden it." They said: "The money of Allāh is allocated to His people." 'Umar said: "Allāh conveyed the details of that in His Book." They said: "Establishing prayers on time?" He said: "That is one of its rights." They said: "Forming rows in the prayers?" He said: "That is in completion of the *Sunnah*." They said: "Verily, we have been sent to you." He said: "Speak without fear." So they said: "Convey the truth to the people." He said: "Allāh ordered that before you did." They said: "There is no rule but God's." 'Umar said: "That is certainly true if it is not pursued falsely." They said: "Do you appoint trustees?" He said: "They are my helpers." They said: "Beware of betrayal." He said: "The thief is chanceful." They said: "And alcohol and pig meat?" He said: "The people of *Shirk* (Polytheism) befit it most." They said: "So whoever enters into Islām is granted security?" He said: "If it were not for Islām we would not be safe." They said: "The people who entered into treaties with the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)?" He said: "Do not burden them with more than they can bear. Allāh says: "*Allāh burdens not a person beyond his scope.*" (*al-Baqarah*, 2:286) They said: "We are reminded by the Qur'ān. Allāh says: "*And be afraid of the Day when you shall be brought back to Allāh*" (*al-Baqarah*, 2:281) They said: "We are reluctant to travel

on our messenger steeds." He said: "There is no money of Allāh that is not good enough for you two." They said: "We do not have money to spend." He said: "You two have the expenditure of wayfarers."⁽¹⁾

'Arṭa'ah bin al-Mundhar said: "I heard Abī 'Awn say: 'People from Ḥarūriyyah entered upon 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and began to speak to him about something, upon which some of 'Umar's companions signalled him to be harsh with them and change his behaviour towards them. However, 'Umar continued to treat them gently until he got what he wanted from them and they were mutually satisfied with his kind treatment of them, at which point they left having reached a fair agreement. After they had gone out, 'Umar hit the knee of his companion sitting next to him and said: "O friend! If you can apply some medicine apart from scalding to cure your friend then do it, but never ever scald as it won't work!"

One narration states that when Shawdhab, also known as Bustām, from the *Banī Yashkur* (tribe) set out against 'Abd al-Ḥamīd bin 'Abd ar-Raḥmān in 'Irāq, during the caliphate of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, from his location by the River Jūkhī in East Baghdad with a cavalry of eighty of the most skilled horsemen, 'Umar wrote 'Abd al-Ḥamīd informing him to not take action except if blood had been spilt or corruption had been spread. He said: "If they do then come to a resolve

(1) *Sirat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 147; *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2/704).

between that and them by sending a resolute, sound man to them who you have advised of your wishes." Accordingly, 'Abd al-Ḥamīd assigned Muḥammad bin Jarīr bin 'Abdullah al-Bajlī with two thousand men from Kūfah and ordered to do as 'Umar had said. At the same time, 'Umar wrote to Bustām calling him and enquiring to him about his whereabouts. As 'Umar's letter reached him so did Muḥammad bin Jarīr, upon which he neither took action against him nor provoked him.

In 'Umar's letter to him, it said: "Indeed, it has reached me that you set out for Allāh and His Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in anger, whilst you are the first to do that against me. Give us your opinion; if we are in the right then you accept what the people accept and if you are in the right, we will take your affair on board." Subsequently, Bustām ceased to take any action and wrote to 'Umar: "You have been just. I have therefore dispatched two ambassadors to you to make enquiries and look into the case with you."

The two men sent to 'Umar by Shawdhab were Makhdūj, a slave of the Banī Shaybān, and a man from the Banī Yashkur who were both chosen after 'Umar had requested that two men be sent to him for the purpose. Thus, when they entered upon him, they looked at 'Umar and said: "Inform us about Yazīd. Why did you make him the caliph after you?" He said: "It was out of my hands." They said: "Have you not considered that if you appointed someone not from your own choice then you would have entrusted it to someone unfit for it? Do you

then reckon that you have upheld your trusteeship to those who entrusted you with it?”⁽¹⁾ In conjecture of this, narrations state: “The Banī Marwān tribe were scared that ‘Umar would confiscate what they possessed of money and that he would relinquish the caliphate from Yazīd bin ‘Abd al-Mālik, which is why they set out to poison him. Before long, he died on the day that he had resolved to hand over his answer to the commissioners.”⁽²⁾

The aforementioned accounts confirm that ‘Umar’s attitude with them was the correct one and was the same attitude that our pious Forebears adopted, such as Ibn ‘Abbās and the *Amīr al-Mu’mīnīn*, ‘Alī bin Abī Ṭālib (may Allāh have mercy on them both). It appears that ‘Umar had been eager to suppress those Kharijites, which is why he left no room for suspicion by squashing them, exposing their falsity and revealing their defects.⁽³⁾ He did not, therefore, continue to dispute with them about the truth but instead he demanded an extension, only he died before they had concluded the matter. When the Kharijites used force against the Governor of Irāq, ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd, further enabling them to drive away the Governor’s army, ‘Umar hastily sent Maslamah bin ‘Abd al-Mālik at the head of army made up of the people of Shām (Levant) and he wrote to ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd: “It has reached what your army

(1) *Tārīkh aṭ-Ṭabarī* [Ṭabarī’s History] (7/460).

(2) *Ibid*; *Malāmiḥ al-Inqilāb al-Islāmī fī Khilāfat ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz* [The Characteristics of the Islāmic Transformation during the Caliphate of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz] by Dr ‘Imād ad-Dīn Khalīl, p. 97.

(3) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah ‘an ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz fī al-‘Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2/711).

did – what an evil army! I have accordingly sent Maslamah, so become comrades.” Maslamah advanced at the head of his forced to the military base of the Kharijites, upon which a battle ensued between the two sides that resulted in the victory of the “Caliphate’s Army.”⁽¹⁾ Had ‘Umar employed force to suppress this particular band of the Kharijites, it would never have been possible for him use the same severity against them all. Hence, he was always ready to enter into dialogue with his opponents and he never allowed bloodshed.⁽²⁾

The Leading Causes for Fighting the Kharijites:

‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz did not order waging war against the Kharijites on the grounds of their differences in opinion, nor did he do that when they opposed and insulted him. Rather, he persevered with them in the hope that Allāh might have guided them to the correct path. It was not until it reached a dangerous level with the appropriation of money, spreading fear and spilling blood that he ordered fighting against them.⁽³⁾

Returning the Property of the Kharijites to its

(1) *Āḡ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5/358); *Malāmiḥ al-Inqilāb al-Islāmī fī Khilāfat ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz* [The Characteristics of the Islāmic Transformation during the Caliphate of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz] by Dr ‘Imād ad-Dīn Khalīl, p. 94.

(2) *Malāmiḥ al-Inqilāb al-Islāmī fī Khilāfat ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz* [The Characteristics of the Islāmic Transformation during the Caliphate of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz] by Dr ‘Imād ad-Dīn Khalīl, p. 94.

(3) *Fiqh ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz] by Dr. Muḥammad Shaqīr (2/469).

Owners:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz did not capture the Kharijites' women and children neither did he deem their wealth lawful but, contrary to that, he returned all their possessions to their deserving owners. Thus, he wrote to his official dealing with the Kharijites: "If Allāh makes you triumphant over them, be sure to return their goods that you obtain on the way to their deserving owners."⁽¹⁾ This was in fact the opinion of 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib in not taking their women and children as captives and not deeming their wealth lawful.⁽²⁾

Imprisoning Kharijite Captives until They Changed:

Having fought against them in battle, some of them were killed and some were taken captive. 'Umar thereby ordered the captives to be imprisoned until they changed their stance, reverted to the truth and abandoned their deviant ideas.⁽³⁾ It was during his imprisonment of them that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-Azīz died.⁽⁴⁾ This was 'Umar's approach and jurisprudence in dealing with the Kharijite opposition.

The Shi'ites:

They maintain the view that righteousness belongs to

(1) *Ibid* (2/471).

(2) *Ibid*.

(3) *Ibid* (2/473).

(4) *Āḡ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5/358); *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Dr. Muḥammad Shaqīr (2/473).

those who exclusively give preference to 'Alī over the Rightly-Guided caliphs before him (may Allāh be pleased with them all) and consider his *Ahl al-Bayt* (Family) as having the most right to caliphate.⁽¹⁾ I have spoken about the Shi'ites in much detail in my book on the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, 'Alī (may Allāh be pleased with him).

The Shi'ite faith split into numerous different branches among which are a number of *Ghulāt* (derived from the word *Ghalūw* meaning "to exaggerate") fell outside the fold of Islām because of their "exaggerated" veneration of certain figures. The main divisions among them are: the Kaysanites, the Saba'ites, the Imamites, etc. 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz is reported as having spoken about the Shi'ite *Ghulāt*, about which he said: "I do not know the goodness of the Banī Hāshim and they (the *Ghulāt*) are corrupt in their extreme zeal towards them."⁽²⁾ Whoever urges love for them is corrupt and whoever urges dislike of them is righteous because they staunchly believed in the return."⁽³⁾

'Umar received a letter from his official over Kūfah informing him of the disobedience of its citizens, so 'Umar wrote back: "Do not demand obedience on the grounds of abandoning 'Alī bin 'Abī Ṭālib (may Allāh be pleased with him)

(1) *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn* [Discourses of the Islāmists], p. 65; *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2/711).

(2) *Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [Islāmic History] extracted from *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2/728).

(3) *Ibid.*

for he was a righteous *Imam* (leader).”(1) Ishāq bin Ṭalhah bin Ash’ath reported: “‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz dispatched me to Irāq with the instructions: ‘Read to them and do not delve into it with them. Speak to them and do not listen to what they have to say. Teach them and do not learn from them.’” ‘Umar composed much poetry in line with his sound doctrine of belief that supports claims of his brilliance. Some verses ascribed to him speak of the exaggerated, corrupt beliefs attached to the *Ahl al-Bayt*, for instance, he said:

“Are the *Imams* not from the Quraysh

‘Alī and three of his sons?

They were descendants, it was no secret.

Thus they were recognised for having faith and righteousness

Then they claimed they were concealed in Karbala’

And that they did not even taste death

Until they ride on horseback and raise the banner.”(2)

Adh-Dhahabī says that az-Zubayr bin Bakkār said about Kathīr: “He was a Shi’ite who believed in the reincarnation of the soul, reciting the verse: “*In whatever form He willed, He put you together.*” (*al-Infīṭār*, 82:8) He staunchly believed in the return, in other words, the return of ‘Alī (may Allāh be

(1) *Tārīkh Damashq* [The History of Damascus] extracted from *Al-Athār al-Wāridah ‘an ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz fi al-‘Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2/729).

(2) *Al-Farq bayna al-Furuq* [The Difference between the Divisions] extracted from *Al-Athār al-Wāridah ‘an ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz fi al-‘Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2/734).

pleased with him) to the earth.”⁽¹⁾ ‘Umar did not give much attention to refuting the Shi’ite *Ghulāt* in the same way that he concerned himself with refuting the *Qadariyyah* and Kharijites. Nevertheless, ‘Umar insistently warned against sitting in the gatherings and company of advocates of *Bid’ah* (innovation) and *Ahwā’* (heretic tendencies; sects).⁽²⁾

The main beliefs of the Shi’ite *ghulāt* are:

Propounding the necessity of ‘Alī bin Abī Ṭālib’s Imamate (may Allāh be pleased with him), his superiority and favour over the rest of the *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions) and that the Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) stipulated ‘Alī’s Imamate;

- Asserting the infallibility of the prophets and *Imams* **in spite of committing major and minor sins;**
- Championing and condemning in word and action, i.e. championing ‘Alī (may Allāh be pleased with him) and condemning the *Ṣaḥābah* of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), especially the three caliphs (may Allāh be pleased with them).⁽³⁾

If one desires to refute the above beliefs, refer to my book on ‘Alī bin ‘Abī Ṭālib (may Allāh be pleased with him).

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- (1) *Bil-Khashab Minhāj as-Sunnah* [With Firmness: The Way of the Prophetic Path] (1/36).
 - (2) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah ‘an ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz fi al-‘Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2/733, 734).
 - (3) *Wasṭiyyah Ahl ash-Shi‘ah bayna al-Furuq* [The Middle Way between the Shi’ite Followers], pp. 293-4.

The Qadariyyah during the Era of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz:

Definition of the term "Qadariyyah": There are general and specific connotations attached to the term:

- 1) **"Qadariyyah" in the specific sense:** They deny decree, i.e. they deny Allāh's decree of servants' actions or some of them. They maintain: "There is no decree (from Allāh)" and man had his own will and power created by Allāh for himself to will and act or not to will and not to act.
- 2) **"Qadariyyah" in the general sense:** They challenge Allāh's Knowledge, Books, Will, Decree and Creation without knowledge and thereby contradict authorized texts and the understanding of the pious Forebears.⁽¹⁾

The Original Claim of 'Qadar' in Islām:

Jābir bin Samra (may Allāh be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "I fear for my *Ummah* in three things: Going astray after having recognised the truth; being misled by trials and ordeals; and the base desires incited by lust and hunger."⁽²⁾ Likewise, the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) warned against argumentation and hypocrisy in the Religion in general and with regard to *Qadar*

(1) *Al-Qadariyyah wal-Murji'ah* [The Qadariyyah and Murjites] by Wasṭiyyah, p. 19.

(2) *Musnad Aḥmad* (590/); authenticated by al-Albānī in *Salsalat aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah*, no. 1127.

in particular, abandoning some of the *Ayāt Allāh* (Verses of Allāh) and authentic *Aḥadīth* (narrations of the Prophet), and dubious or contradictory traditions on the topic of *Qadar* (decree). Aḥmad narrated in his *Musnad* on the authority of 'Amr bin Shu'ayb who narrated it from his grandfather: "The Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) went out one day as the people were discussing the issue of *Qadar* and it was as if a pomegranate had burst open on his face, it was that red with anger, upon which he said: 'What is wrong with you that you would implicate part of the Qur'ān against another part? This was the downfall of those before you.'⁽¹⁾

The Emergence of a Succession of Groups and their Contentions in the First Century up until the Qadariyyah:

After the emergence of the first group, the Kharijites, in 37-40 AH, which was succeeded by the Shi'ites who took to the forefront until just after 62 AH, the star of the *Qadariyyah* – which bore a resemblance to that of the Christians and Zoroastrians – was brought forth by Ma'bad al-Juhāni, the consequence of which brought about contentions over his ideas. As Ibn Taymiyyah says: "The extent of the *Bid'ah* (innovation) in the beginning was a handbreadth but it later adopted more and more followers until it expanded to cubits and miles across the leagues."⁽²⁾

(1) *Musnad Aḥmad* (2196, 178/).

(2) *Al-Fatāwā* (8425/).

The Qadariyyah's First Appearance:

Contentions presented themselves over the temple of al-Juhani and his followers in 80 AH, then Ghaylān ad-Damashqī and his followers in 105 AH. In brief, these figures alleged that Allāh, the Sublime, did not predestine the actions of slaves nor had they already been "written." In that sense, they claimed: "There is no decree (from Allāh)" and that man had his own will and power created by Allāh for himself to will and act or not to will and not to act. The first claims of this sort were made some time after 63 AH, which is marked as the date that the *Qadariyyah* first appeared on the scene in history. Thus, the original *Qadariyyah* were those who denied Allāh's prior Knowledge of things, claiming that He has not predestined man's actions, neither does He know what man is going to do and in that way they have not been "written" or recorded on the *Lawḥ al- Maḥfūz* (Preserved Tablet). By denying the existence of fate and contending that Allāh, the Almighty, does not have knowledge of events beforehand, their belief indicates that He is not aware of things until after they come to pass and this is clear negation of His prior Knowledge. It is an unmistakable aberration, disbelief in Allāh and denial of indisputably established religious facts. Some of them even go as far as to say: "Allāh did not create evil", and it is on this understanding that the Mu'tazilites successively took their stance.⁽¹⁾ The contentions of the

(1) *Al-Qadariyyah wal-Murji'ah* [The *Qadariyyah* and Murjites] by Wasṭiyyah, p. 25.

Qadariyyah can be summarised in two statements:

- Man had his own will and power created by Allāh – to will and act or not to will and not to act – thereby claiming that Allāh is not aware of things until after they come to pass and this is clear negation of His prior Knowledge.⁽¹⁾
- Their assertion that Allāh, the Sublime, has not written down the *Lawḥ al-Maḥfūẓ* (Preserved Table) or people's actions beforehand.⁽²⁾

The first chief proponents of the *Qadariyyah* were:

- Ma'bad al-Juhani (d. 80 AH): In his work *Tahdhīb at-Tahdhīb*, Ibn Ḥajar cites some of the sayings ascribed to the deviant and heretic groups of this era, saying: "Abū Ḥātim said: 'He was the first to speak on the issue of *Qadar* (decree) in Baṣrah, making him the chief founder of this sect. He later moved to al-Madīnah where he spread his corruption to the people.'⁽³⁾
- Ghaylān ad-Damashqī (killed in 105 AH): He was the second man after Ma'bad al-Juhani to head the *Bid'ah* (innovation) of the *Qadariyyah* whose murder was witnessed in Shām (Levant) on account of his deviated teaching.⁽⁴⁾ Ghaylān did not merely propagate

(1) *Al-Fatāwā* (7385/).

(2) *Ibid*, extracted from *al-Qadariyyah wal-Murjī'ah* [The *Qadariyyah* and Murjites] by Dr. Nāṣir al-'Aql, p. 30.

(3) *Tahdhīb at-Tahdhīb* (10/225).

(4) *Al-Qadariyyah wal-Murjī'ah* [The *Qadariyyah* and Murjites] by Dr. Nāṣir al-'Aql, p. 32.

the teachings of Ma'bad al-Juhani but he went further in his discussion of the Divine Attributes, of which he negated some, such as the Allāh's establishment on the Throne and the doctrine of the unity of Divine Essence and Attributes.⁽¹⁾ To him is attributed the argument that *Imān* (belief) is *Ma'rifah* (knowledge) and that actions cannot constitute *Imān*. He also advocated the doctrine of the creation of the Qur'ān.⁽²⁾ This laid the foundations for al-Ja'ad bin Dirham who followed on from him, and subsequently, the foundations of the Jahmites and Mu'tazilites. These groups adopted their doctrines and expanded and adapted them in continuation of the *Bid'ah* (innovation). It is said that the first person to deny Allāh's establishment on His Throne and negate some of His Attributes was Ghaylān ad-Damashqī (d. 105 AH) or al-Ja'ad bin Dirham (killed in 124 AH), while others maintain it was al-Jahm bin Ṣafwān (killed in 128 AH). Denial of Allāh's establishment on the Throne ties in with al-Ja'ad's erroneous teachings that deny His Speech and Intimacy, which makes it more likely that he was the first person to have maintained that Allāh, the Sublime, is not firmly established on the Throne, a doctrine which was probably then adopted by al-Jahm who put it forth.⁽³⁾ It was this doctrine that primarily sparked the people

(1) *Dirāsāt fīl-Ahwā' wal-Furuq wal-Bud'a* [Studies in Heretic Tendencies, Sects and Innovations], p. 251

(2) *Ibid*, p. 250.

(3) *Al-Fatāwā* (520/); *Dirāsāt fīl-Ahwā' wal-Furuq wal-Bud'a* [Studies in Heretic Tendencies, Sects and Innovations], p. 251.

who followed their heretic tendencies to violate Allāh's Attributes through their crooked interpretation and denial. They even went as far as to extend their doctrine to deny Allāh's Hand, Eye, Face, and so on.⁽¹⁾

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Stance on Ghaylān ad-Damashqī:

'Amīr bin Muhājir narrated: "It had reached 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz that Ghaylān bin Muslim was talking about *Qadar* (decree) so he summoned him and confined him for a number of days, after which he had him brought out and said: 'Ghaylān, what is this I have been hearing about you?' At that point, I signaled Ghaylān not to say anything but he said: 'Yes, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*. Verily, Allāh, the Sublime, says: "*Has there not been over man a period of time when man was nothing to speak of? We created man from a drop of mingled fluid to put him to the test; We gave him hearing and sight; We guided him to the right path whether he was grateful or not.*" (*al-Insān*, 76:1-3) Or at the end of the *Sūrah* (Qur'ānic chapter) where Allāh says: "*But you will only wish to do so if Allāh wills – Allāh is All-Knowing, All-Wise - He admits whoever He wills into His Mercy and has prepared torment for the disbelievers.*" (*ibid*: 30-31) 'Umar therefore asked: 'What are you saying, Ghaylān?' He answered: 'I am saying that I was blind and He gave me sight. I was deaf and he gave me

(1) *Dirāsāt fīl-Ahwā' wal-Furuq wal-Bud'a* [Studies in Heretic Tendencies, Sects and Innovations], p. 251.

hearing. I was lost and he guided me.”⁽¹⁾ In another narration, it states: “‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz summoned Ghaylān and said: ‘O Ghaylān! It has reached me that you speak about Qadar?’ He answered: ‘O *Amīr al-Mu’minīn*! They are telling lies about me’. ‘Umar then said: ‘Ghaylān. Recite the first part of *Yā-Ṣīn*, so he began: “*Yā-Ṣīn By the Qur’ān, full of wisdom.*” (*Yā-Ṣīn*, 36:1-2), up until [Verily, We have put on their necks iron collars reaching to their chins so that their heads are raised up. And We have put a barrier before them, and a barrier behind them, and We have covered them up so that they cannot see. It is the same to them whether you warn them or you warn them not, they will not believe.” (*ibid*, 8-10) So Ghaylān said: ‘O *Amīr al-Mu’minīn*! By Allāh, it is as if I have never recited it before today. I declared to you, O *Amīr al-Mu’minīn*, that I am repentant for what I used to say’. At that point, ‘Umar supplicated and said: ‘O Allāh! If he is honest, make him firm and if he is a liar then make him a sign for the believers’.”⁽²⁾

There are, in fact, many narrations detailing the conversations that took place between ‘Umar and Ghaylān including a long *ḥadīth* about the doctrine of belief of the *Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamā’ah* concerning Qadar in which ‘Umar debates with the *Qadariyyah* and questions them about

(1) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah ‘an ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz fi al-‘Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2750/).

(2) *Al-Ibānah* [The Presentation] (2235/); *Al-Athār al-Wāridah ‘an ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz fi al-‘Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2749/).

knowledge in reaction to their arguments on the Knowledge of Allāh. Thus, they recited to him and made deductions that they then concluded in denial and disbelief. Subsequently, 'Umar said to Ghaylān ad-Damashqī: "What do you say about knowledge?" He said: "Knowledge has been exhausted." So 'Umar remarked: "In that case, you are defeated. Now go and say what you want. Woe unto you, O Ghaylān! If you draw on any knowledge, you challenge it and if you dispute it, you disbelieve. To acknowledge it and make deductions from it is better for you than to dispute it and disbelieve."⁽¹⁾

Perhaps 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was the first person to take such an approach with the likes of the *Qadariyyah* in questioning them about knowledge. Even so, this became the way of the *Ahl as-Sunnah* after him, as 'Umar (may Allāh have mercy on) exemplified the clear Qur'ānic Verses in his response to Ghaylān that speak of refuting those who make false claims about Qadar. Allāh says: "*So, verily you (pagans) and those whom you worship (idols) cannot lead astray [turn away from Him any one of the believers] except those who are predestined to burn in Hell!*" (*aṣ-Ṣaffāt*, 37:161-3) Ibn Ḥajar (may Allāh have mercy on him) says in discussing the interpretation of this Verse: "Here, Allāh is saying: 'O you *Mushrikīn* (who associate partners with Allāh)! Not one of you worships these idols and images that you are obsessed with and deluded by, except that I already had Knowledge from beforehand of your entering into the Hellfire."⁽²⁾ In his letters

(1) *As-Sunnah* [The Prophetic Example] by 'Abdullah bin Alḥmad bin Ḥanbal (2429/).

(2) *Tafsīr* aṭ-Ṭabarī (23109/).

and sermons, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz confirms that Allāh, Glorified is He, is the One Who guides and leads astray, which is what the Book attests to in the Verse: "*Those who reject Our Ayāt "verses, proofs, signs" are deaf and dumb in the darkness. Allāh sends astray whom He wills and He guides on a straight path whom He wills*" (al-An'ām, 6:39). Other such Verses attesting to Allāh being the One Who guides and leads astray are denied by the *Qadariyyah* who conversely propound the view that it is man who guides himself if he wants or he can go astray if he wants. Without a doubt, 'Umar's refutations of the innovated views propagated by the *Qadariyyah*, whether intentionally or unintentionally, remain to be the strongest arguments in refutation of any deviation concerning *Qadar* in accordance with the Book and *Sunnah*. He demonstrated that man's actions are created by Allāh, Who predestined and wrote them down. This is what is verified in the Book of Allāh and the *Sunnah*, as Allāh says: [*While Allāh has created you and what you make.*] (aṣ-Ṣaffāt, 37:96) Accordingly, the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Everything has been decreed, even incapacity and ability."⁽¹⁾ 'Umar also conveyed in a sermon that if a servant sins then he is required to repent for it and seek forgiveness from Allāh, the Sublime, and thereby he should not say that any sin he has done was decreed for him by Allāh. On the contrary, he should know that he is the disobedient sinner who committed his sin voluntarily without any knowledge of what Allāh has decreed, but that all

(1) *Muslim*, no. 2655.

Power, Will and Decree belong to Allāh. Moreover, there is nothing except by His Will, Might and Creation, which 'Umar used to refute the *Qadariyyah*'s claims that man has his own free will to determine his own fate. 'Umar showed that while he does have free will, he can only follow it as Allāh wills.⁽¹⁾

Affirming the Categories of Qadar (Decree):

The narrations mentioning 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz (may Allāh have mercy on him) collectively affirm belief in *Qadar*, as well as to the four categories of *Qadar* that were agreed upon by the *Salaf* (Pious Forebears) (may Allāh have mercy on them) and those who followed their understanding. Their belief was that faith is not complete, except with a complete belief in *Qadar*, that is, in the categories of Knowledge, the "Writing Down", Will and Creation. The *Qadariyyah* who were present during 'Umar's time denied Knowledge and the "Writing Down" and they were the ones about whom 'Abdullah bin 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb said: "If you encounter those people, tell them that I have nothing to do with them and they have nothing to do with me."⁽²⁾

Of the statements 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz made that affirm the categories of *Qadar* was his reply to the man who wrote a letter to him, in which 'Umar said: "You wrote to ask about the execution of *Qadar* by the Most Proficient, Allāh. I do not

(1) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2770 ,769/).

(2) Muslim, *Kitāb al-Īmān* [The Book of Faith]: The Chapter on *Qadar* (136,371).

know what the people are saying or innovating about the execution of *Qadar* but they are talking in ignorance about it in their speeches and poems, whilst Islām absolutely does not condone their beliefs. The Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) mentioned it (*Qadar*) in more than one or two narrations, and the Muslims heard it from him and they spoke about it during his lifetime. Then, after his death, they grew weak towards their Lord within themselves by claiming that some things are not encompassed in His Knowledge, they are not written down and denying His *Qadar* (decree); yet they acquire all knowledge from Him. You might say: 'Allāh did not reveal such and such a verse and He did say such and such a thing', in which case you would be saying what they say and following their interpretation based on their ignorance. After that, they erroneously maintain that there is no predetermination but that man has his own will and power created by Allāh for himself to will and act or not to will and not to act. Based on the belief that we do not have it in us to harm or benefit ourselves, they cause themselves to feel despair and fear."⁽¹⁾ Throughout his sermons and letters, 'Umar affirms the various categories of *Qadar* and these are given below:

- **Knowledge:**

This infers that Allāh, Glorified is He, had Knowledge of what His servants were going to do and where they will end

(1) *Al-Ibānah* by Ibn Baṭṭah (2231,232,233/); *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1510/).

up before He created them. He is the Ever-Knowing, which is one of His Divine Attributes and He already knows who the people of *al-Jannah* (Paradise) and *an-Nār* (Hellfire) will be, about which He says: "And with Him are the keys of the 'Ghayb' ('Unseen'), none knows them but He. And He knows whatever there is in the land and sea; not a leaf falls but He knows it." (*al-An'ām*, 6:59). From the *Sunnah* is the saying of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to man said to him: "O, Messenger of Allāh! Are the people of *Jannah* known from the people of the *Nār*? He (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) answered in the affirmative, so the man asked: "And what about the actions?" He (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) answered: "A path has been created for every person."⁽¹⁾

• "Written Down":

In an address to the people, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz said: "O people! Whoever of you does good, let him praise Allāh, the Sublime, and whoever does a bad deed, let him seek forgiveness from Allāh. And if you do it (a bad deed) again, then return to Allāh seeking His forgiveness, for verily nations must do what Allāh has placed on their necks and written down for them."⁽²⁾ One day, 'Umar said in a sermon: "Verily, the *Dunyā* (world) is not a permanent abode. It is an abode for which Allāh wrote down its ruin and from which

(1) Muslim, no. 2649.

(2) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1519/).

its people are written to leave.”⁽¹⁾ These narrations ascribed to ‘Umar testify to Allāh’s “writing down” of the occurrences of creation before He created them and that His Knowledge encompasses and extends to everything and everyone.⁽²⁾ Allāh says: “No calamity befalls on the earth or in yourselves but it is inscribed in the Book of Decrees before We bring it into existence.” (*al-Hadīd*, 57:22) The Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Allāh, the Almighty, set down the fate of creation fifty-thousand years before fashioning the heavens and the earth, and His Throne was over water.”⁽³⁾

• Will:

This implies that whatever Allāh wills is, and whatever He does not will is not. There is nothing or no one who moves or lives in the heavens and earth but Allāh has willed it, Glorified is He. ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz sought to clarify and emphasise this truth and denounced whoever disputed it. In a letter to his official, he wrote: “Whatever He decrees will be and whatever he wills is; whatever he does not decree will not be and whatever He does not will is not.” He also used to say: “If Allāh did not will for disobedience, He would not have created Iblīs (Satan).”⁽⁴⁾ He listened to the views of

(1) *Sirat ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz* [The Biography of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 244.

(2) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah ‘an ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz fī al-‘Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1519/).

(3) Muslim, no. 2653.

(4) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah ‘an ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz fī al-‘Aqīdah* [The Reported

Ghaylān ad-Damashqī and he disproved the errors he made, drawing on the first part of *Sūrat al-Insān*. In doing so, 'Umar requested him to recite the ending of the *Surah* following which he said: "Woe unto you, O Ghaylān! Do you hear that Allāh says: *"And you cannot will unless (it be) that Allāh wills."* (*at-Takwīr*, 82:29). And He says: *[Allāh sends astray whom He wills and He guides on a straight path whom He wills.]* (*al-An'ām*, 6:39). And the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Verily, all the hearts of the children of Ādam are between two fingers of the fingers of the Most Merciful like one heart. He disposes of them however He wills." Then Allāh's Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "O Allāh! Disposer of Hearts, dispose our hearts to Your obedience."⁽¹⁾

• Creation (Bringing into Being):

Allāh, the Sublime is the Creator of all creation whatever that might be. He is therefore the Creator of the universe and its phenomena, and there is nothing likened unto to Him.⁽²⁾ In conveying this point, 'Umar articulated the finest statements, drawing on Allāh's Verse: "...*they will not cease to disagree, except him on whom your Lord has bestowed His Mercy (the follower of Islāmic Monotheism)...*" (*Hūd*, 11:118-9), 'Umar wrote: "Those are the ones who do not disagree that their

Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1519/).

1) *Muslim*, no. 2654.

2) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed.] (1525/).

creation by Allāh was out of Mercy."⁽¹⁾ This Verse alludes to the creation of servants and their actions,⁽²⁾ and therefore, Allāh says after that: [and for that did He create them...] (Ibid, 119). He wrote to 'Udayy bin 'Arṭa'ah: "Your assignment of Sa'ad bin Mas'ūd over 'Ammān was among the errors (offenses) that Allāh decreed for you and He decreed that you be afflicted by it."⁽³⁾ What 'Umar determined in the previous letter sustains the Book and *Sunnah*, as Allāh says: "*Allāh is the Creator of all things*" (az-Zumar, 39:62), and He says: "*While Allāh created you and what you make!*" (aṣ-Ṣaffāt, 37:96). Allāh's Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Everything has been decreed, even incapacity and ability."⁽⁴⁾

The Difference between the Terms Qadar (Decree) and Qaḍā' (Fate):

It is said the correct meaning of *Qadar* is Allāh's specifying how things will be, in pre-eternality, by His Will, in accordance with His Knowledge, whereas *Qaḍā'* (Fate; Destiny) is Allāh's bringing into being through His Power that which His Will specified, like when Allāh says: [*Then he completed and finished their creation (Qaḍāhunna) as seven heavens.*] (*Fuṣṣilat*, 41:12) In other words, His creation of them by *Qadar* and *Qaḍā'* implies two inseparable commands whereby one

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 74.

(2) *Muṣṇaf 'Abd ar-Razzāq* (11122/).

(3) *Ibid.*

(4) *Muslim*, no. 2655.

cannot be detached from the other, as one takes the base function, specifically, *Qadar*, and the other has the evaluation and planning (fashioning) function, namely, *Qaḍā'*. Hence, any attempt to dissociate the two desires to destroy the plan and refute it.⁽¹⁾ It is also said that *Qaḍā'* is the prior Knowledge that Allāh governs with for all eternity, whilst *Qadar* is the occurrence of creation according to that which His Will predestined.⁽²⁾ Ibn Ḥajar says: "The '*Ulamā* (scholars) maintain that *Qaḍā'* is the Eternal, All-Encompassing Power and Rule, while *Qadar* constitutes the particularities and details of that Power and Rule."⁽³⁾

Some of the scholars hold the view that there is a difference between *Qadar* and *Qaḍā'*, but perhaps the most correct view is that there is no difference in meaning between the two and that each of them points to the meaning of the other,⁽⁴⁾ such as the difference between *Islām* and *Īmān* (Faith). There is no clear evidence in the Book and *Sunnah* to indicate that there is a difference between *Qadar* and *Qaḍā'*.⁽⁵⁾ The scholars are agreed that one may be applied to the other, but it should be noted that the word *Qadar* is

(1) *An-Nihāyah* [The End] by Ibn al-Athīr (478/).

(2) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1494/).

(3) *Faḥ al-Bānī* [The Grant of the Creator] (11486/).

(4) *Al-Qaḍā' wal-Qadar* [Fate and Decree] by Muḥammad bin Ibrāhīm al-Ḥamad, p. 29; *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1494/).

(5) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1494/).

most often used in the texts of the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah*, and it is essential to believe in this pillar.⁽¹⁾

Being Satisfied with Qaḍā' and Qadar:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz said: "What has become of me today in my affairs transpired only because Allāh destined it to happen that way."⁽²⁾ He would supplicate: "O Allāh! Make me satisfied me with Your Plan and bless me in Your Decree such that I no longer love hastening something You have postponed or postponing something You have hastened." And he would say: "I will continue to make supplication until it occurs and nothing happens to me except what is destined for me."⁽³⁾ At the time of burying his son, 'Abd al-Mālik, he said: "We are satisfied with Allāh's Plan and we surrender to His Command. All praise belongs to Allāh, Lord of the Worlds."⁽⁴⁾ In paying respect to his son, he would say: "I seek refuge in Allāh from loving something that goes against what He loves, as to go against that is not fitting for me even it means my misfortune in what He has blessed me with."⁽⁵⁾ The narrations reported

(1) *Al-Qaḍā' wal-Qadar* [Fate and Decree] by 'Abd ar-Raḥmān al-Maḥmūd, p. 44.

(2) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5372/); *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1494/).

(3) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 97.

(4) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1536/).

(5) *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'* [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite] (5357, 385/); *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1537/).

on the authority of 'Umar throughout this study collectively demonstrate contentment and satisfaction with Destiny, that is, what Allāh specifically Decreed for His servant of adversities that were not on account of sins. Patience during hardships is necessary and as for being satisfied with them, that takes some work; however, is it a duty or *mustahhab* (desirable; recommended)? According to two statements attributed to the companions of Aḥmad, as well as others, they verify that it is *mustahhab* and not compulsory.⁽¹⁾ Nevertheless, there is no doubt that being satisfied with Allāh's Plan and Decree is part of having complete faith in them and it is proof of one's trust and confidence in Allāh, the Sublime. In that case, one should not regret what had passed or rejoice over what is coming, for they both depend on what Allāh Wills to happen; rather, one should be satisfied with whatever Allāh Wills as is His Plan.⁽²⁾

The Murjites:

Contrary to the Kharijites, the Murjites (or *Murji'ah*) advocated the idea of deferred judgment of peoples' beliefs based on the doctrine that only Allāh has the authority to judge who is a true Muslim and who is not, and that Muslims should consider all other Muslims as part of the community.⁽³⁾

(1) *Majmū al-Fatāwā* [Collection of Legal Opinions] (8191/).

(2) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1538/).

(3) *Al-Farq bayna al-Furuq* [The Difference between the Groups] by al-Baghdādī, p. 202; *Wasṭiyyah Ahl as-Sunnah bayna al-Furuq* [The Path of the People of Prophetic Tradition Amidst the Groups], p. 294.

According to this group, “deferring” held two meanings: firstly, it has the meaning of delaying for some time, as in Allāh’s saying: [*They said: ‘Put him and his brother off (for a time)’*] (*al-A’rāf*, 7:111), i.e. put it off and delay it; secondly, it infers granting or allowing hope.⁽¹⁾

The Murjites, according to Imām Aḥmad, “are those who claim that faith consists merely of words, or what the tongue utters, and that people do not have more faith than others such that the faith of people, the angels and all the prophets (upon them peace) are one and the same. Based on this view, faith neither increases or decreases, as there is no exception to faith other than what the tongue utters – irrespective of what a person does or does not do. So long as the tongue declares it then that person is considered by the Murjites to be a true Muslim.”⁽²⁾ Staunch Murjites, such as Jahm and his supporters, hold the view that faith is not harmed by sinning, just as obedience is of no use if one disbelieves.⁽³⁾ According to ash-Shahrastānī,⁽⁴⁾ the first proponent of deferring, which alluded to the deferred judgment of peoples’ beliefs to Allāh, was Ghaylān ad-Damashqī. However, as for the deferral ascribed to Abī Muḥammad Al-Ḥasan bin Muḥammad, also known as Ibn al-Ḥanafīyyah, this was not in the sense pertaining to faith but rather it referred to

(1) *Al-Milal wan-Naḥl* [Sects and Denominations] by ash-Shahrastānī (1139/).

(2) *Mawqif Ahl as-Sunnah min Ahl al-Ahwā wal-Bid’a* [The Position of the People of Prophetic Tradition with regards to the People of Heresy and Innovation] (1152/).

(3) *Waṣṭīyyah Ahl as-Sunnah bayna al-Furuq* [The Path of the People of Prophetic Tradition Amidst the Groups], p.294.

(4) *Al-Milal wan-Naḥl* [Sects and Denominations] by ash-Shahrastānī (1139/).

deferring the judgment of the fighters among the *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions) to Allāh, the Sublime.⁽¹⁾ In his explanation, Ibn Sa'ad says: "He was the first person to speak on the subject of deferral" and he goes on to mention how Zādhān and Maysarah entered upon him and reproached him for what he had written in his book. He therefore said to Zādhān: "O Abī 'Umar! I wish I would have died and never written it"⁽²⁾. This book discusses deferring the case of the participants in the *Fitnah* (trials; discord) that ensued after the caliphates of Abū Bakr and 'Umar to Allāh, the Almighty.⁽³⁾ Ibn Ḥajar mentions how he was familiar with this book authored by Al-Ḥasan bin Muḥammad, saying: "What Al-Ḥasan bin Muḥammad meant by "deferral" was not the type of deferral which the *Ahl as-Sunnah* find fault with, specifically, that pertaining to faith."⁽⁴⁾ The chief claims that went too far in the view of the *Ahl as-Sunnah* were:

- Their advocating that actions do not amount to belief
- Saying that disobedience cannot cause harm to a person if he has faith in the same way that obedience cannot benefit a person if he disbelieves

(1) *Waṣṭiyyah Ahl as-Sunnah bayna al-Furuq* [The Path of the People of Prophetic Tradition Amidst the Groups], p.295.

(2) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5328/); *Qaḍiyyat ath-Thawāb wal-'lqāb* [The Case of Reward and Punishment] by Dr. as-Samīrī, p. 30.

(3) *Qaḍiyyat ath-Thawāb wal-'lqāb* [The Case of Reward and Punishment] by Dr. as-Samīrī, p. 30.

(4) *Tahdhib at-Tahdhib* (2320/); *Qaḍiyyat ath-Thawāb wal-'lqāb* [The Case of Reward and Punishment] by Dr. as-Samīrī, p. 30.

A -number of narrations on the authority of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-Azīz specifically indicate the enhancement of faith and the relevance of actions to it, which thereby refute the claims of the Murjites, especially since these narrations by 'Umar are mentioned by the scholars in their responses to the Murjites. By the same token, he (may Allāh have mercy on him) has been cited for warning against all types of *Bid'ah* (innovation), while there is no *Bid'ah* more apparent than the *Bid'ah* of the doctrine of deferral.⁽¹⁾ The statements made by 'Umar that we are referring to here have been quoted throughout the course of this study, such as the one where he said: "Islām has *Farā'id* (duties), *Sharā'i* (legal laws), *Hudūd* (Allāh's ordinances between lawful and unlawful things) and *sunan* (ways and acts of worship). Whoever acts on all of these things completely, has complete faith and whoever does not act on them completely, his faith is incomplete. As long as I live, I shall continue to tell you about these things until you learn (act on) them. And should I die, I am not anxious to have your company."⁽²⁾ And he said: "After the *Sunnah*, there is no excuse for anyone to go astray under the assumption that it is guidance."⁽³⁾ And he would say: "Should Allāh cause every *Bid'ah* (innovation in the Religion) to perish by my hands and

(1) *Wasṭiyyah Ahl as-Sunnah bayna al-Furuq* [The Path of the People of Prophetic Tradition Amidst the Groups], p.295.

(2) *Sirat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 60. *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2813/).

(3) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2814/).

every *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition) to live by my hands so that part of my flesh might bring that about until I die, that is easy for Allāh.”⁽¹⁾ From the above statements, we can see how 'Umar felt a clear need and eagerness to reject *Bid'ah* no matter what it took, even if that led to his every limb being amputated.

The point here being that this is an obvious indication by 'Umar of the correct belief that faith entails acts of worship, which for him included giving special attention to his people for as long as he lived. Hence, 'Umar's understanding of faith was sound and authentic.⁽²⁾ In *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt*, Ibn Sa'ad reports that when 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz assumed the caliphate, 'Awn bin 'Abdullah, Mūsā bin Abī Kathīr and 'Umar bin Ḥamzah (other sources also mention 'Umar bin Dhurr among them), went to him to speak about deferral. After listening to their point of view, they claimed that 'Umar agreed with what they had said to him and he did not dispute any of it.⁽³⁾ However, this is not verified based on the following reasons:

- Ibn Sa'ad's report is missing a chain a narration and is therefore considered interrupted
- Because they only alleged that he agreed with them and

(1) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5343/).

(2) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2814/).

(3) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (6339/); *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5104/).

so it is of the weak type of reporting

- Such allegations and claims do not correspond with his views given that his own narrations showed his concern with the doctrine of deferral⁽¹⁾

Even supposing this narration stands the test of scrutiny, it is vital to note that 'Awn bin 'Abdullah later repented for his belief in deferral, which we know from al-Lālakā'ī who reported it from Nawfil al-Hadhli on the authority of his father who said: "'Awn bin 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd had the morals of the people of al-Madīnah and he was one their most learned in jurisprudence. He was a Murjite but he later reverted, after which he would sing:

"The moment we departed there was no doubt

We departed believing in what our Murjites said;

They said a believer was a sinful person,

Whilst they did not believe in our sins;

They said a believer's blood is lawful,

Even though the blood of believers has been made unlawful."⁽²⁾

In that case, there is no question that 'Awn bin 'Abdullah (may Allāh have mercy on him) renounced belief in the doctrine

(1) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2815/).

(2) *Sharḥ Uṣūl I'tiqād Ahl as-Sunnah* [An Explanation of the Principles of the Ahl as-Sunnah's Beliefs] (51077/).

of deferral and it could well have been that his advocating this belief was prior to his intimate conversation with 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz (may Allāh have mercy on him).⁽¹⁾

The Jahmites:

The Jahmites are affiliated with al-Jahm bin Ṣafwān, their founder, who was from Khorasān and a *Mawlā* (client) of the *Banū Rāsib*. He learned under al-Ja'ad bin Dirham and a scribe of Ḥārith bin Surayḥ, a rebel in Khorasān towards the end of the Umayyad period, to whom he attached himself.⁽²⁾ Having attached himself to the theological teachings of al-Ja'ad, al-Jahm advocated making him an authority⁽³⁾ and urged people to join forces with him in the year 128 AH, resulting in the battle between al-Ḥārith bin as-Surayḥ's army and the army of the Governor of Khorasān, Naṣr bin Siyyār. Al-Jahm participated in the battle on the side of al-Ḥārith and it was during the onslaught that a man fatally stabbed his mouth, causing him to die on the battlefield. Alternatively, it has been maintained that he was captured and taken to stand before Silm bin Aḥwaz⁽⁴⁾ who sentenced him death.⁽⁵⁾ The

(1) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2816/).

(2) *Ḥaqīqat al-Bid'ah wa Aḥkāmihā* [The Truth about Innovation (in Religion) and its Rulings] (1115/).

(3) *Al-Kāmil fī at-Tārīkh* [A Complete History] extracted from *Ḥaqīqat al-Bid'ah wa Aḥkāmihā* [The Truth about Innovation (in Religion) and its Rulings] (1115/).

(4) *Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah* [The Beginning and the End], extracted from *Ḥaqīqat al-Bid'ah wa Aḥkāmihā* [The Truth about Innovation (in Religion) and its Rulings] (1115/).

(5) *Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah* [The Beginning and the End], extracted from *Ḥaqīqat*

fundamental teachings of the Jahmites were:

- 1) Al-Jahm built on the teaching of al-Ja’ad bin Dirham that denied the Attributes of Allāh and advocated the createdness of the Qur’ān. Al-Jahm further developed these innovations;
- 2) He claimed that there can be no sharing in name and attribute between Allāh and creation, for that would necessitate *al-tashbīh* (assimilation), according to al-Jahm. Having first denied each and every attribute mentioned in the scriptures, he claimed that the only attributes that could be accepted and described Allāh with were two: creating and power, since humans cannot do these things. He believed that creating and power are the sole attributes that belong properly to Allāh.
- 3) The former belief led him to the doctrine of *al-Jabar* (fatalism; compulsion) for which they are called *al-Mujbirah*.
- 4) The claim that *Imān* (Faith) is only with knowledge of Allāh and that disbelief is only in ignorance of Him;
- 5) The claim that admission to *al-Jannah* (Paradise) and *an-Nār* (Hellfire) is ever-lasting;
- 6) The claim that the Knowledge of Allāh was an eventuality, as he believed that it was inconceivable for Allāh to know

al-Bid'ah wa Aḥkāmihā [The Truth about Innovation (in Religion) and its Rulings] (1116/).

anything before He created it.⁽¹⁾

The doctrine negating Allāh's Attributes was adopted by al-Jahm from al-Ja'ad, non-'Arab philosophers and the Simniyyah, a group of Indian heretics who propagated a particular philosophy of their own and followed a deviant school of thought.⁽²⁾ Despite al-Jahm's eloquent speech, he was not knowledgeable and he never attended the sittings of the scholars. In his conversation with the Simniyyah sect, they said to him: "Describe to us your Lord, the Majestic, who you worship." He then entered his house and did not come back out to them for a number of days, following which time he said: "He is everything and everywhere; nothing is void of Him." Imām Aḥmad (may Allāh have mercy on him) narrated that a dispute took place between al-Jahm and the Simniyyah sect over affirming Allāh, the Majestic and at the end of it, al-Jahm likened Allāh to the soul that neither sees nor feels nor hears.⁽³⁾ Ibn Taymiyyah says: "It is said that al-Ja'ad bin Dirham belonged to the people of Ḥarrān who were known for their large number of Saba'ites and philosophers. They also adhere to a school of thought that denies all but negative attributes of Allāh, as well as adding and distorting them. It is likely that al-Ja'ad adopted his ideas from the Saba'ites and philosophers",⁽⁴⁾ and al-Jahm was influenced by the views of

(1) *Tanāqid Ahl al-Ahwā' wal-Bid'ah fil-'Aqīdah* [The Doctrinal Contradictions of the People of Heresy and Innovation] (1/131).

(2) *Ẓāhirat al-Irjā' fī al-Fikr al-Islāmī* [The Phenomenon of Deferral in Islāmic History] (2/392).

(3) *Ar-Rudd 'alā al-Jahmiyyah* [Refuting the Jahmites] by Imām Aḥmad, p. 445-.

(4) *Al-Fatāwā* (522, 211); *Tanāqid Ahl al-Ahwā' wal-Bid'ah fil-'Aqīdah* [The Doctrinal

al-Ja'ad.⁽¹⁾

As for their belief in *al-Jabar* (Fatalism), the Arab *Mushrikīn* (Polytheists) held this view before him, as Allāh says: [And those who joined others in worship with Allāh said: 'If Allāh had so willed, neither we nor our fathers would have worshipped aught but Him, nor would we have forbidden without (Command from) Him'. So did those before them. Then! Are the Messengers charged with anything but to convey clearly the Message?] (*an-Nahl*, 16:35). Allāh herein informs us of the delusion of those who object to *Qadar* (Decree; Fate) by which they argue that if Allāh, the Sublime, was unwilling for them to do something then He would deny them from doing so and make them unable to do it.⁽²⁾ In terms of what they claim about faith equating to knowledge of Allāh, the Murjites actually held this view before them, whilst their belief in the extermination of *al-Jannah* and *an-Nār* goes back to the teachings of the *Ismā'īliyyah* sect, the mystics, theologians and the Jews. According to Ibn Abī al-'Azz (may Allāh have mercy on him): "Al-Jahm bin Ṣafwān talked about the consumption of *al-Jannah* and *an-Nār* without any credibility neither from the *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions) nor the *Tābi'īn* (second or third generation followers) who possess excellence and neither from the Imāms of the Muslims nor the *Ahl as-Sunnah* (People of Prophetic Tradition). This statement

Contradictions of the People of Heresy and Innovation] (1/131).

(1) *Tanāqid Ahl al-Ahwā' wal-Bid'ah fil-'Aqidah* [The Doctrinal Contradictions of the People of Heresy and Innovation] (1/131).

(2) *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm* [An Interpretation of the Magnificent Qur'ān] (2626/).

of his is based on his own corrupt speculation and assumptions that deny the existence of permanent events in a manner typical of culpable theologians.⁽¹⁾ Generally speaking, such people tend to dismiss specific facts and evidence from the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* in place of resorting to speculation as proof of their arguments whereby the practice of theologians has been to adopt their knowledge and ideas from philosophers and rationalists⁽²⁾ whose origins can be traced back to the Magis, Christians and Jews.

With regards to the belief that Allāh's Knowledge is an eventuality, al-Jahm quoted Ma'ad who was influenced by the ideas of a Christian by the name of Sawsan, which goes to show the credibility of their beliefs given that the proof they rely on comes from terminated communities. What they can be said of those who come after them?⁽³⁾ 'Umar's refutations of the Jahmite beliefs were quoted by the scholars of the *Salaf* (Pious Forebears), such as Imām Aḥmad ad-Dārimī and others, in their refutation of them. Ja'far bin Burqān narrated: "A man came to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz to ask him about some of the heretical tendencies and sects and 'Umar replied: 'You should follow the religion of the young man in the Book and the religion of the Arab man and leave everything else'."⁽⁴⁾ 'Umar also said: "The Prophet (may peace and blessings of

(1) *Sharḥ al-'Aqīdah at-Ṭahāwīyyah* [An Explanation of at-Ṭahāwī's Creed], p. 420.

(2) *Tanāqid Ahl al-Ahwā' wal-Bid'ah fil-'Aqīdah* [The Doctrinal Contradictions of the People of Heresy and Innovation] (1/133).

(3) *Ibid* (1133/).

(4) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2819/).

Allah be upon him) left his *Sunnah* and governorship after him was carried out in accordance with the *Sunnah*, adherence to the Book of Allāh and reliance on the *Dīn* of Allāh. It is not for anyone to change or replace, neither should they hold an opinion in contradiction of it. Whoever is guided by it is guided and whoever seeks its help is victorious, whilst the one who abandons it and follows a path of other than the believers, Allāh will give him his due and grant him the worst fate in *Jahannam* (Hell)."⁽¹⁾ 'Abdullah bin al-Ḥakm said that he heard Mālik say: "'Umar's resoluteness in this respect pleases me."⁽²⁾ And he said: "Whoever makes his religion the object of argumentation will frequently change it."⁽³⁾

These statements by 'Umar are recurrently quoted by the *Salaf* scholars to refute the Jahmites and no doubt for the purpose of refuting all rejected innovations in religion. In this manner, 'Umar (may Allāh have mercy on him) held fast to the inclinations of the *Fitrah* (natural disposition) in affirming all the rightful Attributes and Names of the Majestic Creator. For this reason, 'Umar discouraged argumentation and dispute without knowledge, since the likes of Jahm did not arrive at their conclusions except through means of arguing without proper knowledge that cause him to go astray and lead others astray. In their refutation of the Jahmites, the *Salaf* scholars use 'Umar's arguments and proofs as indispensable

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 40.

(2) *Ibid.*

(3) *Al-Maqālāt* [Discourses] (1/167-8).

sources adopting the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the Rightly-Guided Caliphs. This was the way of Ibn Taymiyyah in his *al-Fatwā al-Ḥamawiyyah* [Legal Ruling to the People of Ḥamawiyyah] wherein he mentions that Abī al-Qāsim al-Azī narrated that Ṭarf bin 'Abdullah said: "I heard Mālik bin Anas say that if anyone refuted the *ahādīth* about Allāh's Attributes in his presence that he would say: "Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz said..." and he mentioned the narration by 'Umar about the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and leadership after him." On the subject of this narration, ash-Shāḥibī says: "It succinctly reiterates the goodness of the *Sunnah* in bringing an end to all innovations." What he means by this is that it praises the one who follows the *Sunnah* and reproaches the one who contradicts it, while confirming the *Sunnah* of the successors and their deeds complied with the Book of Allāh and the *Sunnah* of the Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). For all these reasons, 'Umar's narration is considered important on the basis on its essential and beneficial points.⁽¹⁾ In his book *ar-Rudd 'alā al-Jahmiyyah* [Refuting the Jahmites], Imām Aḥmad also cites 'Umar's narration: "Whoever makes his religion the object of argumentation will frequently change it."⁽²⁾

The *Mu'tazilites* were influenced by the *Jahmite* doctrines

(1) *Al-I'tiṣām* [Adherence] extracted from *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2822/).

(2) *Ar-Rudd 'alā al-Jahmiyyah* [Refuting the Jahmites] by Imām Aḥmad, p. 69.

on denying Allāh's Attributes and the createdness of the Qur'ān and it was on account of these commonalities that many Muslim scholars studying these groups have mistakenly called the *Mu'talizes Jahmites*. For this reason, it is necessary to warn against labelling these sects with names due to the fact that a sect does not become another sect because it shares some aspect of its beliefs. Also, if we go too far in labelling a sect with a name because it shares a belief with it, this may cause confusion and its approach will never be correct. From the intellectual perspective of accuracy and correctness, it is vital to call sects by their proper names and in no way should we borrow names from others.⁽¹⁾

The Mu'tazilites:

This was the name given to the group that emerged in Islām during the first part of the second century through the person of Wāṣil bin 'Aṭā'.⁽²⁾ Having embarked on a purely intellectual study of creeds and doctrines, I have come to the conclusion that all the facts point to the Mut'azilites as being the masters of *Kalām* (Speculative Theology) and the chiefs of disputation and controversy.⁽³⁾

(1) *Qaḍīyyat ath-Thawāb wal-'Iqāb* [The Case of Reward and Punishment] by Dr. as-Samīrī, p. 34.

(2) *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān* [The Meanings of the Qur'ān], p.131.

(3) *At-Tanbīh wa ar-Rudd* [Warning and Refuting], p. 50; *Ta'thīr al-Mu'tazilah fīl-Khawārij wa ash-Shi'ah* [Mu'tazilite Influence on the Kharijites and Shi'ites] by 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Hafīf.

The Establishment of the Mu'tazilite Sect and the Origin of its Name:

A man entered upon Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and said: "O Imām of the Religion! Our time has seen the emergence of a sect who declares major sinners apostates, namely, sub-sects of the *Kharijites*, and another group who believe in deferring the judgment of grave sinners to Allāh, the Sublime, claiming that a major sin is not harmful so long as one has faith, and those are the *Murjites* of the *Ummah*. Therefore, what is the ruling regarding that doctrine of belief?" Ḥasan al-Baṣrī thought about it for a moment but before he could give his answer, al-Wāṣil remarked: "I consider a grave sinner to be neither a believer nor a disbeliever; rather, he lies somewhere between the two such that he is not a believer or a disbeliever", at which point he stood up at an instant and withdrew from the circle of the *shaykh* (learned elder) to one of the pillars of the *masjid* (mosque). Concerning this incident, Al-Ḥasan said: "Wāṣil separated from me", upon which Wāṣil and his supporters were given the name *Mu'tazilites*, which originates from the Arabic word *l'tazala* meaning "to separate (oneself)", "to withdraw."⁽¹⁾ Historians unanimously agree on this point,⁽²⁾ while it must be stressed that the name bears no plausible relationship with the honourable *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions). On the contrary, the *Ṣaḥābah* who dissociated and withdrew from the *Fitnah* (controversy; trials) that took place between

(1) *Al-Farq bayn al-Furuq* [The Difference between the Groups], p. 118.

(2) *Ārā' al-Mu'tazilah al-Aṣūliyyah* [The Basic Views of the Mu'tazilites] by Dr. 'Alī aḍ-Ḍuwayḥī, p. 71.

'Alī and Mu'āwiyah in the battle of the Camel (may Allāh be pleased with them) were not called *Mu'tazilites* in the same sense that the term is understood to apply to the Wāṣil and his supporters, but rather it was used only in the linguistic sense when referring to their withdrawal from the battle. This claim is supported by the fact that the *Mu'tazilites* in question were called exactly that because of their dissension and withdrawal from the teachings of the *Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah*, whereas the Companions of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) are the leaders of the *Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah*. How then, can they be associated with each other when the *Mu'tazilites* derive their reasoning illegitimately? It is important to therefore acknowledge the mistake of one who equates the Companions of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) with these *Mu'tazilites* who dissented on the ground of religion whereby they sought to worship Allāh according to their own doctrines. Quite the opposite of them, the *Ṣaḥābah* dissociated from the *Fitnah* to stay away from sinning and spare lives.⁽¹⁾

What distinguishes the *Mu'tazilites* from the *Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah* is their school of thought that is intellectually dominated by rational thought and reasoning. It follows, in *Mu'tazilite* reasoning, that "sacred precedent" is not an effective means of determining what is true, as what is obligatory in religion is only obligatory "by virtue of reason." From this premise, they abandoned religious legal texts

(1) *Ibid*, p. 72.

that contain unadulterated guidance and protection against deviation and perversity.⁽¹⁾

The Sub-Sects among the Mu'tazilites:

Since the essence of Mu'tazlite doctrine was based on reason, which they used both to verify or deny something, and because of the Mu'tazilites' absorption with Greek philosophy that was founded on conflict and debate, disagreement began to creep in between the individuals of this sect. As a result, opinions branched out and the sect fragmented in twenty-two different sub-sects, such as the Wāṣiliyyah, 'Umrūwiyyah, Hadhliyyah and Nizāmiyyah, to name but a few. To each sub-sect belonged its own specific *Bid'ah* (innovation) and although all of them collectively concurred on five fundamental principles, they differed on their details. Of course, this comes as no surprise given that they governed themselves by reason and inevitably the interests of one person, or group, are going to differ from another's.⁽²⁾

The Role of the Mu'tazilites in Reviving the Doctrines of Former Sects:

The Mu'tazilites were influenced by three former sects whose doctrines they revived, but in a different form, with their own emergence. These sects were: the Kharijites; the

(1) *Ārā' al-Mu'tazilah al-Aṣūliyyah* [The Basic Views of the Mu'tazilites] by Dr. 'Alī aḍ-Ḍuwayḥī, p. 76.

(2) *Ta'thīr al-Mu'tazilah fīl-Khawārij wa ash-Shi'ah* [Mu'tazilite Influence on the Kharijites and Shi'ites] by 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Hafṭī, p. 20.

Qadariyyah Ghulāt (exaggerated, extreme) factions; and the Jahmites.⁽¹⁾

What did they adopt from the Kharijites?

Sentencing a Grave Sinner:

Al-Baghdādī says: "The Wāṣiliyyah and 'Umruwiyyah sects supported the Kharijites in sentencing a grave sinner to the *Nār* (Hellfire) as they considered him as being in an in-between state, claiming that he was neither a *Mushrik* (Polytheist) nor a *Kāfir* (Disbeliever).⁽²⁾ It is apparent from this that the Mu'tazilites revived the doctrine of the Kharijites concerning perpetrators of grave sins in the *Ākhirah* (Hereafter), however, they did not rule this for *Kufr* in the *Dunyā* (this world).⁽³⁾

Dissidence from Unjust Leaders:

The Kharijites were united in their belief on the necessity of dissenting from unjust leaders with armed opposition in order to remove injustice and error and establish justice and truth, according to them.⁽⁴⁾ In doing

(1) *Ibid*, p. 19.

(2) *Al-Farq bayna al-Furuq* [The Difference between the Divisions], p. 119; *Ta'thīr al-Mu'tazilah fīl-Khawārij wa ash-Shī'ah* [Mu'tazilite Influence on the Kharijites and Shi'ites] by 'Abd al-Latīf al-Hafīz, p. 20.

(3) *Ta'thīr al-Mu'tazilah fīl-Khawārij wa ash-Shī'ah* [Mu'tazilite Influence on the Kharijites and Shi'ites] by 'Abd al-Latīf al-Hafīz, p. 18.

(4) *Maqālāt al-Islamiyyīn* [Discourses of the Islāmists] (1204/); *Al-Milal wan-Nahīl* [Sects and Denominations] by ash-Shahrastānī (1115/).

so, they manipulated the tenet of faith to enjoin good and forbid evil as a means of challenging the leaders, dissenting from them and waging war with the opposition.⁽¹⁾ This principle was later adopted by the Mu'tazilites who theoretically revived it under the premises of enjoining good and forbidding evil. According to Abu Al-Hasan al-'Ash'arī: "The Mu'tazilites agreed on the obligation to enjoin good and forbid evil when necessary and possible by means of the tongue, hand and sword."⁽²⁾ In another place, he says: "They considered dissenting from the authority obligatory when necessary and possible."⁽³⁾

The Case of Interpretation:

The Kharijites were the first to open the door of fallacious interpretation in the history of the *Ummah* whereby they forged interpretations of legal texts, texts of Divine promise and threat, and the concept of enjoining good and forbidding evil in a manner incongruent with what was revealed by Allāh. Soon after the various strands had formed between them, they each inherited this practice of false interpretation to justify their latest individual *Bi'dah* (innovations). Amongst

(1) *Al-Khawārij Awwal al-Furuq fī al-Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [The Kharijites: The First Sect in Islāmic History] by Nāṣir al-'Aql, p. 37.

(2) *Maqālāt al-Islāmīyīn* [Discourses of the Islāmists] (1337/); *Ta'thīr al-Mu'tazilah fīl-Khawārij wa ash-Shi'ah* [Mu'tazilite Influence on the Kharijites and Shi'ites] by 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Haḥḥāfī, p. 21.

(3) *Maqālāt al-Islāmīyīn* [Discourses of the Islāmists] (2157/); *Ta'thīr al-Mu'tazilah fīl-Khawārij wa ash-Shi'ah* [Mu'tazilite Influence on the Kharijites and Shi'ites] by 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Haḥḥāfī, p. 21.

these groups was the Mu'tazilites who forged a metaphorical interpretation of the texts dealing with the Divine Attributes, whilst this was not a tenet of faith for the Kharijites.⁽¹⁾ Ibn Taymiyyah said: "The Kharijites were not accustomed to scholastic theology or metaphorical interpretation of the texts until after the emergence of the Mu'tazilites."⁽²⁾ The latter group further applied this interpretation to texts on *Qadar* (Decree), which was neither done by the Kharijites. In short, the Mu'tazilites inherited the practice of interpreting from the Kharijites, which they wholly manipulated until it became a rule for dealing with the texts of the Book and *Sunnah*.

The Qadariyyah:

As for the *Qadariyyah*, the Mu'tazilites adopted the doctrine of denying *Qadar* (Fate) from them and revived it in a manner that was not as blatant as to include denying the Knowledge of Allāh, as the early proponents of the *Qadariyyah* had done. In fact, this earlier doctrine soon lost support and faded away for two main reasons: 1) because of the small number of proponents who were inclined to talk about *Qadar* in this way; and 2) due to the firm denunciation shown by the *Ṣaḥābah* who were familiar with this view and the *Tābi'īn* scholars against its proponents, which at times resulted in their disownment. This was the attitude of Ibn 'Umar (may Allāh be pleased with him) who said to the person who informed him about them: "If

(1) *Ta'thīr al-Mu'tazilah fīl-Khawārij wa ash-Shi'ah* [Mu'tazilite Influence on the Kharijites and Shi'ites] by 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Laṭfī, p. 22.

(2) *Ibid*.

you encounter those people, tell them that I have nothing to do with them and they have nothing to do with me.”⁽¹⁾ Other outcomes saw them being openly disdained and belittled, such as when Ṭāwūs bin Kīsān saw Ma‘bad, upon which he turned to the people around him and said: “This is Ma‘bad, therefore treat him with contempt!”⁽²⁾ Or some of them were even killed after they had apostated in order to put an end to spreading *Fitnah* amongst the Muslims, which is what happened with Ghaylān ad-Damashqī when he persisted in pursuing his corrupt doctrine of belief.⁽³⁾ Nevertheless, the Mu‘tazilah still revived this doctrine but in a less aggressive manner than its forebears. As such, they affirmed attributing Knowledge and “the Writing Down” to Allāh, although they denied the statuses of Will and Creation (Bringing into Being) based on the belief that people are the creators of their own actions and they do them if they want to without Allāh determining it.⁽⁴⁾ On these grounds, the scholars have not declared them disbelievers, as they did with the former *Qadariyyah Ghulāt* (i.e. the extreme sects). Ibn Taymiyyah says: “As far as the *Qadariyyah* who deny the Writing Down and Knowledge were concerned, the scholars declared them disbelievers, but they did not declare it of those who affirmed Knowledge and those

(1) Muslim, *Kitāb al-Īmān* [The Book of Faith]: The Chapter on *Qadar* (136,37/).

(2) *Sharḥ Uṣūl l’ṭiqād Ahl as-Sunnah* [Explaining the Creed of the People of Prophetic Example] (4/637).

(3) *Ta’tḥīr al-Mu’tazilah fīl-Khawārij wa ash-Shi’ah* [Mu’tazilite Influence on the Kharijites and Shi’ites] by ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Ḥafṭī, p. 24.

(4) *Al-Qaḍā’ wal-Qadar fī Ḍaw’ al-Kitāb was-Sunnah wa Madhāhib an-Nās* [Fate and Decree in light of the Book, the Prophetic Example and the People’s Schools of Thought], p. 117.

who did not affirm the creation of actions.⁽¹⁾

The Jahmites:

The process of synchronisation and personal communication between Jahm and his supporters on one hand and Wāṣil on the other had been paved to facilitate the Mu'tazilites' adoption of Jahmite doctrines dealing with *Tawḥīd* (Oneness). This consisted of:

Negating the Attributes:

Ibn Taymiyyah says: "The origins of this discourse (around denying Allāh's Attributes) can be traced to the teachings of the Jews and *Mushrikīn* (Polytheists)." The first person to introduce these ideas into Islām was al-Ja'ad bin Dirham, which was adopted by al-Jahm bin Ṣafwān who openly professed them and for that reason the doctrines are attributed to the *Jahmites*.⁽²⁾ However, the Mu'tazilites later inherited these innovated teachings from the *Jahmites* but which manifested in a less exaggerated doctrine, unlike the Jahmites who negated the Names and Attributes of Allāh.⁽³⁾ Ibn Taymiyyah mentions: "Al-Jahm embellished the negation of Names with the negation of Attributes⁽⁴⁾ and as for the Mu'tazilites, they

(1) *Al-Fatāwā* [Legal Rulings] extracted from *Ta'thīr al-Mu'tazilah fīl-Khawārij wa ash-Shi'ah* [Mu'tazilite Influence on the Kharijites and Shi'ites] by 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Ḥafṭī, p. 24.

(2) *Al-Fatwā al-Ḥamawīyyah al-Kubrā* [The Greatest Legal Ruling to the People of Ḥamawīyyah] proposed by Sharīf Hizā', pp. 478-.

(3) *Ta'thīr al-Mu'tazilah fīl-Khawārij wa ash-Shi'ah* [Mu'tazilite Influence on the Kharijites and Shi'ites] by 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Ḥafṭī, p. 25.

(4) *Ta'thīr al-Mu'tazilah fīl-Khawārij wa ash-Shi'ah* [Mu'tazilite Influence on the

affirmed the Names but denied the Attributes.”⁽¹⁾

The Doctrine of the Createdness of the Qur'ān and Negating the Sight of Allāh:

Concerning the Mu'tazilites, Ibn Taymiyyah says: "The doctrine of *Tawhīd* (Oneness) that they subscribe to is the same doctrine as the Jahmites' which involves negating Allāh's Attributes amongst other things, such as claiming that Allāh does not see and that the Qur'ān is created."⁽²⁾ These are collectively the doctrines adopted by the Mu'tazilites from the sects preceding them, namely, the Kharijites, *Qadariyyah* and Jahmites. With the emergence of their turn to revive the innovated doctrines, the Mu'tazilites made significant changes in order to take off some of the pressure that had been attached to the majority of these philosophical beliefs. Before long, fragmentation ensued and resulted in each of the sub-sects interpreting these doctrines in their own way incongruent with the rest of the Mu'tazilites but using Mu'tazilite proofs to justify their argument. ⁽³⁾

The Five Tenets of Mu'tazilite Teaching:

All Mu'tazilites agree on five basic tenets that form the fundamental teachings of their dissociated school of thought.

Kharijites and Shi'ites] by 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Ḥafṭī, p. 25, extracted from *al-Fatāwā* [Legal Rulings].

(1) *Ibid.*

(2) *Ibid.*, p. 26.

(3) *Ibid.*

The first is *at-Tawhīd* (the Divine Unity; Oneness). The second is *al-'Adl* (Divine Justice); the third is *al-Wa'ad wa al-Wa'd* (Divine Promise and Threat). The fourth is *al-Manzilah bayna al-Manzilatayn* (the Place between Two Places). The fifth is *al-'Amr bi al-Ma'rūf wa an-Nahy 'an al-Munkar* (Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil).⁽¹⁾ Notably, the phrase Five Basic Tenet was not applied by Wāṣil bin 'Aṭā' but it was taken up by his students and finally standardised by Abī al-Hadhīl al-'Alāf after it reached the peak of popularity with the isolated sect and was therefore laid down with authorisation by Abī al-Hadhīl al-'Alāf. He went on to write about the Five Basic Tenets within his books, which later fell into the hands of Ja'far bin Ḥarb, Judge 'Abd al-Jabbār and other Mu'tazilite supporters.⁽²⁾ By the time of the advent of the Abbasid State, the Mu'tazilite movement was flourishing and it had begun to send its emissaries to all quarters of the Muslim empire, inviting the people to follow their school of thought and doctrine of beliefs. Some of the founders of the Abbasid dynasty subscribed to their school, which afforded the Mu'tazilites a great deal of support and strength particularly during the era of al-Ma'mūn. For now, we shall leave discussing the Mu'tazilite principles and the position of the *Ahl as-Sunnah* until we reach our study of the Abbasid State, by the Permission of Allāh.

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- (1) *Ta'thīr al-Mu'tazilah fīl-Khawārij wa ash-Shī'ah* [Mu'tazilite Influence on the Kharijites and Shi'ites] by 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Ḥafṭī, p. 26; *Ārā' al-Mu'tazilah al-Aṣūliyyah* [The Basic Views of the Mu'tazilites] by Dr. 'Alī aḍ-Ḍuwayḥī, p. 79.
- (2) *Nasha'at al-Fikr al-Falsafī fīl-Islām* [The Spread of Philosophical Thought in Islām] by Dr. an-Nashār (1417/); *Ta'thīr al-Mu'tazilah fīl-Khawārij wa ash-Shī'ah* [Mu'tazilite Influence on the Kharijites and Shi'ites] by 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Ḥafṭī, p. 27.