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‘Abdallāh ibn ‘Umar
Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb

by

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Thesis submitted to the
Faculty of Arts
in the
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for the Degree of
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Abstract

The aim of this work is to study ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar's life.

Ibn ʿUmar lived eighty-four years (74/693 years of the hijra), being born in 613 A.D.

He was first and foremost a jurist and religious leader and intellectual, and the founder of the Medinese School of Law. Therefore as long as there are Muslims in the World he has been, and will be, highly esteemed by past, present and future generations of scholars and others conversant with religious instruction.

There is still the need for a comprehensive study of his teaching and doctrine. The present work does not attempt to cover this need.

This thesis is a biography of ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar and deals with his activities and influence as a religious jurist and founder of an important School of Law. It is composed of six chapters. The introduction gives a brief biographical note on the social and religious background of the Arabs before Islām and the life at Mecca and Medina, the cities in which Ibn ʿUmar lived.

The first chapter aims to study the early life of Ibn 'Umar, his formative years, family background, childhood, conversion to Islām and his emigration to Medina, followed by a genealogi table. The second chapter deals with his military life, his career as a cavalryman and how he assisted in gaining victory for his nation, followed by a chronology of his military career table. The third chapter deals with his political life and how he rejected the offer of the Caliphate three times. Chapter four is concerned with his intellectual achievements; this study deals with his teachers, how he established a Medinese School of Law, his approach to his teaching, and his students with a brief note of his prominent students and an example of his work as a Mufti. Chapter five deals with his appearance and personality, his charity and his worship. Chapter six gives an account of his family and the end of his life.

Preface

This research on ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar who lived in the first century of the hijra has been compiled of material not only from Durham University Library but also from the British Museum's Manuscript Room and also from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. The main references were The Qurʾān, al-Muwaṭṭaʾ (the commentaries of al-Zarqanī, al-Suyūṭī and M.F. ʿAbd al-Bāqī) and ^{the} ^{of} Musnad ~~Ibn~~ Ḥanbal also. Also history books such as Ibn Saʿd al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā, Ibn Qutayba al-Imama wa ʿl-Siyāsa, Ibn Kathīr al-Bidāya and Ibn al-Athīr.

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Last, but not least, I thank my husband, who has been left alone at home to look after himself while I have been working in Durham, and who has been a constant support.

Notes

1. Transliteration of Arabic:

Hamzah: not shown, when initial, otherwise

ب	b	ص	s	ه	h
ت	t	ض	d	و	w
ث	th	ظ	t	ي	y
ج	j	ط	z	consonant	
ح	h	ع	ʿ	vowels	
خ	kh	غ	gh	short damma	'u
د	d	ف	f	fatha	ˊ a
ذ	dh	ق	q	kasra	ˋ i
ر	r	ك	k	long	ˉ u
ز	z	ل	l		
س	s	م	m		
ش	sh	ن	n		

2. When two dates are given thus: 73/692, the first is the Hijra date.

When Christian dates alone are given, nothing is normally added.

3. Abbreviations:

b. ابن

B. بنو

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Introduction

Brief biographical note on 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar

Social and religious background

The religion of the Arabs before Islām

The life at Mecca

The life at Medina

'Abdallāh b. 'Umar was born in approximately 613, in the 1st/7th century. His life covered nearly three-quarters of the century and was spent in both Mecca and Medina.

Ibn 'Umar spent his childhood in Mecca where he was born, and all the rest of his life in Medina where he established the Medinese School of Law. He died in Mecca in 74/693.

To understand the impact of the environment in which he lived, it may be useful to give a brief description of the two cities, Mecca and Medina.

Al Hijāz:

This is a region which consists of a narrow wadi. This wādī has three passes, one to the south (the Yemen), the second to the Red Sea and the port of Jidda, and the third to the north (Syria). Within this wādī lies Mecca, Medina and al-Tā'if.

Mecca, with its holy Ka^ʿba, was a small city in the Hijāz, lying midway between the Yemen and Syria. This wadi undulates between high hills of gneiss and quartz. The general direction and slope is from north to south. Mecca does not have the advantage of tropical showers. The rain begins about December and the weather is hot in the summer time. There is no big difference between summer and winter temperatures. There are no rivers, but only a few springs or small oases(1). It is a very barren place, as stated in the Qur^ʿān when the Patriarch Abraham brought his wife and his son there(2), but nobody knew when exactly the Patriarch Abraham came to that place(3). It is difficult to ascertain when this wādī was first inhabited, because, for thousands of years, traders passed through it, making their way from north to south and back again, resting by the oases.

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1. H. Ibrāhīm, Islāmic History, I, 21-26.
 2. Qur^ʿān, XIV, 37.
 3. Al-Azraqī, Akhbār Makka, 19. When Abraham came from Syria there were some people living outside of Mecca. They were called al-^ʿAmāliq.

The merchants preferred this overland route to that of the sea and travelled in camel trains, despite the extra distance, in order to avoid the pirates who ravaged the sea routes. However, most of the Arabs who used to live in that wādī were nomads. They moved from one place to another where there was considerable rainfall in winter, and the valleys supported a rich vegetation and pasture. The bedouins moved in small or large groups, looking for pasture land with their camels, whose needs were satisfied with unusual ease and which provided the Arab with food and clothing, as was stated in the Qur'ān(4).

Major tribes:

The leading tribe in old Mecca was the Quraysh, which included many branches, such as B. ʿAbd Manāf, B. ʿAbd al-Dār, B. ʿAbd al-ʿUzzā, B. Taym b. Murra, B. Zuhra, the Asad, the Makkzūm(5) and the ʿAdday, the latter being ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar's tribe.

4. Qur'ān, XXXVI, 71, 72, 73.

5. Al-Masʿūdī, Merūj, III, 119-120.

Each tribe retained its tribal constitution and was self-governing in the same way as a desert tribe. Thus Mecca was rather a collection of tribal camps. The Quraysh, with all its branches, lived at Mecca. During that time, the Arabs lived a simple bedouin life, not only in the Hijāz but everywhere else on the Peninsula. The Quraysh were business people who used to go to the north (Syria) and to the south (Yemen). Such trade routes acted as a cultural background. They had two departures, one to the north in the summer time and the second to the south in the winter time(6).

That means the Quraysh had two sources of income, one from their journeys as commercial traders, and the second through service to the pilgrims visiting the Ka'ba. These businesses kept them from starvation and protected them against the enemy.

The economic system was simple. They used to carry goods for the merchants or guide them or they transacted business themselves. Under these circumstances, business transactions were, like everything else, regulated by common law and customs.

6. Qur'ān, CVI, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Their lives were regulated by these laws. Common law regulated barter, contract, share-cropping and usury.

In short, Mecca was the market centre of the Peninsula. Many people had dwellings in Mecca, but their cultural patterns and habits were identical in many respects with the bedouins.

There were no statutes to protect women upon marriage or divorce(7). Polygamy was unlimited and temporary marriage common. So also was divorce, often without what is now considered reasonable cause. The man could divorce his wife several times without a time limit, and return to her at any time. "And it was so after the beginning of Islām, until the advent of the Qur'ān"(8). "Divorce must be pronounced twice and then a woman must be retained in honour or released in kindness"(9). Women and infants were denied inheritance.

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7. Mahmaṣānī, *Falsafat al-Tashrīc*, 25, There are some Arab customs which prevail today from pre-Islāmic times. For example in some tribes a woman did not accept a man as her husband until he had given her full powers to divorce herself from him, in case this should be required in the future. Salmī bint 'Amr, one of the B. al Najjār, the mother of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, is an example. For more detail, cf. Shalabī, *Tārikh*, I, 103-104; Hasan, *Tārikh*, I, 66.
 8. Al-Wāhidī, *Asbāb al-Nuzūl*, 43.
 9. Qur'ān, II, 229.

The people were very carefree and independent. They were proud and considered themselves of noble lineage and they did not mix with any race. Therefore, they were opposed to Muḥammad, although he was a native son of Mecca, when he commanded them to leave off their habit of worshipping idols and follow him and embrace Islām. They feared, too, his political ambitions.

Medina:

This was the second city of the Islāmic Mission after the emigration of the entire Muslim community from Mecca in 622.

Medina became a famous city and the capital of the Arab Empire.

In the course of its history, the town was known by at least thirty names(1). The name immediately preceding the hijra was Yathrib(2) and the usual explanation of the succeeding name (al Madīna) is "the town of the Prophet"(2). Originally, Medina "was an oasis of some twenty square miles or more"(3).

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1. Al-Sambūdi, Wafā, I, 7; Yāqūt, Mu^cjam, V, 82-88 mentioned twenty-nine names, the famous one is Taba.
 2. Yāqūt, Mu^cjam, V, 83.
 3. Watt, Islām and the Integration, 14.

Standing near the trade route through Hijāz territory, at the beginning of the Wādī al-Qurā, it was the largest and most important town in the wādī.

The evolution and social life of the city:

In ancient times, between about 1300-1200 B.C., the city was colonized by the Amorites al-‘Amalīq(4), a very powerful people. They practised agriculture on the cultivable land(5) around the oasis. After a long period of unquestioned supremacy, they were conquered by the Jews and fell from power. They inhabited Wādī al-Qurā and many other different places, such as Fadak and Khaybar. They took over several oases and began to cultivate the land with the co-operation of the Amorites. While the Jews lived in Medina, new immigrants arrived who had left the Yemen after the destruction of the dam of Ma’rib.

These newcomers were the Aws and Khazraj tribes who originated from the tribe of Al-Azd. They came from the south of Medina(6) and

4. al-SaMhūdī, Wafā’, I, 110.

5. Yāqūt, Mu‘jam, V, 84.

6. Yāqūt, Mu‘jam, V, 34-38.

settled there. The situation was greatly complicated by the presence of these foreign settlers. The Medinese were not in the same position as the Meccans. They were skilful artisans, agriculturalists and eloquent speakers; whereas the Meccans were traders or commercial agents of one kind or another, who had much contact with the Persians and Byzantines, and many other people. The Medinese had no such highly evolved business in the market of Yathrib. The most important commodity was dates, for which Medina is still famous. The Medinese had no coinage and instead used their date crops as a medium of exchange.

Their religion:

The residents belonged to different religions and different tribes, which induced much social conflict. There was no government and no judiciary or codified legal system, and the judge was usually a man of skill who put himself forward as arbiter. They also had no ruling family. There were no places of worship or places of pilgrimage and no public place for poetry recitals. They lived in the most primitive conditions.

The general tension reached a peak in the war between Aws and Khazraj, twenty years before the Hijra.

The Hijra:

When the Muslim community arrived at Medina, the Medinese hardly welcomed them. When Muhammad entered the city, he tried to diminish the difference between Meccan and Medinese Muslims, to encourage the idea of brotherhood between them. In practice, this meant that each Medinese Muslim was to regard himself as the supporter (Al-Anṣār) and serve as host for one of the Meccan immigrants (Al-Muhājirūn). Later, they came to be known as the Companions (Ṣahāba).

ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar was one of these Companions, even though he was nearly ten years old when he arrived at Medina. He was to gain fame as a Companion of Muhammad and was the founder of Medina's School of Law.

Chapter One

The Early Life of

ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb

- A. His formative years
- B. Family background
- C. Childhood
- D. Conversion to Islām
- E. Emigration to Medina
- F. In Medina

‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar

A. His formative years

His birth. About ten years before the Muslim emigration to Medina (hijra), A.D. 613, a boy was born in Mecca to ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb whom the latter named ‘Abdallāh(1). This event was not of great significance at that time except for the interest aroused in his immediate family. ‘Umar himself was naturally very pleased with the new boy, because it was the first male child born to him(2). As is still customary, the Arab preferred a male child to a female, for different reasons. These reasons included keeping the family name, supporting the parents, fighting the enemy and so on. At that time also some Arab tribes still used to bury girls immediately after birth(3). But ‘Umar clearly did not follow this custom and already had a girl before the arrival of his baby son. Anyway, he celebrated the occasion on a large scale

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1. Ziriklī, A‘lām, IV, 246. Ibn Ḥajar Iṣāba, IV, 107.
 2. ‘Umar's first child was a girl - Ḥafsa.
 3. This custom did not appear in all the Arab tribes, but some clans were accustomed to doing so, such as B. Asad and B. Tamim, "but not all of them", cf. Shalabī, Tārīkh, 1, 103.

in the taverns he was accustomed to frequent(4).

4. al-ʿAqqād, ʿAbqariyat ʿUmar, 116. Ibn Kathīr Bidāya, III, 81. ʿUmar was at this time a drinker. He himself admitted, "I was (before Islām) a drinker and I loved wine" (Kuntu ashrahuhā wa-Uhubbuhā).

B. Family background

‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar was born to a noble family. His father's name was ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb b. Nufayl b. ‘Abd al-‘Uzzā b. Riyāh b. ‘Abdallāh b. Qurt b. Rizāh b. ‘Adī b. Ka‘b b. Lu‘ayy b. Ghālib b. Fihri. His kunya was Abū Ḥafṣ and his laqab al-Fārūq(1).

Thus Āl al-Khaṭṭāb belonged to the tribe of Quraysh; the father of the tribe was al-Nadr b. Kināna, and their closest family group was called B. ‘Addī. The more famous amongst them were those who lived in Mecca during pre-Islāmic times(2). The B. ‘Addī were of noble status amongst Quraysh and ranked highest amongst the tribal communities. All ambassadors to other tribal groups were chosen from B. ‘Addī from those who were considered to be honourable, kind and respected(3). ‘Umar acted as an envoy representing his tribe(4) (as his grandfather, Nufayl, had done before him), whenever wars

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1. Ibn Sa‘d, Ṭabaqāt, III, 265. Nawawī Tahdhīb, II, 3, 4. Ibn ‘Asākir Tahdhīb, al-Tahdhīb, 53. Ibn al-Athīr, Uṣd, IV, 52. E.L. Provençal, Nasab, X, 346-7.
 2. Ibn al-Athīr, Uṣd, IV, 53.
 3. Muḥammad, Muḥabbar, 173-7.
 4. Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr al-Istī‘āb, III, 1145.

broke out among their tribe's sub-tribes or between themselves and other tribes. He was, however, usually occupied before Islām in helping his father, al-Khaṭṭāb, as a shepherd(5). However, later on, as is well known, he became the second Caliph. ʿAbdallāh's grandmother was Hantama bint Hāshim b. al-Mughīra b. Makhzūm(6), the latter being one of the chiefs of the Quraysh. ʿAbdallāh's mother was Zaynab bint Maḍʿūn b. Ḥabīb b. Wahab b. Jumah al-Jumahiyya(7).

5. Ibn Saʿd Ṭabaqāt, III, 266.

6. See footnote 1. above. Some authors think she was the daughter of Hishām. If this is so, then it means she was Abū Jahl's sister. Hishām and Hāshim were brothers, so she must have been Abū Jahl's cousin. Cf. Ibn al-Athīr Usd, IV, 52-3, and Ṭabarī, Riyād, I, 187.

Hantama was from a very proud family who counted amongst their number such warriors as her father called Dhū ʿl-Rumḥayn. Cf. Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, al-Istīʿāb, III, 144. Also al-ʿAqqād, ʿAbqaryyat ʿUmar, 37, said her father was a commander in the Quraysh army in every battle. Her uncle, ʿAmr, was named Zād al-Ru, who had meals served to countless numbers of guests who came to his door without invitation. Cf. Levi-Provençal, Nasab Quraysh, IX, 299-301.

7. Muḥammad Muḥabbar, 83. Ibn al-Athīr, Usd, III, 227. Ibn al-Jawzī, Safwa I, 228.

C. His childhood

‘Abdallāh then was born in Mecca, at the house of B. ‘Addī between al-Ṣafā and al-Marwah(1). Another author mentions that, before Islām, ‘Umar's house was in Mecca on the mountain al-‘Āqir which is now known as ‘Umar's Mountain. At the time of ‘Abdallāh's birth, social conditions in Mecca were in turmoil, due to the rise of the new religion spreading amongst the members of Quraysh and of Āl al-Khaṭṭāb(2).

This situation led to some confusion. It necessitated the overthrow of the idolatry of the tribal forefathers of the people. They did not know whether to believe in this new religion or to remain as they had always been.

The Quraysh, as mentioned above, were famous amongst the Arab tribes, not only in Mecca, but throughout the Peninsula. Divergence from their old religion would lead to Mecca no longer being a centre of pilgrimage. It

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1. Ibn al-Azraq, Akhbār Makk, II, 210-2. ‘Umar demolished this house and, as an offering to the Faith, made it into an area in which camels could rest at the time of pilgrimage.
 2. Ibn Sa‘d, Ṭabaqāt, III, 266.

would also affect the main trade routes, for example that from the Yemen to Syria. Moreover, the Meccans were merchants or guides to the merchants, protecting them and assisting them in finding their way on their business journeys. Commercial activities were one source of income. If the Meccans changed their religion, no-one would trust them, then they would lose their influence with the others outside the town and finally lose their income also.

Another important reason was that the Quraysh were the protectors of the Meccan Haram (the sacred area around Ka'ba). When the people came to Mecca on pilgrimage, they would be under the protection and receive the hospitality of Āl Hāshim (family of Quraysh). All those who used to come on pilgrimage were idolaters, as were the Meccan people and also those in the surrounding areas. Thus, if the Quraysh changed their religion, then the pilgrimage to Mecca would be in doubt and the Quraysh - and the Meccan people - would lose one of the main sources of their income. The pilgrims, too, spent large sums of money in Mecca, which was the capital of the Arabian Peninsula, and this too would be lost to the town.

The third reason is that they were always independent in their way of life and had no wish to be followers of other people.

The fourth reason is that they did not like to do away with tribal solidarity and inter-family rivalry.

There is a final reason: the conservatism of the pre-Islāmic Arabs. The Arabs were pagans, believing in a whole host of gods. When Muhammad asked them to follow him, they said, "Does he make all gods one god? Verily this is a thing astonishing"(3).

The Arabs were always proud of their ancestors. When Muhammad asked his uncle, Abū Talib, to believe in God, he said, "If I change my religion because I fear something, that is a shameful thing to do"(4).

This respect for their ancestors was very important to the Arabs.

When one said to them, "Follow what Allāh hath sent down," they said, "No, we will follow what we found our fathers following"(5).

For all these reasons then, the Meccans did not like change.

3. Qur'ān, XXXVIII, 5.

4. Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil, II, 44.

5. Qur'ān, XXXI, 21.

ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar, as a little boy, naturally did not understand the situation amongst his people and did not know what idolatry meant. He had probably seen idols in his house or in the Kaʿba when he went with his father. His father, ʿUmar, was at that time a heathen and was very cruel to the new Muslim followers(6). ʿAbdallāh was very respectful towards his father. When his father adopted the faith, he accepted Islām too.

ʿAbdallāh was the first boy born to his parents and he was therefore their favourite, especially of his father. ʿAbdallāh had this close relationship with his father until the latter died, in spite of the fact that he (ʿAbdallāh) had thirteen other brothers and sisters. He grew up very close to his father, and was greatly influenced by his father's manner and morals which he himself adopted. Some examples of this can be found in the next chapter.

6. Tanṭāwī, Akhbār ʿUmar, 15, and, Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, II, 47.

D. ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar's Conversion to Islām

When ʿAbdallāh was nearly six years old(1), his father, ʿUmar, embraced Islām(2). There are varying accounts of how the young boy also became a Muslim about the same time. They are as follows:

As he was so young, he could not comprehend the religious debate before him, but merely followed the religious ideas of his father.

There is direct evidence for this.

ʿAbdallāh was reported to be always with his father, saying, "I accepted Islām along with my father when I was a child"(3). On another occasion, he said, "I was with my father" - he means going to the Kaʿba - "I was a little boy, but I recall everything"(4).

In addition, ʿAbdallāh was accustomed to seeing Islāmic religious ceremonies being performed, as his aunt, Fātima(5), was already

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1. We do not know exactly when he was born.
 2. Ibn al-Jawzī, Safwa, I, 228. Ibn Saʿd, Ṭabaqāt, III, 270, al-Ṭabarī, al-Riyāḍ, II, 80.
 3. Ibn al-Athīr, Usd, IV, 56.
 4. Ibn Ḥajar, Isāba, IV, 107. Ibn al-Athīr, Usd, IV, 56, al-Ṭabarī, al-Riyāḍ, II, 80.
 5. Ibn Saʿd, Ṭabaqāt, III, 268. Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil, II, 58.

a Muslim. Therefore it did not seem strange for him to see his father doing likewise.

Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr(6) and Ibn al-Athīr(7) mentioned that Ibn ʿUmar embraced the Faith before his father. They said also, "That is not true, because Ibn ʿUmar himself rejected that".

Ibn Kathīr mentioned that, according to Nāfiʿ, it was said(8), "The reason for saying that Ibn ʿUmar embraced Islām before his father is that, at the time of al-Hūdaybiya during the month of Dhū ʿl-Qaʿda six years after the hijra, ʿUmar saw an assembly of people around the Prophet Muhammad under the tree and asked his son, ʿAbdallāh, to go to see what was the reason for such an assembly. ʿAbdallāh saw all the Muslims making the "Pledge of Blood" or the "Pledge under the tree". ("Allah was well pleased with the believers when they swore allegiance unto thee beneath the tree ...")(9). As ʿAbdallāh made his pledge to the Prophet and returned to

6. Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, Istīʿāb, 950.

7. Ibn al-Athīr, Usd, III, 227.

8. Ibn Kathīr, Bidāya, IV, 172-3.

9. Qurʾān, XLVIII, 18.

his father, he told him to come to make his pledge too. There is another possible justification for such a view. This was also the time of al-Hūdaybiya, when ʿUmar sent his son ʿAbdallāh to one of his friends who had borrowed his horse to ask him to return it, as it was needed for the fight. ʿAbdallāh saw that all the Muslims were assembled around the Prophet to pledge their faith to him, and he (ʿAbdallāh) made his pledge and went to his father to suggest that he also make his pledge(10).

Something new was happening to the little boy which was to affect his life. He felt that he had found something new. He used still to go with his father to the Kaʿba to learn how to pray. However, although he was very small for such a ceremony, he declared that this was his first step towards embracing religion(11). He began to realise that the Muslim community had suffered enough at the hands of the Quraysh, especially from his

10. The Ṣulḥ al-Hūdaybiyah or Bayʿat al-Ridwān. The outline of the story is given in the following sources: Ibn Hishām, Sīrat, III, 355; al-Wāqidī, Maghāzī, 241; Ibn Saʿd, Ṭabaqāt, II, 69; Ibn Kathīr, Bidāya, IV, 173.

11. Ibn Saʿd, Ṭabaqāt, IV, 159.

father who was vehemently against them(12). After his father, ʿUmar, embraced the Faith, the Muslim community changed. ʿAbdallāh saw the Muslims becoming stronger and thriving more. In the words of ʿAbdallāh b. Masʿūd: "We have been stronger since ʿUmar embraced Islām"(13).

ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar himself commented, "I noticed that when my father embraced Islām, he was anxious to pass the news of his conversion to Islām from person to person among the Quraysh. Then he asked a person to spread this news, and went to the Kaʿba. I was with him, following him and I understood everything that I heard or saw. He started to fight the Quraysh and to declare his conversion to his religion"(14).

ʿUmar did so because he had been harming the Muslim people and he wanted now to make up for his previous offensive behaviour towards them.

12. al-Ṭanṭāwī, Akhbār ʿUmar, 17.

13. Ibn Saʿd, Ṭabaqāt, III, 270; al-Bukhārī, IV, 242; Ibn al-Athīr, Usd, IV, 58.

14. Ibn Kathīr, Bidāya, III, 81-82.

E. ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar's Emigration to Medina

Four years after Ibn ‘Umar embraced Islām, the Muslim followers started to emigrate to Yathrib , later Medina, to promulgate their new religion and to protect themselves from the Quraysh's cruelty. ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar accompanied them. There is disagreement in the sources over Ibn ‘Umar's age at that time of his emigration to Medina and how he left.

Some sources say that he emigrated before his father. As Ibn al-Athīr stated, "‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar emigrated before his father, therefore some people thought he accepted Islām before his father"(1). Others, however, say that ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar emigrated to Medina with his father and his mother(2). The latter seems more feasible because ‘Umar was amongst the third group of emigrants, after the last pledge of ‘Aqaba. The first group consisted of Mūs‘ab b. ‘Amīr and Ibn Umm Maktūm(3). The second group consisted of Bilāl, Sa‘d(4) and ‘Ammār b. Yāsir. The third group

1. Ibn al-Athīr, Usd, III, 227.

2. E.g. Ibn al-Jawzī, Safwa, I, 228; Ibn Sa‘d, Tabaqāt, IV, 142; Tabarī, al-Riyād, II, 80.

3. Ibn Umm Maktūm's name was ‘Amr b. Qays or ‘Abdallāh; his mother's name was ‘Ātika and her kunya was Umm Maktūm. Cf. Ibn al-Jawzī, Safwa, I, 237.

4. Someone said Sa‘d was Ibn Abī Waqqās.

consisted of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, his wife and his family and some of his relatives, such as his brother and son-in-law and twenty other friends(5).

There is another dispute amongst the authors about Ibn 'Umar's age when he emigrated. Ibn al-Athīr said that 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar was 11½ or 13 at that time. According to some authors, he was born two years after Muhammad's mission, assuming that Muhammad stayed in Mecca thirteen years. Others said Ibn 'Umar was born one year after Muhammad's mission, if Muhammad stayed in Mecca for ten years.

In general it seems that Muhammad stayed in Mecca for thirteen years after his mission. Muhammad did not tell anyone except his nearest relatives that he was receiving revelations from God for three years. After that time, he

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- Ibn Kathīr, Bidāya, III, 173.
5. There are three families who went to Medina one year before the last pledge of 'Aqaba:
- (i) Abū Salma, 'Abdallāh b. 'Abd al-Asad with his wife and his son later on;
 - (ii) 'Amir b. Rabī'ah with his wife Laylā;
 - (iii) 'Abdallāh b. Jahāsh with his wife and sister.

They were all from the Quraysh. Cf. Ibn Hishām, al-Sīrat, II, 77-78.

started to declare his mission for ten years. That means that ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar embraced Islām about nine years after Muhammad declared his first revelation from God, or about six years after Muhammad(6) publicly revealed his mission. ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar supports this by saying, "I was six years old when I accepted Islām"(7). In support of this, Ibn al-Athīr also said, "ʿUmar accepted Islām after six years of Muhammad's mission"(8).

Thus it seems that ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar emigrated with his father when he was ten years old.

6. Ibn al-Athīr, Kamil, II, 76.

7. Ibn Saʿd, Ṭabaqāt, III, 270.

8. Ibn al-Athīr, Usd, IV, 57.

F. ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar in Medina

When ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar entered Medina, he noticed a big difference between the two cities. The people of Medina on the whole welcomed the arrival of the emigrants, offering them hospitality(1). ‘Abdallāh was very happy, because he saw something new which he had not seen before. The city was much pleasanter than Mecca, since it was centred on an agricultural area with palm trees in plenty. The climate, too, was kinder than that of Mecca. The people, in the main, welcomed them very warmly, in contrast to the people of Mecca.

Anyway, it can be assumed that he was happy with this change, as is usual when a person travels to another city.

A remarkable new situation developed between the two peoples involved, who came to be known respectively as the Emigrants (Muhājirūn, those who migrated from Mecca), and the Helpers (Ansār, Muhammad's supporters in Medina), thus encouraging the idea of brotherhood(2) between them. As is stated in

1. Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāya, III, 197.

2. Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāya, III, 226; Ibn Hishām, Sīrat, II, 123. (According to the Ḥadīth "Herender, the Muslims are as brothers").

the Qur'ān: "Those who entered the city and the Faith before them love those who emigrate unto them ..."(3).

In practice, this meant that each Medinan Muslim was to regard himself as the protector of, and host to, one of the Meccan immigrants. Later they came to be known as the Companions (Ṣahāba).

ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar was thus one of these Companions, even though he was only ten years old. He learned a useful lesson at the beginning of this phase of his life, schooling himself for his future life towards a close understanding with the people, as his first teacher Muḥammad had done. From the time when ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar started to follow Muḥammad, he remained for much of the day and night in the mosque(4). He had devoted himself to his religious duties since he embraced the Faith. Then, when they were at Medina, and since their house was facing the mosque, he asked his father if he could sleep at the mosque. He had heard that some people were always asking the Prophet about their dreams and that they had seen so and so

3. Qur'ān, LIX, 9.

4. Ibn Saʿd, Ṭabaqāt, IV, 146-7.

in them. His father granted his request and he slept in the mosque. The story is told that, in his sleep, he had a dream of someone giving him a kind of fabric (istabraq)(5). It was clear to him that this piece of material could take him to any place in Heaven. Then, in the morning, as he himself states, "I went to my sister, Hafṣ, to ask her to mention the dream to her husband, Muhammad, and she did. The Prophet said: "Your brother (ʿAbdallāh) would be an upright man if he were to pray at night"(6). From that time ʿAbdallāh used to pray at night for a long time. That is why some authors mentioned this. Those such as Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Nisābūrī have doubts about Ibn ʿUmar's living in the mosque as "the people of the bench" (ahl al-Saffa) who "were very poor people who had no homes and nothing to eat, and whom the other Muslims took over to their houses to feed"(7). According to

5. al-istabraq al-dībāj al-ghalīz. Cf. Maʿlūf, al-Munjid, 9, dībāj being a material woven from silk and whose warp and weft are pure silk.

6. This vision was related by his son, Sālim, and also by his client, Nāfiʿ, by several authors, such as Ibn al-Athīr, Usd, III, 228; Ibn Saʿd, Tabaqāt, IV, 147 and Ibn Hajar, Isāba, IV, 107.

7. Abū Naʿīm, Hilyat, I, 337-47.

Nisabūrī's words, "ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar stayed in the mosque with the stone benches as his dwelling and shelter"(8).

Another author refutes this idea, saying, "The author, Abū Naʿīm al-Isbahānī, mentioned in his book Hilyat al-awliyāʾ that he (Abū Naʿīm) used some rather abusive words, called the Companions Sufīs and charged them with Sufism because they were ascetic"(9).

According to these words, the four Orthodox Caliphs and the Companions were much more ascetic than were the Sufīs, and incidentally did not subscribe to Sufism.

At that time, mysticism was not yet known or established and such an idea arose later on. Anyway, Sufism is out of the question. ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar was not from the group who were accommodated at the mosque, because he was not poor; on the contrary, his father, ʿUmar, was self-supporting and he was one of the richest men amongst the Quraysh(10).

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8. Abū Naʿīm, Hilyat, II, 7.
 9. Ibn al-Jawzī, Naqd al-ʿilm, 165.
 10. Ibn Kathīr, Bidāya, III, 172; Tantāwī, Akhbār ʿUmar, 27.

According to Arab custom, young boys live with their parents. This was especially true of ʿUmar and his son, ʿAbdallāh, who was always with his father. On the other hand, ʿUmar's house was beside the Prophet's house, facing the mosque and there was a private door leading to the mosque, according to the Prophet's own design(11). If ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar for some reason slept occasionally in the mosque, that did not mean that he belonged to the same class of those "people of the bench".

Actually he was following in the steps of Muhammad, preparing for future religious matters and, therefore, he was always with his father in the mosque. He himself also followed the Prophet closely. He was therefore able to quote directly Muhammad's directions and orders concerning the religious and secular affairs of the community. Our sources suggest that ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar participated in these affairs by reason of his outstanding ability to ensure that injunctions

11. al-Bathnūnī, Rihlah, 212. When Muhammad arrived in Medina he had the plan for the design of the mosque, for his own house, and houses of Abū Bakr, ʿUmar and ʿUthman. Within the first month he arranged that his house stood inbetween those of his successors.

newly revealed were passed on to the community(12). Therefore, the new Muslim community lived very close to Muhammad, who taught them a new religion and way of life. Hence all the Muslims came to the mosque.

There is a story that ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar as a little boy always used to go to school (in fact in the mosque, because at that time the mosque was the school) with his father, and how very clever he was even as a small boy. The Prophet once said: "Amongst the trees there is one kind of tree, the leaves of which do not fall and which is like a Muslim. Tell me the name of that tree". Everybody started thinking about the wild trees of the desert area and Ibn ʿUmar thought of the date palm, but felt too shy to answer. The others said, "O Apostle of God, inform us of it". He replied, "It is the date palm". ʿAbdallāh told his father what had come to his mind, and ʿUmar said, "Had you said it, I would have preferred it to

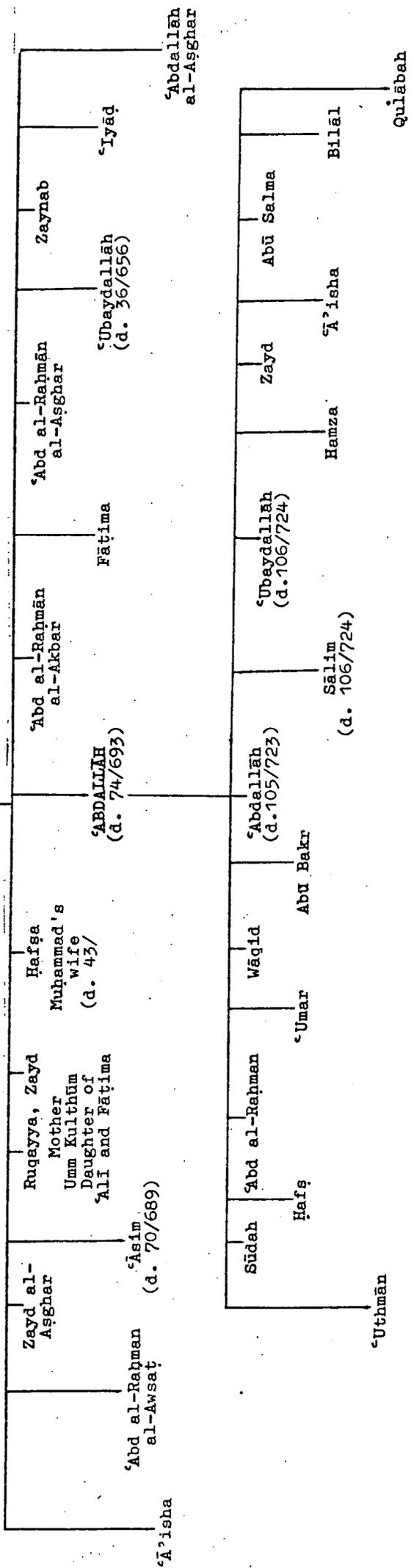
12. Ibn Hishām, Sīrat, II, 128. The first Sūra revealed at Medina is II, the Cow. Cf. Qūtb, Zilāl, I, 27.

anything that I might possess". This indicates that he was very intelligent, but also a shy boy(13).

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13. Narrated on the authority of Ismā'īl, on the authority of Mālik, on the authority of 'Abdallāh b. Dīnār, on the authority of 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar. Sahīh al-Bukhārī, I, 97-8, No. 133 and Ibn Hajar, Fath al-Bārī, I, 119-120.

THE LINEAGE OF 'ABDALLAH B. 'UMAR

Fihri
 Ghālib
 Lu'ayy
 Ka'b
 'Addi
 Rizah
 Qurt
 'Abdallah
 Riyāh
 'Abd al-'Uzzā
 Nufayl
 Al-Khathīb
 'Umar



Chapter Two

The Military Life of
‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar

Part played in the military campaigns
of Muhammad

His activities during the period of the
Orthodox Caliphs:

Abū Bakr

‘Umar

‘Uthmān

‘Alī b. Abī Tālib

Part played in the military campaigns
of Muhammad

A short while after the new residents settled in Medina, several small military expeditions went out, led by Muhammad himself with both Muhājirūn and Anṣār participating against the Quraysh(1).

Muhammad acted thus against the Quraysh to avenge himself after their opposition to him, to impress upon them how strong the Muslim community had become and finally to obtain booty.

‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar had not yet reached the required age to join the army. As usual, it is related, he followed his father as he left for battle. Also, he was so fond of Muhammad that he wanted to spend as much time as possible in his company. He also clearly liked to see and to know what expedition was being mounted.

He eventually joined the invaders and associated with the army in their activities on the battle-field. He presented himself to Muhammad at the time of the battles of

1. Al-Wāqidī, Maghāzī, 4-10.

Badr and Uhud to ask permission to fight. The Prophet, however, sent him back on account of his age(2). He was to go with the army only so long as they were not actually in battle. He certainly went about amongst the combatants at Badr and Uhud(3) to give out water, or to bandage ~~the~~ wounded, or to help by preparing the arrows.

‘Abdallāh was about fifteen years old at the time of the siege of Medina(4), the Battle of Khandaq. He supported his right to fight on this occasion, saying, "I presented myself to the Prophet to fight at the Battle of Uhud, when I was fourteen years old. He did not permit me to fight then, but on the day of al-Khandaq when I presented myself, I was fifteen years old, so he permitted me"(5).

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2. Al-Wāqidī, Maghāzī, 12.
 3. Ibn Hajar, Isāba, III, 107, Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb, V, 330.
 4. Abū al-Fidā , Tārīkh, I, 141. This campaign took place on 5 Shawwāl, 5/626.
 5. Ibn Sa‘d, Ṭabaqāt, IV, 143. This served as a precedent later in an analogous case put forward by ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, the Umayyad Caliph, who said, "That is the division between the old and the young".

Afterwards he took part in all military actions during the Prophet's lifetime, such as Khaybar, the disastrous expedition to Mu'ta, the Conquest of Mecca and so on. Even as a young man he was remarkable in military matters. He fought bravely as a cavalryman in the army, if not always as a commander. For instance, the Prophet sent him with a detachment to Najd where they won the battle and took part in dividing the booty among the soldiers. Everyone was given eleven camels and one more. This division was accepted by the Prophet without any change. This meant that 'Abdallāh was capable both as a fighter and as an administrator(6).

However, another source(7) states that 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar mentioned, "I was with a detachment sent by the Prophet to Najd. We won the battle and our share (was) eleven of something (Sahm) of the booty, and twelve camels, and the Prophet gave us one more camel as a present (nafal)." This version, mentioned in one reference only, differs from most.

6. Ibn Sa'd, Ṭabaqāt, IV, 146.

7. E. Lévi-Provençal, Nasab Quraysh, 350.

When ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar was twenty years old, he went with the Muslim army to conquer Mecca. He was one of the cavalrymen to find favour with Muhammad. The latter praised him when he saw him riding a steady horse with a heavy spear, and arrayed in battle finery and swaggering in the ranks of the army. The Prophet said: "That is ʿAbdallāh! That is ʿAbdallāh!"(8).

8. Ibn Saʿd, Ṭabaqāt, IV, 172.

‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar's military activities
during the period of the Orthodox Caliphs

Introduction

Before we continue our account of Ibn ‘Umar's military life during the later years it is necessary to give a brief idea about the changing state of the régime from the period of the prophecy to that of personal government.

Naturally human beings seek to wield authority over other people, even over close relatives. Therefore, after Muḥammad died the Muslim community started to quarrel amongst themselves to obtain power, even though Muḥammad was still not buried. The trouble-makers were the Anṣār, who had a meeting in Saqīfat B. Sā‘idah(1). The leader of the meeting was Sa‘d b. ‘Ubādah(2), one of the Anṣār. He was desirous of being Caliph after Muḥammad. The other side opposing

1. Al-Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, III, 218-223.

2. Sa‘d b. ‘Ubādah b. Dulaim b. Hārithah al-Khazrajī. He was one of the nine persons in the accounts of the second meeting at al-‘Aqaba as guarantors of the new converts. He was proposed as a successor to the Prophet. His death was in Hawrān about 15 (636/637). Cf. E.I., IV, 32.

him were the Muhājirūn, whose leaders were Abū Bakr, ʿUmar and Abū ʿUbayda(3). The third group was ʿAlī b. Abī Tālib and some of his relatives.

A certain Khazrajī stated that he would not like the Caliphate to be given to Āl al-Daylam from the Ansār. That was most favourable to the cause of the Muhājirūn. Bashīr b. Saʿd(4) sided with the Muhājirūn, accepting ʿUmar's idea that the Caliphate must go to one of the Quraysh.

Immediately, ʿUmar and Bashīr started to pay homage to Abū Bakr. At the same time, Usayd b. Hudayr(5), the chief of the Aws, gave his homage to Abū Bakr and followed his tribe because Usayd thought that if the Khazraj won power, it would be disastrous

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3. Abū ʿUbayda: ʿĀmir b. ʿAbdallāh b. al-Jarrāh of the family of al-Hārith of the Qurayshite tribe of Fihri. One of the ten believers to whom paradise was promised. He fell victim to the plague in Syria in 18/639 at the age of 58. Cf. E.I.², I, 158.
 4. Bashīr b. Saʿd. One of the Khazraj. He attended the second ʿAqaba meeting with Muhammad. He died at ʿAyn al-Tamr in 12/633. Cf. E.I.², I, 1077.
 5. Usayd b. al-Hudayr b. Samāk b. ʿAlīk b. Imrūʿal-Qays. He was the leader of the Aws. He was known as al-Kāmil because he was renowned for his writing, swimming and shooting. He died in Medina in 20/640. Cf. Ibn Saʿd, Tabaqāt, III, 603-6.

for the Aws. Then the Muhājirūn and Anṣār paid their homage to Abū Bakr.

These two parties had solved their problem, but what about B. Hāshim? 'Alī, his uncle al-'Abbās and Abū Sufyān(6) began to excite 'Alī against Abū Bakr. There were a few of both the Muhājirūn and Anṣār and 'Alī's relatives, who did not pay homage to Abū Bakr, because they thought that Alī was more entitled to be Caliph. 'Alī b. Abī Tālib kept quiet, without paying homage to Abū Bakr, until his wife, Fātima(7), died in 11/632. Even 'Alī b. Abī Tālib was seeking to be Caliph, but he did not like to make trouble for the company, even though his uncle and others were pushing him, but in fact his delay in paying homage was because his wife, Fātima, was annoyed with Abū Bakr about her inheritance

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6. Abū Sufyān Ṣakhr b. Ḥarb. B. Umayya, of the clan of 'Abd Shams of Quraysh, a prominent Meccan merchant who died in 32/653 at the approximate age of 88. Cf. E.I., I, 151.
 7. Fātima, Muḥammad's daughter. She died six months after her father. Cf. Al-Ṭabarī, Tarīkh, II, 208.

of Fadak(8). Abū Bakr did not give them the right to have such a thing, because Muḥammad himself said: "We are not heirs; the property we have will go to the people as alms"(9).

ʿUmar was very hard on them when they did not pay homage to Abū Bakr.

Thus, after Muḥammad's death and the congress of Saqīfat B. Sāʿida, the Muslim community immediately elected Abu Bakr(10), and he was followed by ʿUmar b. al-Khattāb. Both were accepted throughout the land, with the same spirit of complete equality and brotherhood as had prevailed amongst the

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8. Fadak: an ancient small town in the northern hijāz near Khaybar, not far from Medina. The modern village of al-Huwayyit. When in 5/627 Muḥammad took his well-known measures against B. Qurayza, the Jews of Khaybar, after their breaking of a vow, Fadak was allocated to Muḥammad, who devoted the revenues from it to needy travellers and also for the maintenance of the poor of the B. Hāshim.

Fātima maintained that Fadak, like Muḥammad's share, should come to her as her father's heiress. Abū Bakr, on the other hand, maintained that this should remain exactly as Muḥammad had settled it. Alī supported his wife. This question of inheritance aggravated his opposition towards Abū Bakr. Not only Fātima, but her uncle, al-ʿAbbās, also was a claimant to the estate of Fadak. Cf. E.I.², II, 725-7.

9. Concordance, XLV, 184. See Wensinck.
10. Al-Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, III, 218-223; Ibn Qutayb, Imāna, I, 4, 15.

faithful since Muhammad's time. The first three Caliphs continued to follow the general policies, especially Abū Bakr and ʿUmar. Religious enthusiasm was still alive. ʿUmar was successful in checking tribal jealousies and family rivalries. His rule was accepted without objection or question. Military activity did not cease. While at first Muhammad and his followers fought against the Quraysh and other Arab tribes around Mecca, now the fighting continued against other peoples, e.g. the Byzantines and the Persians. While formerly they had been fighting in and around their own land, now they campaigned to distant places, into Iraq, Khurāsān, Nahāwand and Africa, until they had carved out a large empire.

ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar, during the Caliphate of Abū Bakr and his father, ʿUmar, spent his time in military activities.

We hear also of his participation in military affairs during the Umayyad Caliphate, particularly that of Muʿāwiya.

The Caliphate of Abū Bakr 11-13/632-634

Soon after Abū Bakr came to power, war broke out. This war was known as the "War of Apostasy", or the War of the Ridda. It was very important in the life of the early Muslims, because it flared up just after Muḥammad's death when Muslims were still not unanimous about Abū Bakr taking the Caliphate.

Briefly the background to this war was as follows: The Arabs were more inclined to accept Islām after Muḥammad won a victory at Badr(1) with such a small number of his followers, for then he became greater in the eyes of the Arabs. After Badr he staged numerous expeditions against the Quraysh and also against other hostile nomads. However, they occupied a wide area round Medina and even as far as places on the route to Syria.

Then the Islāmic community increased rapidly as many of the smaller tribes near Medina allied themselves with Muḥammad.

1. Badr: the name of a place between Medina and Mecca, which became the scene of a battle between Muḥammad and Quraysh in 2/623. Cf. Al-Masūʿn, 332.

Throughout west and central Arabia his power and prestige were great. This was because the nomads discovered that Muhammad was the strongest man in Arabia.

Soon those Arabs who were not in an alliance with Muhammad came to Medina from all parts of Arabia, asking for alliance with him. The conditions of alliance were the acceptance of Islām and the acknowledgement of Muhammad as prophet, and they had to agree to the Islāmic ritual, such as certain payments to Medina, technically in the form of "religious alms".

This, however, did not mean that all the Arabs became Muslims. There were some reasons for accepting such a religion, even without being pressed into it. For example, some of the tribes were weaker and sought an alliance with Muhammad in order to strengthen their position against their rivals. Some thought that they would have more opportunity and hope of plunder in the Muslims' expeditions than in their own raids. It was becoming increasingly obvious that Muhammad was in a better position to guarantee security to his followers than any other leader in that part of Arabia, and that he was able to show a high degree of justice and fair

play between the various sections of his community. As Muhammad's position strengthened, those not allied with him became more inclined to join him, including some whose alliance to him would mean some loss of self-determination.

In the year 9/630(2) after Muhammad's conquest of Mecca, the Quraysh and Thaqīf embraced Islām and the other Arabs understood there was no choice for them but to do the same because the Meccans were the cornerstone then, and the remainder could not fight Muhammad. They, therefore, started to send their deputies to make peace with Muhammad. In the same way, the pro-Persian groups in the Yemen(3), Oman and other places followed him because they thought that the Islāmic state was like the Byzantine and Persian empires. If they went on to say how it differed, they had to use religious terms.

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2. Ibn Hishām, Sīrat, IV, 221-258. The Year 9 was called the "Year of Deputation"; Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil, II, 195-9.
 3. Ibn Hishām, Sīrat, IV, 264-271. It was at the end of the Year 10/631 that Muhammad sent delegates to countries such as the Yemen.

After Muḥammad's death, therefore, they began to give up their obedience(4) and al-Aswad al-ʿAnī(5) claimed the prophecy in the Yemen and Musaylima(6) and Sajāḥ(7) did the same in Yamāma, because they had seen Muḥammad had become such a powerful person, because he was a messenger of God.

Yet others did not claim that they were prophets, and did not return to Arab paganism, but remained Muslims, yet refused to pay the (Zakāt) alms. Then most of the Arabs were

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4. Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil, II, 231; al-Tabarī, Tārīkh, III, 228-249.
 5. Al-Aswad b. Kaʿb al-ʿAnī of the tribe of Madhḥij, leader of the first Ridda in the Yemen during Muḥammad's time. His proper name is ʿAyhala or ʿAbhala. He claimed to be a (Kāhin) soothsayer, speaking in the name of Allāh or al-Rahmān. His monotheism is probably derived from Christianity or Judaism. He was killed in 11/632 by some persons whom Muḥammad had sent. Cf. E.I.², I, 728.
 6. Musaylima, a prophet of B. Hanīfa in Yamāma. He must have been considerably influenced by Christianity. He was killed in 12/633. Cf. E.I., III, 796.
 7. Sajāḥ, one of several prophets and tribal leaders who sprang up in Arabia shortly before and during the Ridda. She herself was Christian. She came to the fore in 11/632 after Muḥammad's death. She decided to join Musaylima and married him. Later, she embraced Islām when her family decided to settle in Basra. Cf. E.I.¹, IV, 44-45.

apostates except the Quraysh and Thaḳīf(8). This happened because they thought the Muslim community would be very weak after Muḥammad, and they did not know who would follow him, and if he would be as strong as Muḥammad or not. They decided, therefore, that they would wait and see how events turned out.

Abū Bakr began military action against them in different places with a number of commanders, such as Khālīd b. al-Walīd, ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ, Shuraḥbil b. Ḥasnah, ʿIkrima b. Abī Jahl and others. Abū Bakr himself was fighting against those who came to the borders of Medina.

During the Ridda, ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar was with his uncle, Zayd b. al-Khaṭṭāb, who was the commander of the Muhājirūn. The army triumphed over the enemy and returned to Medina. Zayd b. al-Khaṭṭāb himself was killed. ʿUmar was very sad at his brother's death, as he loved him very much. Then ʿUmar said to his son ʿAbdallāh, "Why did you not perish like your uncle, Zayd?" ʿAbdallāh replied, "He asked God to grant that he should die as a martyr in the way of God, and He granted his

8. Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kamīl, II, 231; al-Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, III, 242.

wish. I asked the same favour, but was not
accepted"(9).

9. Al-Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, III, 292.

‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb's Caliphate

13-23/634-643

When the Muslim armies eventually triumphed in the Ridda wars, Abū Bakr asked the Medinese people and the Companions to form an army to serve in the newly conquered territories, as Muḥammad had intended(1).

When ‘Umar came to power that campaign was under way in the struggle to conquer these territories. ‘Abdallāh was one of those present in the campaign, and the Commanders-in-Chief were ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ and Abū ‘Ubayda b. al-Jarrāh. ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar was the leader of one thousand cavalrymen under his flag, and this was the first time he led such a number.

This action was against the Byzantines near Aylah(2). ‘Abdallāh killed the enemy Commander(3). ‘Abdallāh was very proud of his army's achievement because he lost only

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1. Al-Wāqidī, Futūh, I, 2; Kūrd ‘Alī, Futūh, I, 106.....
 2. Aylah: a small port on the Gulf of ‘Aqaba. It was a trade centre between Palestine and the Arabian Peninsula. It is now called ‘Aqaba. The Muslims won a victory there.
 3. Al-Wāqidī, Futūh, I, 9-10.

seven soldiers, although he had seized very valuable booty and his army said, "We accept all this triumph and goods because 'Abdallāh was a pious man"(4).

He continued to use such methods. When the army was beset with difficulties, the Commander asked, "Where is 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar?"(5). Military affairs were not alien to him(6). He was also one of the six whose valour was proved in the war(7). 'Abdallāh always sought out the leader of the enemy in the battle. An example of this was at al-Madā'in(8) in Iraq. In this campaign, 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar fought a duel with a Persian leader (dahqān). Ibn 'Umar triumphed over this enemy and killed him. Some of the soldiers were accustomed to looting everything after an assault, especially military equipment, and then giving it to Ibn 'Umar,

4. Al-Wāqidī, Futūh, I, 10 and 11.

5. Al-Wāqidī, Futūh, I, 104.

6. Al-Mubarrad, Tahdhīb, I, 11.

7. Al-Wāqidī, Futūh, I, 106. They were Khālīd b. al-Walīd, al-Zubayr b. al-'Awām, 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Abī Bakr, al-Faḍl b. al-'Abbās, Dirar b. al-Azwar and 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar.

8. Al-Baghdādī, Tārīkh, I, 171.

but he did not accept the booty. When he came back to Medina he gave it to his father(9).

He did this because he was not fighting to obtain booty or to seem superior amongst his Companions, but for the glory of his country and creed. He said, "If you hate jihād, you will be despised and your enemy will conquer you"(10).

On one occasion the Persians again renounced their allegiance to the Arabs in Nahāwand and began to rebel after having been conquered by them. The Caliph ʿUmar wanted to join in the fighting there himself, but the Companions in Council did not accept his request. Then ʿUmar sent notable persons from Medina under the command of al-Naʿmān b. Muqrin. His son, ʿAbdallāh, was one of those men(11). ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar was fighting

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9. Ibn Saʿd, Ṭabaqāt, IV, 170. (This information about ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar was given on the authority of Aḥmad b. ʿAbd-allāh b. Yūnis, on the authority of Abū Shihāb, on the authority of Hajjāj b. Irtā, on the authority of Nāfiʿ.)
10. Al-Shaybānī, Sharḥ al-Sīyar, I, 29.
11. Khalīfa, Ṭabaqāt, 172, mentioned that ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar was fighting with the army to conquer Khūzistān, Kirmān, Nahāwand and al-Fayḥān; Ṭabarī, Ṭārīkh, IV, 115.

in different cities of the east, Kirmān, Isfahān and so on.

On the other hand, he was not only engaged in fighting along with the army, but also used to put forward religious views and advice, according to what was happening in the course of the campaign(12). Since it was winter, with deep snow covering the road, the army was stranded there for six months. ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar was performing the short prayer(13).

However, this case of reducing prayers, as Ibn ʿUmar said, is the Sunna, supplementing the Qurʾān and Muḥammad's teaching, as the following example shows.

Once, a person came to Ibn ʿUmar, asking him, "Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar's kunya), we find an instruction in the Qurʾān to reduce the prayer when fighting, but nothing about travelling in peace time". Ibn ʿUmar said, "That is the Sunna of the Prophet and we must follow the Sunna"(14). As is stated in

12. Ibn Saʿd, Ṭabaqāt, IV, 162.

13. Short prayer. This is permitted in Islām in times of war, travelling, etc. to reduce the number of rakʿahs - in some prayers - at noon, afternoon and late at night.

14. Mālik, Muwattaʿ, I, 264.

the Qurʾān: "Verily, in the Messenger of Allāh, ye have a good example"(15).

On another occasion when the Muslim army departed for the conquest of Egypt, their enemy was large in number. The Muslims were apprehensive about this. The Commander-in-Chief was ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ and he proceeded to call together his leaders, such as al-Zubayr, ʿAbd al-Raḥman, ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar and others. ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar answered the call readily and was put in charge of a troop of five hundred cavalry. He was delighted with his command and hurried to the battle-field, reciting a poem praising his own valour(16) though such haughty behaviour is disapproved of in Islām.

ʿAbdallāh sometimes used to be a guide or soldier with an army division under him. He rode in the centre of his soldiers, or on the wing. He would not change his position, but, if he had no special detachment, he would then be in the centre of the combatants, helping the weak section of the army, or he would be at the side of the Commander(17).

15. Qurʾān, XXXIII, 21.

16. Al-Wāqidī, Futūh, II, 140.

17. Al-Wāqidī, Futūh, II, 146.

On one occasion he was fighting against a mass of Byzantine soldiers, amounting to more than one thousand. With his division he triumphed, but he was wounded six times in his hand(18). This points not only to his personal bravery, but also to his carelessness for his own safety. If he had died, it would have been glorious for him to perish in God's way (fī sabīl Allāh) or to give his nation victory. He himself explained this to his father: "I always obtained victory for the army and with my fighting I shook the Byzantine army's faith and caused their collapse"(19).

18. Al-Wāqidī, Futūh, II, 149.

19. Al-Wāqidī, Futūh, II, 129.

The Caliphate of 'Uthmān

28-12-23/4-11-644

35/655

When 'Uthmān came to power, 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar took no part in military activities because he was older than before and occupied himself with serving the people by solving their religious and legal problems in his capacity as a judge. Even though several military expeditions took place during 'Uthmān's reign(1), Ibn 'Umar joined in only one campaign invasion of Jurjān and Tabarastan under the command of Sa'īd b. al-'Ās invaded with the other Companions, such as Hudayfa b. al-Yamān, 'Abdallāh b. 'Abbās, 'Abdallāh b. al-Zubayr, 'Abdallāh b. 'Amar b. al-'Ās, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, the sons of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and others. That foray was in 30/650(2).

Ibn 'Umar reduced his military activities because fewer and fewer conquests were taking place, and most of the states were occupied before by 'Uthmān's time.

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1. Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil, III, 45-54; Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāya, VII, 151-154.
 2. Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil, 54; Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāya, VII, 154; al-Ṭabarī, Ṭarīkh, IV, 270.

It is possible that Ibn 'Umar went on campaigns but historians of that time did not mention his name.

The Caliphate of 'Alī b. Abī Tālib

35-40/655-660

Previously 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar had played a large part in military life, but after all the struggles in which he had participated since the age of eleven, he changed his life style by leaving his active military life(1) and keeping himself away from the incessant troubles at Medina, in order to devote himself to religious pursuits.

When 'Alī b. Abī Tālib came to power, all the Muslim communities were in an extremely agitated state. 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar did not pay homage immediately(2), not because he considered 'Alī as undesirable, but first of all because he disapproved of the violent way in which 'Uthmān had been removed from his office(3), and secondly, he disapproved of this manner of choosing a successor, that is by means of regicide, which naturally horrified the Muslim community at that time.

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1. Al-Wāqidī, Maghāzī, 171.
 2. Al-Balādhurī, Ansāb, V, 188; Ibn Qutayba, al-Imāma, I, 42.
 3. Ibn Qutayba, al-Imāma, I, 42; Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, IV, 428.

Later on 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar paid his homage to 'Alī, along with the whole company.

According to Ibn 'Umar, 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib was the most suitable person for Caliphate for many reasons(4); he was one of the six persons at the Council who were elected by 'Umar to be Caliph; he was the most suitable candidate because he was the first young Muslim; he was the cousin and son-in-law of Muḥammad and had been in daily contact with him; and he was very religious and courageous in time of war.

After a while, the first Civil War broke out. It began with the Battle of the Camel, when Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr, together with 'Ā'isha, wanted to go to Baṣra(5) in order to fight the Caliph 'Alī to revenge 'Uthmān. The mood of the people arose out of feelings of confusion due to the divided loyalties which they shared between 'Uthmān and 'Alī's cause, together with the existence of a third faction which remained politically neutral.

4. Ibn Qutayba, al-Imāma, I, 35.

5. Baṣra is a city in the southern part of Iraq, established in the reign of the Caliph 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb.

Talḥa and al-Zubayr were among the six of the Council appointed by ʿUmar to be Caliph. They were also among the ten persons whom the Prophet Muḥammad declared would go to Paradise. They were very close Companions and related to him as well. Al-Zubayr b. al-ʿAwām was the maternal cousin of the Caliph ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib. They went there because there they found some support for their cause. Ostensibly, they were avenging ʿUthmān, but the fact was that Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr wished to share the rule with ʿAlī. ʿĀʾisha was not in reality avenging ʿUthmān, but avenging herself because her action had been misinterpreted and her honour called into question by ʿAlī when Muḥammad was alive(6).

Both parties asked ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar to join them for different reasons. The first party - ʿĀʾisha, Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr(7) - asking Ibn ʿUmar to join them to seek the people's support because he was a popular person throughout the community. The Caliph ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib(8) asked Ibn ʿUmar to join him because he was afraid of those in Medina

6. Al-Nisāburī, al-Tanzīl, 182-185, Qiṣṣat al-ifk.

7. Ibn Qutayba, al-Imāma, I, 47.

8. Al-Ṭabarī, Ṭārīkh, IV, 446.

who remained entirely neutral. They were the Companions, the Muhājirūn. But Ibn ʿUmar refused to give his support to any one faction. ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar escaped to Mecca from the atmosphere of sedition prevailing at Medina to save himself and his religious principles from such a terrible environment.

Like Ibn ʿUmar, some of the Companions who had remained in Medina, apart from those who had adopted an attitude of political neutrality, went to Mecca.

Thus, the situation throughout the whole Muslim Empire had a troubled and disturbing effect on the lives of the people. Ibn ʿUmar was spending his life at that time, as usual, giving legal opinions in the mosque in Mecca, or in the mosque of Medina.

After a few months, another Civil War was to break out; that leading up to the Battle of Siffīn, between ʿAlī, the legal Caliph of Islām, and Muʿāwiyah b. ʿAbī Sufyān, who was the Governor of Syria. ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar did not join in the civil war which broke out, neither in the ranks of the Caliph, ʿAlī b. Abī Tālib, nor in those of his opponent, Muʿāwiyah(9). In his opinion, such wars were

9. Ibn Qutayba, al-Imāma, I, 47, 48.

illegal because both parties were Muslims(10), and he said: "I have engaged in wars, as long as they were for God (or in the path of God), but you are fighting just to kill each other and this is sedition. I will not fight any Muslim, following the Prophet's tradition"(11).

‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar believed that such wars were seditions and would bring about a division in the Islāmic community. For this reason, he did not wish to join even the Caliph, ‘Alī b. Abī Tālib. Some authors mentioned that Ibn ‘Umar was later regretful because he did not fight along with Caliph ‘Alī(12).

‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar then was a person of high principles who did not want to join in the civil wars to fight against other Muslims. In his opinion, in Islām, civil wars were seditious and subsequent happenings proved him correct, for the Muslim community was divided into many parties, instead of Muslim unity being preserved.

10. Al-Dhahabī, Duwal al-Islām, I, 15.

11. Al-Balādhurī, Futūh, 226-302; Hasan Ibrāhīm, Tārīkh, 48; Abū Na‘īm, al-Hulya, I, 293.

12. Al-Khāḍarī, Tārīkh, 143; Ibn al-Athīr, Usd, III, 229.

The Caliphate of Mu'āwiya

41/661 - 60/679

After nearly twenty years, Ibn 'Umar returned to his favourite life with the military. During the reign of Mu'āwiya he set out with the Muslim army to conquer Constantinople. The army attacked Byzantine cities and besieged Constantinople. In that campaign were Ibn 'Umar, Ibn 'Abbās and some other Companions, such as Abū Ayyīb al-Anṣārī. That was in 48/668(1).

There were differing opinions about the exact time of this foray. According to al-Ṭabarī, "The siege of Constantinople occurred in 49/669"(2), although Ibn al-Athīr mentioned it happened in 50/670 or 49/669(3).

Some authors mentioned that, during Mu'āwiya's reign, 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar went on another campaign to Samarqand, under the command of Sa'īd b. 'Uthmān. In this

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1. Abū al-Fidā , Tārīkh, I, 186.
 2. Al-Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, VI, 130.
 3. Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil, III, 227; Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāya, VIII, 32 mentioned that the foray happened in 49/667.

campaign, Qatham b. al-‘Abbās was killed and buried in Samarqand. This expedition took place in 56/675(4).

‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar's military life ended after this campaign.

Though ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar had been a cavalryman since his youth, as mentioned before , and had had a very successful career right down to his old age, it should be noted that historians glorified his military exploits. They put him alongside the great commanders, such as al-Zudayr b. al-‘Awām. For example, in 70/689, Najda al-Harūrī wanted to invade Medina and the news was spread over Mecca (because Najda was in Mecca at that time). The people there were frightened by such news. When Ibn ‘Umar heard it, he got ready to fight. When Najda received the news, he changed his route to al-Ta’if(5), because he was afraid to meet and fight Ibn ‘Umar. At that time Ibn ‘Umar was eighty years old and still a man to be feared.

4. Abū al-Fidā , Tārīkh, I, 198.

5. Anonymous, Arabische Chronik, 137.

However, there are many strange stories about Ibn 'Umar's life, which occasionally leave one in doubt, but which may, perhaps, be true.

Chronology of 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar's Military Career (A)

Name	Date	Location	Enemy	Role of Ibn Umar	Overall leader of Muslims	Leader of enemy
Badr	2/623	Badr, between Mecca and Medina	Quraysh	As assistant or helper in the military	Muhammad	
Uhud	3/624	Foot of Mount Uhud, north of Medina	Quraysh		Muhammad	Abū Sufyān ibn Harb
Al-Khandaq (The siege of Medina)	5/626	North part of Medina, outside the town	Quraysh and Jewish tribes, Qurayzah, al-Nadīr, Ghatfān		Muhammad	Abū Sufyān b. Harb 'Uyaynah b. Hisn

(B)

B. Qurayzah	5/626	Beside one of the wells of B. Qurayzah outside of Medina	Quraysh	Muhammad	
B. Liḥyān	6/627	Ghasfān	Mecca	Muhammad	
Dhū al-Qiradah	6/627	On the way to Khaybar two nights distant from al-Madina	Quraysh and their allies	Muhammad	
B. al-Muṣṭaliq	6/627	Al-Muraysi ^c , a well belonging to B. al-Muṣṭaliq	B. al-Muṣṭaliq	Muhammad	al-Hārith b. Dirār

(C)

Khaybar and Wādī al-Qurā	7/628	Outside of Medina	The Jews		Muhammad	Marhab
Muṭṭah	8/629	A village in the north part of the Arab Peninsula on the Syrian border			Zayd b. Haritha Ja'far b. Abī Talīb Abdallāh b. Rawāḥa	
Conquest of Mecca	8/629	Mecca	Quraysh		Muhammad	
B. Khuzayma		Outside of Mecca	B. Khuzayma		Khālid b. al-Walīd	
Hunayn, Awṭās Hawāzin	8/629	A valley between Mecca and al-Ja'if	B. Hunayn Hawāzin tribe B. Sa'd and B. Bakr		Muhammad	Mālik b. Awf al-Nadri

(D)

Tabūk	9/630	In the north of the Arab- ian Peninsula	Byzantines, Lakhm and Ghassān	Muhammad	
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(E)
Caliphate of Abū Bakr

Musaylama al-Kadhdhāb	11/632	Al-Yamāma	Certain Najdīs	Khālīd b. al-Walīd	Musaylama
Al-Ridda	11/632	Najd al- Yamāma	Most of the Arab- ian Penin- sula	Khālīd b. al-Walīd, Zayd b. al- Khaṭṭāb	B. Yarbūc Mālik b. Nuwayra

(F)
Caliphate of Umar b. al-Khattab

To Palestine Aylah	14/632	Aylah	Byzantines	Commander of thou- sand cavalrys from al- Ta'if and Thaqif	Amr b. al- As	Rubays
al-Yarmūk	15/636	al-Yarmūk	Byzantines and the Christian Arabs	Commander	Khālid b. al-Walīd and Abū Ubayda	Jabla b. al-Aylam
Salāsīl					Khālid b. al-Walīd	Māhān and Jirjir
Jerusalem		Aylah and Jerusalem			Khālid b. al-Walīd and Abū Ubayda	

(G)

Conquest of Irāq	15-16/ 636- 637	Al-Raḥba to al-Hirah and al-Qādisiyya	Persians		Sa'ḍ b. Abī Waqqās	Rustam b. Isfandiyyār
		Al-Mada' in Jalawlā	Persians		Sa'ḍ b. Abī Waqqās and Ḥasim b. al-Mirqāl	Qurt b. Fayrūz and Shahriyār b. Sāwr
Conquest of Egypt	19-20/ 640	Alexandria and other Egyptian towns al-Bahnasa Murj Dhshūr al-Fayyūm	Byzantines	Commander	Amr b. al-As and Khālīd b. al-Walīd	
				Commander	Khālīd b. al-Walīd	Butrus Qabīl
Nahāwand Iṣfahān Adhirbayjān	21/641 22/642	Nahāwand	Persians		Hudhayfah b. al-Yamān and al-Na'mān b. Miqrin	Al-Fayrazān

(H)

Conquest of Africa					Sa'id b. al-'As	
Tabaristan	30/650	Tabaristan	Persians			
Constantinople	49/669	Constantinople	Byzantines		Yazid b. Mu'awiya	

References:

- (1) al-Ṭabarī, Ṭarīkh, IV.
 (2) al-Wāqidī, Fatūh, I, II.
 (3) Yāqūt, Mu'jam, V.
 (4) Al-Khudārī, Ṭarīkh
 (5) Al-Balādhurī, Futūh
 (6) Abū al-Fida, Ṭarīkh
 (7) Ibn Hishām, Sīrat
 (8) Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, Zād al-Mi'ād
 (9) Al-Wāqidī, Maghāzī
 (10) Kurd 'Alī, Khutat

Chapter Three

Abdallah b. Umar
and the Caliphate

‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar
and the Caliphate

‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar did not have a very remarkable role in political life. He was neither head of state nor leader of the army. However, he was a brave cavalry soldier during his military service and during his military life he did sometimes achieve outstanding and noble feats in several battles and combats.

Nevertheless, Ibn ‘Umar was one of the famous Companions of those who took an active part in the foundation and building up of the religious fabric of Islām, but not of its political framework. The majority of those who were responsible for the political establishment were decidedly dominated by greed for gold, ambition, love of war, tribal spirit and family rivalry.

Ibn ‘Umar's life and thoughts were completely different from most of the other Companions. He was distinguished by reason of his high religious and social standing and his respectability was high amongst the Companions. For all these reasons the Caliphate was offered to him three times:

- (1) After the death of ʿUthman;
- (2) During the negotiations at Dawmat-al-Jandal, or at Adhruh(1), of the two arbiters appointed to resolve the dispute between the Caliph ʿAlī b. Abī Tālib and Muʿāwiyā;
- (3) After the death of Yazīd b. Muʿāwiyā in 65/684(2).

But Ibn ʿUmar refused all three offers.

To be able to appreciate the importance of this, it is necessary to examine the situation at the time of the Caliphate of ʿUthmān.

When ʿUthmān accepted the Caliphate, the Government assumed a worldly shade and colour. The element of kinship supplanted the religious element in the Caliphate. ʿUthman excessively favoured his own tribesmen, the Umayyads, and the Meccan aristocracy connected by marriage to him, and thus he was responsible for the revival of the old tribal spirit.

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1. There are differing views. Some authors mention that the two arbiters appointed to resolve the dispute between ʿAlī and Muʿāwiyā met at Dawmat-al-Jandal; others say at Adhruh.
 2. Al-Tabarī, Tārīkh, VII, 38; Ibn Saʿd, al-Ṭabaqāt, IV, 169.

According to tradition, there was in Mecca a continued struggle among the families of Hāshim and Umayya for political power. Through the victory of Muhammad, and the election of the first two Caliphs, the house of Hāshim, a branch of the Quraysh tribe, came out on top. There had been constant efforts by the conquerors to remove all tribal and family distinctions, in order to induce the whole body of the Arabs to regard one another as brothers in the spirit of Islām.

With ʿUthmān, a Caliph of the house of Umayya, all these efforts were in vain. When the Caliph ʿUmar was asked to nominate his follower from among the Companions, he appointed an elective council of six to settle this question after his death. He was obviously aware of the danger that ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib or ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān, the likely successors, might reintroduce the kind of tribalism that he had sought to avert all his life(3). Therefore, in most of the Muslim states, insurrections broke out, and the acceptance of the Caliphate by ʿUthmān led to conspiracies and a period of civil war until he fell victim to the dagger of the conspirators(4).

3. Al-Ṭanṭāwī, Akhbār ʿUmar, 452.

4. Al-Ṭabarī, Ṭārīkh, IV, 393.

To return to ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar, the Caliphate was offered to him immediately after the death of ʿUthmān(5), but he was not in favour of such a life. Even Al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī admonished him, saying, "You must accept, otherwise they will kill you in your bed". Ibn ʿUmar did not change his mind, however, and refused yet again(6).

After the Battle of Ṣiffīn between the Caliph ʿAlī and Muʿāwiyā, ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar was the first person who was expected to become Caliph by most people except himself.

First of all, private letters arrived from Muʿāwiyā himself to Ibn ʿUmar, saying, "There is no one from the Quraysh whom I prefer to be Caliph after ʿUthmān's death except you. I remember how you disappointed ʿUthmān and criticised his helpers. At that time I had a bad opinion of you. But I changed my mind about you when I saw you disagree with ʿAlī, and I forgot everything. So please help us to avenge the unjust murder of the Caliph ʿUthmān. I do not want to be your governor, but I would like you to be our

5. Al-Ṭantāwī, Akhbār ʿUmar, 475.

6. Al-Ṭantāwī, Akhbār ʿUmar, 475.

governor. If you do not want to accept it, then there will be a council among the Muslims"(7).

‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar's answer was as follows: "The idea in your mind gave rise to such a situation: I did not support ‘Alī, the Muhājirūn and the Anṣār and I did not support Talḥa and al-Zubayr; you want me to follow you. That will never happen. You said I criticised ‘Alī. Who am I to do such a thing to ‘Alī? I am not like him from the point of view of the Islāmic people. ‘Alī is a much better man than I am. My delay (in paying homage) was because I saw something different (the number of the Caliph) from the Prophet's time. Thus I thought, if this situation is right then I have lost something good, and if it is something undesirable, it will not be a calamity. Please leave me"(8).

Later when he was chosen as candidate during the negotiations by the arbiters appointed at Dawmat-al-Jandal or Adhruh after Ṣiffīn and the Caliphate was offered to him, he again refused as he had previously.

7. Ibn Qutayba, al-Imāma, I, 75; Naṣr b. Muzāhim, Waq‘at Ṣiffīn, 39.

8. Ibn Qutayba, al-Imāma, I, 76; Naṣr b. Muzāhim, Waq‘at Ṣiffīn, 40.

When he found out that he was the candidate nominated not only by the arbiters, but also by the public at large(9), he still did not accept and he sent a letter to Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī: "O Abū Mūsā, you have offered me the position, although you do not know whether I wish to accept it or not. Do you think that I would do something that was prohibited to me by my father, ‘Umar?"(10).

In any event, on several occasions, Ibn ‘Umar declared his opinion about ‘Alī, namely that he was the most worthy of the office.

This clearly indicates that ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar was not an unimportant figure, but, on the contrary, had a very high standing, not merely in the Ḥijāz, but in the eyes of the public at large throughout the Islāmic Empire.

It was said by the people during the negotiations of the arbiters appointed at Adhruh (38/656) between Abū Mūsā and ‘Amr b. al-‘Ās in nominating ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar:

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9. Al-Ṭantāwī, Akhbār ‘Umar, 475; al-Khudarī, Ṭārīkh, 143 mentioned that "Ibn ‘Umar did not accept the Caliphate, even although he was the favourite person in the eyes of the Medinese and Syrians generally".
10. Ibn Qutayba, al-Imāma, I, 102.

"He will return us to 'Umar's time"(11). The entire Islāmic state was happy at the prospect of his nomination.

Subsequently, the Caliphate was offered to him after the death of Yazīd b. Mu'āwiya, but, as on previous occasions, Ibn 'Umar again refused. According to some authorities, he would have agreed to his election if it had been agreed upon unanimously(12), since he wished to avoid bloodshed in securing it. His refusal was hardly due to narrow-mindedness, but it has to be seen in the context of his life-long dedication to the service of God and his people. Some other writers have suggested that 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar was lacking in energy and that his father recognized this defect in him, and therefore did not nominate him to be his successor because 'Abdallāh did not know how to divorce his wife(13).

If the paragraph is studied closely, it will be noticed that the suggestion of this authority may be contradicted and refuted in this way. 'Umar said to the man who advised him to nominate his son, 'Abdallāh, "You are not a good adviser, because, as we have seen,

11. Al-Ya'qūbī, Tārīkh, II, 166.

12. Ibn Qutayba, al-Imāma, I, 47-48.

13. Al-Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, IV, 228.

‘Abdallāh did not know how to divorce his wife. Do you not realise that I have been troubled by many problems and worries, good and bad things during my reign as a Caliph, and I do not wish my son or anyone from my family to inherit these. If things go well, we accept the situation, and if they go badly, it is enough that one person suffers"(14). This means not that ‘Umar recognized a defect in his son, but that he did not want to involve his favourite son in such troubles.

When ‘Abdallāh divorced his wife, he was still very young, perhaps sixteen years old(15), and it was during the Prophet's life time when the Islāmic law was first instituted. Thus, it was an entirely new kind of divorce, and ‘Umar himself did not know about this law.

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14. Al-Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, IV, 228; Al-Ṭantāwī, Akhbār ‘Umar, 452; Tāha Husan al-Fitna, 54.
15. Al-Wahidī, Asbāb al-NUZŪI, 245, mentioned that Sūrat al-Ṭalāq (divorce), according to al-Ṣaddī, was revealed when Ibn ‘Umar divorced his wife. ‘Umar went to the Prophet and asked him about this new situation, because it was the first case at that time. Sayyid Quṭb, Zilāl, VI, 3599, states: "According to the Hadīth of al-Bukhārī, it was revealed when Ibn ‘Umar divorced his wife. (That happened in 6/627 and the date of the revelation is 6/627, a little earlier). Cf. Picket Hall, The Meaning of Glorious Qur’ān, 403.

Therefore he went to Muḥammad and asked him about it, because the word "concept" could mean several things. Thus, one would like to know how or why ʿUmar asked the Prophet about it(16).

It must mean that ʿUmar himself did not know. However, could his son, ʿAbdallāh, know whether he did right or wrong? It appears that some authorities tended to reduce his status or perhaps slightly misunderstood the situation(17).

If the scholar examines the question carefully, he will see how the suggestion that Ibn ʿUmar was unfit for office is refuted: "I did not offer it to anyone of my family". Ibn Qutayba mentioned that, when the Companions asked ʿUmar to nominate his successor, he left the choice to the six persons sitting in council, and ordered that his son, ʿAbdallāh, must be with them, as a

16. There are methods which must be followed when a man divorces his wife, because even divorce may be good for the married couple. On the other hand, it may be very bad depending on its results. Therefore, there are statements made by the Prophet to safeguard the parties. For further explanation see, H. ʿAlī al-Aʿẓamī, Personal Statutes, 108-129, Ibn Rushd, Bidāyat, II, 60-99.

17. Cf. E.I.², I, 54.

counsellor only. The Companions said: "Why did you not nominate him as a successor? He is very suitable for such a position and we have great confidence in him and we accept him." 'Umar replied: "No, it is enough for one person from Āl al-Khaṭṭāb to bear the burden of the Caliphate". He said to his son, 'Abdallāh, "I warn, you are not to accept the Caliphate"(18).

According to 'Umar, he took his cousin, Zayd b. Sa'īd b. Nufayl, away from the council. He asked the six members to choose one amongst themselves as Caliph(19).

Anyway, 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar was very loath to follow such a life. When the Caliph 'Uthmān asked him to be an official judge he refused, saying, "I do not want to be a judge, because I have heard that if one gives an ignorant judgement, one will go to Hell. If a man is prejudiced he will also go to Hell. But if a man strives hard and gives a right judgement, he is impartial and has no recompense

18. Ibn Qutayba, al-Imāma, I, 20.

19. There were ten persons whom Muḥammad declared would be in Paradise in the second life; two of whom (Abū Bakr and Abū 'Ubayda b. al-Jarrāh) were dead, and 'Umar himself. The remainder made seven, but he left his cousin, Zayd b. Nufayl, out of these. Therefore the final number was six. Cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ṭārīkh, IV, 228.

nor any fault." 'Uthmān said, "Your father was a judge in the Prophet's time and during the Caliphate of Abu Bakr." Ibn 'Umar replied, "Yes, he was. If he had a problem, he would ask the Prophet. If the Prophet had a problem, he would ask the Angel Gabriel. I do not know whom I will ask. I have heard the Prophet say, 'Whoever finds protection in God, He will protect'." 'Uthman said, "Yes. Then excuse me," and accepted the decision of Ibn 'Umar, who replied, "I take refuge in God that you do not involve me"(20).

However, he gave advice on jurisprudence to 'Uthman, and spent much of his lifetime helping people with legal or religious problems in an unofficial capacity(21) in Medina and in Mecca when he was there.

20. Ibn Sa'd, al-Ṭabaqāt, IV, 146.

21. Al-Ya'qūbī, Tārīkh, II, 153.

Chapter Four

‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar's intellectual achievements

Ibn ‘Umar's scholastic life

‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar's teachers

The Medinese School of Law

‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar's approach

His students

Some of his Fatwās

‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar's intellectual
achievements

Introduction

In the past, the social environment was very different from nowadays. This naturally affected the intellectual life and social organization. If we want to attempt to discuss this intellectual life of Ibn ‘Umar, we must examine his life and thought and the things which influenced his life.

Ibn ‘Umar's scholastic life

Ibn ‘Umar was born in Mecca nine years after Muḥammad's mission in 613 A.D.(1). He embraced Islām in his childhood and grew up within an Islāmic environment. It is clear that the religion of Islām in its earlier forms was adapted to the social and intellectual needs of Mecca and Medina and the Arabian Peninsula as a whole. So the first thing ‘Abdallāh experienced in his life was the success of Islām, first of all in Medina after the hijra, then in MeCCO. Previously it was through the tribe that a man's life became meaningful. However, the appearance of Islām

1. Al-Ziriklī, A‘lām, III, 246.

led to a religious as well as a social crisis. In Ibn 'Umar's early life, before he left Mecca for Medina, an important section of the Arab community dealt with this crisis by substituting to some extent the Islāmic community for the tribe. Life became significant for them through the membership of this community, since it was divinely founded and was living in accordance with divinely given laws. If a person followed this new religion conscientiously, it would take him to a pleasant life and everlasting bliss. Then the followers of Muḥammad started to follow this divine religion strictly.

As mentioned previously, since Ibn 'Umar had embraced the faith, he followed Islāmic ceremony, even though he was very small. As he always went to the mosque to pray with his father, and met his father's associates, he came into contact with the intellectual circles of the time. His father was very anxious that his sons, especially 'Abdallāh, should be educated very well(2), so 'Abdallāh himself was very keen on acquiring Islamic knowledge which was desirable for people of that time(3) who were hoping to follow this new religion.

2. See Chapter One, p. 19

3. Al-Khulī, Tarjama, 48.

The basic teaching in those early days was the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth, the traditions of Muḥammad.

The Qur'ān was the basic scripture of the new religion and Qur'ānic principles were designed to control the life of the State. However, the Qur'ān was the spiritual basis of the community, as well as the Ḥadīth. The Qur'ān is the main source of the Muslim law, and the Ḥadīth is merely of secondary importance.

There were no schools or colleges, except the mosque. A school was established at Medina when the mosque was built. Here Muḥammad taught the Qur'ānic verses and the Ḥadīth.

The teaching at that time was verbal(4) because most of the people were illiterate. It is for that reason that the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth were learnt by heart. Generally, the Ḥadīth were easy to memorize, because the words were not complicated and it was permissible to alter the words, as long as the meaning was retained. The Qur'ān, however, was more complicated because alteration even of a single letter was prohibited. 'Abdallāh

4. Al-Balādhurī, Futūh, 477.

b. ʿUmar spent some years learning Sūrat al-Baqara. Al-Bājī commented: "There are different ideas about how long Ibn ʿUmar took to learn this Sūra; some of them said four years, others said eight years or more. According to Imām Mālīk b. Anas, Ibn ʿUmar took twelve years to memorize it after which he sacrificed a camel as a token of celebration"(5).

The reason it took Ibn ʿUmar so long to learn this Sūra was not because he was not a good learner, but because he found the Sūra very interesting(6). ʿAbdallāh confirmed that, saying, "After the Sūra was first revealed to Muḥammad, people believed in it and understood the Qurʾān, whereas before they had only read the Qurʾān without fully understanding it." Ibn ʿUmar also said, "Many people in Muḥammad's time believed before they read the Qurʾān, but people later on read the Qurʾān first, then they believed"(7).

The period of revelation of this Sūra covered two years by which time Ibn ʿUmar was eleven. At such an age learning by heart

5. Suyūṭī, Tanwīr, I, 162.

6. al-Suyūṭī, Al-Itqān, II, 176.

7. al-Suyūṭī, Al-Itqān, I, 85.

was very easy for him, but understanding the meaning was not, because this Sūra was the most difficult in the Holy Book. It mentions all the essential points of the Revelation(8) which are elaborated elsewhere in the Qur'ān, such as the rules for fasting, pilgrimage, divorce, usury, contracts, etc. In addition to learning this difficult Sūra, Ibn 'Umar was learning other things, such as the Hadīth and other Qur'ānic verses as well.

In these early times, the most important subject was religion, which everyone wanted to learn because it was a new subject to which people gave priority. They would study the Qur'ān and its exegesis and the Hadīth in depth. Anyone mastering these was revered by his colleagues.

Ibn 'Umar attained such recognition by devoting himself to religious duties that he became highly regarded in this field. Concerning Ibn 'Umar's following the Sunna, it was said by Abū Ja'far: "There is no-one from amongst the Companions of the Prophet who, if he hears something from the Prophet, will transmit it as it is, neither adding to

8. The period of revelation of Sūrat al-Baqara covers the years 1/622 and 2/623. Cf. Pickett Hall, Qur'ān, 34.

nor omitting anything from it, except
‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar”(9).

He was in a good position to follow
Muḥammad for his sister, Ḥafṣa, was Muḥammad's
wife. Therefore, he was always with him,
either outside in the mosque, or indoors in
his sister's house. As ‘Ā’isha said, "There
is no-one who follows in the Prophet's steps
as ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar does. He used to follow
him to his house"(10).

Moreover, he followed him not only in
the matter of legal decisions, but in every-
thing - his ways, his dress, his habits and
his life style. There are many stories which
illustrate his devoted following of Muḥammad.
For example, once Ibn ‘Umar was with his client,
Nāfi‘, on a road, and both of them were riding
camels. Suddenly he heard a shepherd playing
music on a pipe (Zummāra). He put his fingers
in his ears so as not to hear the music, and
he made his camel change direction in an
effort to get away from the music. He asked
Nāfi‘: "Can you still hear the music?" and

9. Ibn Sa‘d, Ṭabaqāt, IV, 144.

10. Ibn Sa‘d, Ṭabaqāt, IV, 145.

Nāfi^c replied, "Yes". He asked him several more times until Nāfi^c's answer was "No". Then he brought his camel back again on the road and completed his journey. This story illustrated how wholeheartedly Ibn ^cUmar followed Muḥammad, for on one occasion Muḥammad heard this kind of music and had avoided it. The incident was reported by Nāfi^c himself(11).

However, he did not want to change his life style even a little from that of Muḥammad, and his father, ^cUmar, and he adhered to the same style. Therefore, as has already been mentioned, when one saw Ibn ^cUmar, he was reminded of Muḥammad and his two first successors(12).

Some scholars are under the impression that the cultural and intellectual life of the Islāmic community was affected after the conquest of parts of the Byzantine Empire and Persia, because many of the new converts came from a higher cultural level than the Arabs, and naturally retained some of their culture. Some of the pious scholars in whose hands the Sharī^ca took shape, developed the principles found in the Qur'^{ān} by adding to them from Christian, Jewish, Gnostic and other trad-

11. Ibn Sa^cd, Ṭabaqāt, IV, 163.

12. Ibn Sa^cd, Ṭabaqāt, IV, 146.

itions. Such people as ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAbbās, too, had an influence and dealt with the Old Testament in his exegesis of the Qurʾān, because he got a great deal through Kaʿb al-Aḥbār, Wahb b. Munabbih, ʿAbdallāh b. Salām and others, who were originally Jewish. When they converted to Islām, they still retained the education they had received under their old religion(13).

‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar's teachers

No doubt ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar's first teacher was his father, which is usual for many children.

There was another teacher, of course, who was very important for his career, and that was Muḥammad himself, whom ‘Abdallāh followed closely when attempting to establish religious education in Medina. Therefore his education was first-hand. The entire corpus of Hadīth or Sunna ^{with which Ibn ‘Umar was himself familiar} was related to him authoritatively by Muḥammad. He also learnt from his father ‘Umar, Abū Bakr, ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī b. Abī Tālib(1), who all became Caliphs. Amongst them, the most learned on the subject of the rituals connected with the pilgrimage was said to be ‘Uthmān, and after him, Ibn ‘Umar(2). On another occasion, somebody said it was Ibn ‘Umar, because he had followed Muḥammad during the Muslim conquest of Mecca and made the first pilgrimage in Islāmic times. He was with the Prophet, therefore he did exactly as Muḥammad and that was in his favour(3).

1. Ibn al-Athīr, Usd, III, 229.

2. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, A‘lām, I, 19.

3. Ibn Khallikān, Wafayāt, II, 234; Al-Nawawī, Tahdhīb, I, 279; Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, Istī‘āb, 951.

Ibn ʿUmar was related also to ʿĀʾisha,
Ḥafṣa, Zayd b. Thābit and Muʿādh b. Jabal(4).

4. Ibn Hajar, Iṣāba, III, 107.

Ḥafṣa: bint ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, Muḥammad's wife. She was born five years before Muḥammad's mission. She died in 45/665. Cf. E.I.², III, 65.

Zayd b. Thābit al-Daḥḥak al-Anṣārī al-Khazrajī. He was a specialist on the subject of hereditary law. He was born eleven years before the hijra. He died in 45/665. Cf. E.I.¹, IV, 1195.

Muʿādh b. Jabal b. ʿAmr al-Anṣārī al-Khazrajī. He was born twenty years before the hijra. He was distinguished amongst the Companions by his profound knowledge of the law. He died in 18/639. Cf. Al-Ziriklī, Al-Aʿlām, VIII, 166.

ʿĀʾisha: see below,

The Medinese School of Law

At the time of ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar there was no legal school at Medina, but no other cities in the Arabian Peninsula provided lectures in religion or Fatwā except Medina. In general, this city was Muḥammad's home. When he arrived there he started to give decisions or commands, and aid on legal points, particularly after he had built the Medina mosque. Such decisions came from the Hadīth or Sunna, but most importantly the Qurʾān. Therefore, Medina was the intellectual centre of the Arab world.

After the death of Muḥammad, his successors, the Orthodox Caliphs, led this School and with them were some of the other Companions. According to some authors there were seven persons who gave such decisions. They were ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, ʿAbdallāh b. Masʿūd, ʿĀʾisha bint Abū Bakr, Zayd b. Thābit, Ibn ʿUmar and Ibn ʿAbbās(1). ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar was the leader of this School - alone after ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb and Zayd b. Thābit(2) - for a long

1. Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya, Aʿlām, I, 23.

2. Amin, Fajr, 174.

time, as mentioned before. As one who related the Hadīth, ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar among the other Companions(3) passed down to us the majority of the Hadīth from Muḥammad. A brief review is, therefore, necessary about Hadīth, its chronological development, Hadīth from the point of view of men of knowledge and Ibn ‘Umar's attitude towards Hadīth.

Definition of Hadīth:

"It is all that a man utters in speech"(4), and in the spoken language it is information conveyed through speech, be it little or much. Furthermore, haddatha as a verb means to tell and to relate something about somebody(5). Terminologically speaking, Sunna and Hadīth are considered synonymous, but there is in fact a difference in their meaning. Sunna 'tradition' means "personal history and method, the nature of God, His legislation and His orders and prohibitions"(6). Therefore, all Sunna is Hadīth, but not all Hadīth is Sunna. The Hadīth is a general term and is used to describe a saying of Muḥammad. Sunna deals

3. Ibn al-‘Imād, Shadharāt, I, 63-64.

4. Al-Shātibī, Muwāfaqāt, I, 23-5; Abu Zahw, Al-Hadīth, 8-19.

5. Al-Bustānī, Quṭr al-Muḥīṭ, I, 367-8.

6. Al-Bustānī, Quṭr al-Muḥīṭ, I, 978.

with his actions(7), although Hadīth refers to the general and Sunna refers to the specific. But even so, the majority of scholars consider both terms as one and the same. Therefore, the definition of Hadīth and Sunna, according to the general convention, is: "The entire output of what originated from the Prophet Muḥammad in saying, action and statement"(8). These items are considered as being of secondary importance after the Qur'ān as a source of Islāmic Sharī'a. There is another aspect to the Sunna for it also contains translations of some Qur'ānic passages of the more intricate issues of verses, such as al-Ṣalāt, al-Zakāt.

Ibn 'Umar's teaching was generally from the Hadīth.

As previously stated, Medina was the home of the Hadīths and the Medinese know very well why a certain verse of the Qur'ān was revealed, and why a certain hadīth was given. Ibn 'Umar, as was said by al-Sha'bī, "was excellent in interpreting the Hadīth, but not as good as he was in Fiqh", and he said this was because he was very careful in his religious piety.

However, most of his students followed that way, as did the Seven Lawyers of Medina(9).

7. Qaṭb, Ulūm al-Ḥadīth, 8.

8. Al-Khāḍarī, Tarīkh, 32.

9. For the seven lawyers' names, see *below*, pp. 104-105.

‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar's approach

In his school, which was known as the Hadīth School, Ibn ‘Umar would have a circle of students sitting around him, to teach or to answer their questions or those of the other people who came to ask him about their problems, especially for legal advice according to the Sharī‘a, for example the problems of marriage or divorce and also secular issues.

Sometimes Ibn ‘Umar used to turn aside from the Hadīth. For example, he hated to perform ablutions with water if a cat had touched it, because he was a very clean man. Even the Prophet used to allow such water to be used for ablutions(1). On another occasion, Ibn ‘Umar's father deviated from the Qur’ān about the division of the lands of Iraq and Syria as booty between the Arab armies when they conquered these lands. This was against both Qur’ānic teaching, and the Sunna. ‘Abdallāh was with his father on this occasion and accepted his ideas, which meant his approach in his school sometimes turned aside from the Hadīth, if it dealt with health or was in the public interest(2).

1. Ibn Māja, Sunan, I, 149; Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, Istḥkār, 218.
2. Al-Khidarī, Tārikh, 114.

When he had a problem, he mostly solved it by following Qur^ʿānic teaching, but if he did not find the solution there, he would follow the Hadīth. If there was nothing to refer to, he would follow the approach of the Orthodox Caliphs, and as a last resort he would give his own opinion, but very seldom did he do this because he was very God-fearing.

His circle in the mosque was always crowded. He would say to the people: "Please do not ask me a lot, for I do not know if I will be able to judge for you. If I knew that, I would have learnt more and more to be able to give you judgement"(3).

On another occasion, a man asked Ibn ʿUmar a legal question but Ibn ʿUmar did not answer him immediately. The man said, "Abū ʿAbd al-Rahmān (Ibn ʿUmar), did you not hear my question?" Ibn ʿUmar replied, "Yes, but please let me think of the answer. If I know the solution I will tell you, or if not I will tell you too. Do not use my back as a bridge between goodness and evil."(4)

Sulayman b. Yasār says, "I used to divide my time for studying between Ibn ʿUmar and Ibn ʿAbbās. Often have I heard Ibn ʿUmar say

3. Ibn Saʿd, Tabaqāt, IV, 145.

4. Ibn Saʿd, Tabaqāt, IV, 168; Ibn al-Jawzī, Safwa, I, 230.

'I do not know', while Ibn ʿAbbās never refused any answer. Once I heard Ibn ʿAbbās say, 'I wonder about Ibn ʿUmar and his turning people away. Could not he look into any question he was not sure about and see if a tradition was established about it which he could follow, otherwise resort to his own judgement?'"(5)

Even though Ibn ʿUmar was a traditionalist, he did not say "Muḥammad said so and so" For example, al-Shaʿbī said, "I was with Ibn ʿUmar more than one year. I have not heard him say, 'Muḥammad said'"(6).

ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar's principles in his judgement were: "The Holy Book, The Sunna Māḍiya and I do not know"(7), which means that he was following the Holy Book, the Qurʾān in his Fatwā and the Sunnaton Māḍiya, which means the Sunna which is very frequently used and clearly understood, and the sentence 'I do not know', which was used by Ibn ʿUmar when he was not sure of his answer. Thus he gained half of the knowledge required and was half-way to a fuller understanding of the problems.

5. Al-Ṭūsī, ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar, 8.

6. Ibn Saʿd, Tabaqāt, IV, 145.

7. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, Aʿlām, I, 67; Ibn Saʿd, al-Tabaqāt, 144.

Anyway, he was one of the highest ranking men in his field, and he was a prominent religious leader(8). As Mālik b. Anas said: "ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar was present for over sixty years at the mosque in Medina and Mecca giving Fatwās after Muḥammad, and many people came from different countries to ask him for a Fatwā"(9).

He divided his day-time between his job as a merchant and a teacher, and he used to go to the market daily, even if he had nothing to do concerning his business, to see the people who had no opportunity to meet him in the mosque.

Ibn ʿUmar's school was an important school in ancient times. The old savants of the Muslim religion were educated there. First of all, during the Prophet's time, the Companions, amongst them ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar, then his students, a great number of first Followers, then the 'Followers of the Followers', such as al-Zuhrī, and the last was Mālik b. Anas. Then four Islamic madhhabs, especially the Māliki and Shāfiʿī, followed Ibn ʿUmar's teaching and doctrine more than other madhhabs.

8. Ibn al-Athīr, Usd, III, 227.

9. Ibn al-Athīr, Usd, III, 228.

The Seven Lawyers

These were seven scholars who used to examine and give their opinions on the problems arising in any one sitting after which the judge could give the final judgement. They were:-

1. Sa^ʿīd b. al-Musayyab, al-Qurayshī al-Makhzūmī. As he was a collector of fatwās, advising in the time of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar used to ask him about some of these cases, although Sa^ʿīd was only a little boy in ʿUmar's time. His death took place between 93-100/711-718. Cf. Ibn Ḥajar, Tahdhīb, IV, 84-88.
2. Sulaymān b. Yasār al-Hilālī, was a client of Maymūna, one of the Prophet Muḥammad's wives. She gave him to her nephew ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAbbās. He was born in 24 or 27/644 or 647, and his death occurred between 97-101/715-719.
3. Al-Qāsīm b. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr. He was brought up by his aunt, ʿĀʾisha. He achieved fame for his knowledge of ḥadīth. His death was in 106/724. Cf. Ibn Ḥajar, Tahdhīb, VII,

4. ʿUrwa b. al-Zubayr b. al-ʿAwām al-Asadī. He knew best his maternal aunt's (ʿĀʾisha) hadīth. He also avoided all the sedition which arose in his time. His death occurred in 94/712. Cf. Ibn Ḥajar, Tahdhīb, VII, 180.

5. ʿUbaydallāh b. ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUtba b. Masʿūd. He was a teacher of the Caliph ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz. He was very remarkable in jurisprudence and was also an illustrious poet. Cf. Ibn Ḥajar, Tahdhīb, VII, 23.

6. Khārijah b. Zayd b. Thābit al-Anṣārī. He had a special wisdom in dividing inheritances. His death was in 94/712. Cf. Ibn Ḥajar, Tahdhīb, III, 74.

7. Sālim b. ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar. His biography will follow.

The four Islāmic madhhabs, especially the Mālikī and Shāfi'ī, followed Ibn 'Umar's teaching. As previously stated, Hadīth is one of the most important authoritative source in the Muslim religion, and it was known that Ibn 'Umar's related hadīth were very accurate, as stated by Muḥammad al-Bāqir(1). Al-Dahlawī mentioned that Mālik's teaching fiqh was based on the hadīths and on 'Umar's legal decisions and on the fatwā of Ibn 'Umar and his work, and after them on the judgement of some of the Companions, and the followers such as the Seven Lawyers(2).

Mālik chose Ibn 'Umar's works because it is mentioned in al-Mūwatta': "The most famous and oldest Companions gave evidence in favour of his integrity and truthfulness in presenting the hadīths amongst the other Companions, especially after the two civil wars"(3).

Mālik's scholarly activity was at Medina(4). No exact date was mentioned when Mālik arrived in Medina because he was born in a village 192km. from Medina(5).

1. Mālik b. Anas, al-Muwatta', II, 1007.
2. Mālik b. Anas, al-Muwatta', II, 1007.
3. Mālik b. Anas, al-Muwatta', II, 1007.
- 4/5. Al-Khūlī, Tarjamah, 19.

Medina was distinguished by several features from the other Islāmic states because, firstly, it was the scene of the revelation of the Qur'ān and the capital of the Islāmic Empire in the era of the four Orthodox Caliphs. Medina was not affected by the infiltration of conquered peoples as much as other Arab countries and no ancient civilization had influenced the city before Islām(6). On the other hand, there were no subjects other than Hadīth studied at that time. In Medina most people paid more attention to the Companions and their legal decisions than those in other Arab states were doing, although the Medinese were very poor from the point of view of civilization. Islāmic teaching was thus the first and only basis of their education. Therefore, Mālik went to Medina and attended the mosque to learn fiqh. He followed many teachers, such as Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī and Nāfi^c (the client of ^cAbdallāh b. ^cUmar) and others. Most of his teachers were students of Ibn ^cUmar.

6. See above, Introduction, p. 6...

It was said: "The correct Isnad is on Mālik's authority, on the authority of Ibn ʿUmar, through Nafiʿ, and called the golden chain"(7). On another occasion, as mentioned, al-Dahlawī said: "The Medinese were working at the time of Mālik, and before and after his time in Medina which was a centre of refuge and the place where savants broke their journey. There emerged many persons skilled in fatwā and fiqh since Muḥammad's time, and Mālik inherited all that"(8).

If you look at al-Muwatṭaʿ, Mālik's book, you will see it contains a large percentage (27.86%) of Ibn ʿUmar's doctrines and teaching and ḥadīths related on his authority by his son, Sālim; his client, Nafiʿ and some of his students, such as ʿAbdallāh b. Dīnār and others.

After Ibn ʿUmar and his father had built up such an important contribution to the Muslim world, the people forgot about them and their names. The people then began to follow different schools of thought and they continued to have many followers in the past,

7. Ibn Khallikān, Wafīyyāt, V, 4.

8. Mālik b. Anas, al-Muwatṭaʿ, II, 1006.

present and future, such as al-Ḥanafī, al-Mālikī, al-Shāfiʿī and al-Ḥanbalī. All these schools included many of Ibn ʿUmar's doctrines in their religious instruction books, such as Kitāb al-Sarakhsī al-Mabsūt, which contains Kutūb Zāhir al-Riwāya, Al-Shaibānī, Sharḥ Kitāb al-Siyar al-Kabīr, Abū Yūsuf, Kitāb al-Athar and others, Al-Shafiʿī Kitāb al-Umm, Akhtitāf al-Ḥadīth, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal-Musnad b. Ḥanbal.

Thus, Al-Shafiʿī, more than any of the other students, was a follower of Ḥadīth, his topic was the Ḥadīth and the Qurʾān, because he spent his youth in Medina and his childhood in Mecca. It was related: "His mother sent him to Mecca when he was two years old (following the tradition of his tribe which was the Quraysh)"(9) Later on he went to Medina where he was always with Mālik. It was said by al-Dahlawī, "Shafiʿī's madhhab is an elaboration of al-Muwaṭṭaʿ, and the later two Imams - al-Shafiʿī and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal - are Mālik's students"(10).

9. Abū Zahw, al-Ḥadīth, 298.

10. Mālik b. Anas, al-Muwaṭṭaʿ, II, 1006.

Thus, al-Shafi'ī had good connections with Aḥmad and therefore obtained Ḥadīth from Mālik and Aḥmad. It was said: "He, al-Shafi'ī, was the meritorious authority for the Ḥadīth followers, because he put them on the right way, using the correct meaning of the Sunna against their contradictors. By elucidating the proof, therefore, he gained a high position amongst them"(11).

Then later on he was to contest the Māliki school concerning the Ḥadīth, such as the ḥadīth of Ibn Umar and others.

11. Abū Zahw, al-Ḥadīth, 299.

Mālik b. Anas was very famous as a Muslim jurist. His teaching (madhhab) is the ^{Madhhab} which is named after him, and frequently he is called the Imām of Medina or Imām Dār al-Hijra.

Mālik's great work is Kitāb al-Muwaṭṭa' which represents the traditions. Al-Bukhārī said: "The correct Isnād of Mālik is on the authority of Ibn 'Umar, on the authority of Nafi'"(1). Mālik himself mentioned that, "I was going to Nafi' at mid-day, the sun was too hot as I was waiting for him to come home to ask him what Ibn 'Umar said in such and such a case. He used to answer me and I stayed with him for a long time every day so that he could teach me"(2).

Mālik's death was in 179/795.

Al-Zuhrī: Muḥammad b. Muslim b. 'Ubaid(3) allāh b. 'Abdallāh b. Shihāb. He was one of Malik's teachers, as some people said: "The correct Isnād of Mālik by Ibn 'Umar

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1. Mālik b. Anas, al-Muwaṭṭa', I, 12.
 2. Ibn Farḥūn, al-Dībāj, I, 26.
 3. Kaḥḥala, Mu'jam, XII, 21. His father's name was Muslim, but al-Dhhabī, Tārīkh, V, 136 mentioned Sālim.

via Sālim via al-Zuhrī"(4). He was a celebrated traditionalist, the collecting of Hadīth being his main preoccupation(5). Therefore, he gathered a vast number of traditions, not only of the Prophet Muḥammad, but of the Companions' Hadīths also. He is described as being the first to fix Hadīth in writing, but this was done only under pressure during the Umayyad reign(6).

His death occurred in 124/741(7).

Al-Shāfi'ī: Muḥammad b. Idrīs. He was from the Quraysh tribe. He established his school in Baghdād and Egypt. His school was distinguished by the fact that it followed the manifestation of the Qur'ānic word until he found evidence which proved the opposite, then he followed the Sunna. His school met the traditional school half-way. He was the only person to promulgate his science himself and wrote his book unaided as well. He was

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4. Al-Khīdarī, Tārīkh, 240; Ibn 'Asākir, Tahdhīb, IV, 52; Al-Nawawī, Tahdhīb, I, 207.
 5. Watt, The Majesty That Was Of Islām, 86.
 6. E.I., IV.
 7. Kaḥḥāla, Mu'jam, XII, 21. This biography cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāya, IX, 340-348.

born in Gaza in 150/767 and his death was in 204/819 in Egypt(8).

Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal al-Shaybānī al-Baghdādī(9). He was the leader of the Ḥanbalī School. He was born in Baghdād in 164/780. Ibn Ḥanbal was a contemporary of al-Shafi‘ī.

His school followed the purely traditional pattern. His death was in Baghdād in 241/855.

8. Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāya, X, 251-254.

9. Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāya, IX, 325.

‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar's Students

‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar instructed a great number of students in the nature of divine inspiration and Islāmic teaching in the Medina School and Mecca. Some of these students were from amongst the Companions. Those who failed to come to the mosque enquired from their friends about the contents of the talk. These were also the cases with those who did not live in Medina all the time and did not keep company with Muḥammad all the time, such as ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Abbās, Jābir, al-A‘azz al-Muznī and others(1). Ibn ‘Umar also taught his sons, amongst them Sālim, Ḥamza, ‘Abdallāh and Bilāl(2), and his grandchildren and his nephews too. Other students of Ibn ‘Umar were the older, famous Followers (3), the Followers, such as Sa‘īd b. al-Musayyab, Sulaymān b. Yasār, Sālim b. ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar, al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad, ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr, ‘Ubaydallāh b. ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Utba and Khārijah b. Zayd(4)

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1. Ibn al-Athīr, Uṣd, III, 229; Ibn Ḥajar, Iṣāba, III, 107.
 2. Al-Nawawī, Tahdhīb, 279.
 3. Ibn al-Athīr, Uṣd, III, 229.
 4. Ibn ‘Asākir, Tārīkh, VI, 51.

from the clients, Nāfi^c, ʿAbdallāh b. Dinār, Aslam and others(5).

Surpassing all the other students were his son, Salim, and his own client, Nāfi^c, who both belong to the first category.

Let us give a brief idea of the career of each of them:-

Sālim (as he was known) al ʿAdawy, al-Qurayshī. His mother was a Persian princess, the daughter of Yazdajrid(1). She was captured during the war with Persia.

He was one of the famous jurists of Medina, one of the Seven Lawyers and the chief

5. Ibn Hajar, Iṣāba, III, 107.

1. Amīn, Fajr, 91. They were three captive girls. ʿAlī b. Abū-Ṭalīb asked ʿUmar the Caliph to purchase them in a separate group because they were the King's daughters. ʿUmar accepted, then ʿAlī b. Abū-Ṭalīb gave one of them to his son, al-Ḥusain; the second girl to Muḥammad b. Abū Bakr, the first Caliph; and the third one to ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar, the present Caliph. Three of them gave birth to three boys successively, who were ʿAlī Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, al-Qāsim and Sālim. They were remarkably skilled in jurisprudence. Two of them were from the Seven Lawyers, and some authors used to count ʿAlī Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn among the Company proclaiming the Fatwā.

amongst his contemporaries of the first category(2) (the Followers) during the Umayyad reign. He resembled his father, ʿAbdallāh, in everything, not only in his dress and bearing, but also in his scientific prowess, his religious nature and his piety. Therefore his father loved him very much and respected him amongst his brothers. Ibn ʿUmar helped Sālim to further his scientific studies even under his own tuition and supported his son in his efforts to win high position(3).

He was the most respected amongst his contemporaries, not because he was the son of ʿAbdallāh, but on account of his high position in his fiqh - jurisprudence - and his influence in the community at that time.

2. Al-Ziriklī, al-Aʿlām, III, 115; Ibn Ḥajar, Tahdhib, III, 436; Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziya, Iʿlām al-Muwaqqiʿīn, I, 25-26.
3. Ibn Saʿd, al-Ṭabaqāt, IV, 184. When Ibn ʿUmar felt that he would die, he gave his Will to his son, ʿAbdallāh. When some friends asked him, "Why did you not give it to Sālim?" (because he loved Salim more than the others), he said, "Because I did not like to involve him in mundane affairs".

He related a vast mass of Hadīth from his father, who, in his day, had inherited them from Muḥammad. Therefore he was the authority on Hadīths and Fatwās of Medina.

The followers of the traditional school to which Sālim belonged, were very strict concerning the authenticity of the hadīth. According to some, he did not like to give his opinion if there were no Hadīth(4). This observation is exaggerated for as he was in a high position of Fiqh, it is unlikely that he could not give his opinion unsubstantiated by the hadīth.

His death was in Medina in 106/724(5).

Nāfi^c: He was a client of ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar and was known as Abū-ʿAbdallāh al-Madanī. Originally he was known to have come from Daylam, although his parentage is unknown. ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar took him as a slave on one of his occasional raids when Nāfi^c was still a little boy(6). ʿAbdallāh

4. Amīn, Fajr, 243.

5. Al-Ziriklī, al-Aʿlām, III, 115; Al-Nawawī, Tahdhīb, I, 208 mentions 107 or 108; Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāya, IX, 234.

6. Al-Ziriklī, al-Aʿlām, VIII, 319.

b. 'Umar recognised that the little boy would become very famous and clever, then he said: "Nafi^c was granted to us from God"(7). His expectations were to be fulfilled later.

Nafi^c was educated by Ibn 'Umar himself and was, therefore, one of the famous persons in his Fiqh (jurisprudence). If he related hadīth, he related it correctly. He had many students, the most famous being al-Imām Mālik b. Anas.

Al-Nassā'ī said, "Nafi^c is reliable and passes on authentic messages to Mālik, and he is like Sālim, but Sālim is more dignified and esteemed than Nafi^c"(8). Therefore Nafi^c could not give any Fatwā during Sālim's lifetime. That was proved by Ibn Wahab(9). Sālim did not ask him to do so.

In the reign of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, the Umyyad Caliph sent Nafi to Egypt to teach the Egyptians the Hadīth or the Sunna(10).

7. Ibn Hajar, Tahdhīb, X, 413.

8. Ibn Hajar, Tahdhīb, X, 413.

9. Al-Dhahabī, Tārīkh, V, 10; Al-Khidārī, Tārīkh.

10. Al-Khidārī, Tārīkh, 146.

ʿAbdallah b. ʿUmar gave Nāfiʿ his freedom and he wed him to his favourite slave girl, Rumayth (or Rumyna), having already given her her freedom also(11). Nāfiʿ' s death occurred in 117/735 or 119/737(12).

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11. Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāya wal-Nihāya, IX, 319. Ibn ʿUmar was offered ten thousand Dinars to sell Nāfiʿ, but he said: "It is the best thing that he be freed to serve God."
 12. Al-Khūdarī, Tārīkh, 146; Al-Ziriklī, al-Aʿlām, VIII, 319.

‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar's Fatwās(1)

The following examples are given in order to give some idea of this person who sat in judgement for sixty years after Muḥammad's death, giving Fatwās on different subjects in the mosque in Medina, which became, as it were, his School of Law, and also in the Meccan Ḥaram, during the time of pilgrimage or lesser pilgrimage. Unfortunately, most of Ibn ‘Umar's Fatwās have been lost. Their exact number is unknown, but it must have been great(2).

Example 1 - Prayer

Once, when it was very windy and very cold, Ibn ‘Umar was travelling. The time for prayer came and he ordered those who were with him to pray, seated on their saddles. He ordered the Mu‘ezzin to announce that the prayer would be said in the saddle. He did so because the Prophet had done so(3).

1. A fatwā is an informal, unofficial legal opinion, given either to a judge or to a private individual. The giver of such a fatwā is a muftī.
2. Ibn Farḥūn, Dībāj, 25.
3. Mālik, Muwatta’, I, 73.

Example 2 - Zakāt

(a) Nāfi^c mentioned that Ibn ʿUmar said: "No Zakāt may be levied upon any kind of income until after one complete year"(4).

(b) ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar said: "There is no reason for the slave to pay Zakāt". However, on another occasion, Ibn ʿUmar said: "The slave will pay Zakāt on his income"(5).

When Ibn ʿUmar excused the slave from paying Zakāt, it was because the slave had no right to make money from his own labour. His master gave him his orders and it was said: "The slave and all his possessions belong to his master." The slave has no profit with which to pay the tax.

When Ibn ʿUmar said the slave should pay Zakāt, this was for another kind of slave called Mukātib. That slave would have negotiated a contract with his master to pay him such an amount for his freedom.

(c) Zakāt al-fiṭr: Alms given at the end of Ramaḍān.

ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar said: "The Prophet Muḥammad ordered the payment of Zakāt for the

4. Mālik, Muwaṭṭaʿ, I, 246.

5. Averroes, Bidāya, I, 245.

breaking of the fast (Zakāt Siyām Ramaḍān) for every Muslim, free man or slave, man or woman, one Sā^c- measure of dates or barley(6).

Nāfi^c said that ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar always used to pay the Zakāt al-fiṭr in dates, except once when he paid it in barley(7).

Example 3 - Pilgrimage

Sālim mentioned that his father, ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar, said, "If the pilgrim is detained or kept back from practising the pilgrimage in Mecca, he must hold himself in readiness to make the pilgrimage at some future date, when he can carry out the walk between al-Ṣafā and al-Marwa and circum-ambulate the Ka^cba. If he needs to dress himself or to take medicine for his condition, he can do it, but he will have to make a sacrifice on his arrival at Mecca and after the ceremony"(8).

Mālik narrated that al-Sikhtiyānī said there was a man from Basra, who was on his way to Mecca. After a while he broke his leg in an accident and he sent someone to Mecca where

6. Mālik, Muwaṭṭaʿ, I, 284.

7. Mālik, Muwaṭṭaʿ, I, 284.

8. Mālik, Muwaṭṭaʿ, I, 361.

‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar and ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Abbās and others were. "They did not permit me to be free from my iḥrām, so I stayed in that place beside the well for seven months until I became well. I entered Mecca on the lesser pilgrimage and I was free from my iḥrām"(9).

Mālik said Nāfi‘ mentioned that ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar said, ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb said, "Make a distinction between the main pilgrimage and the lesser pilgrimage, because it is much better to make the two in different months"(10).

Someone asked Ibn ‘Umar for a fatwā about someone walking to the pilgrimage; what, for example, to do if this person was an old lady who could not walk. Ibn ‘Umar said: "Let her ride and let her walk; when she feels tired, let her ride again until she arrives at Mecca"(11).

In connection with the pilgrimage, Nāfi‘ mentioned that ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar said: "A woman must not wear the veil on her face or wear gloves"(12).

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9. Mālik, Muwatṭa’, I, 361.
 10. Mālik, Muwatṭa’, I, 347.
 11. Al-Suyūtī, Sharḥ al-Muwatṭa’, I, 314.
 12. Mālik, Muwatṭa’, I, 328.

Example 4 - Fasting

Al-Shāfi'ī mentioned that 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar said: "The Prophet Muḥammad said the month will be twenty-nine days. Do not fast until you see the moon rise, and do not end the fast until you see the Shawwāl moon rise. If the sky is overcast, then complete the thirty days"(13).

Mālik mentioned that 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar was asked if it was right to pray on behalf of another person or to fast on behalf of another. His reply was: "No, no-one can pray instead of another, nor can he fast"(14).

Mālik mentioned that someone had asked 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar what a pregnant woman should do in case the fast might harm her unborn child. Ibn 'Umar said, "She should stop fasting and pay one midd (a certain measurement of wheat) daily to poor people"(15).

Mālik said that 'Abdallah b. 'Umar did not fast when he was travelling(16).

13. Al-Shāfi'ī, al-Umm, II, 94.

14. Mālik, Muwatṭa', I, 304.

15. Mālik, Muwatṭa', I, 308.

16. Mālik, Muwatṭa', I, 295.

Other examples

Narrated by Mujāhid b. Jabur: "I was with Ibn ʿUmar when there came to him a person whose name was Wardān al-Rūmī. He was a goldsmith. He asked Ibn ʿUmar, 'Abū ʿAbd al-Rahmān, I make gold jewellery and I sell it for more than its weight in order to earn a little for my labour". Ibn ʿUmar's reply was, 'I prohibit you from doing so; that is usury.' The goldsmith repeated the story again and again until we arrived at the door of the mosque and Ibn ʿUmar said, 'A dīnār for a dīnār and a dirham for a dirham, and no more! That was the Prophet's order to us and we commit this to you.'"(17)

Sālim narrated this from his father's Fatwā: When some man asked him if he owed a debt to another person, to be repaid by a certain time, and if the creditor subtracted some amount in return for his money, was it right? Ibn ʿUmar said, "No, that is usury"(18).

A man came to Ibn ʿUmar and asked him, "I have a slave and emancipated a third of him." Ibn ʿUmar said, "There are no half measures with God. The slave is free"(19).

17. Mālik, Muwatṭaʿ, III, 111.

18. Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, al-Istidhkār, MS unnumbered folios.

19. Ibn ʿAbd al-Bar, Istidhkār, MS.

Someone came to Ibn ʿUmar for a fatwā concerning the following:-

Two or more had bought a slave between them. One of them decided to free the slave with his part share, but what about the other person's share?

Ibn ʿUmar said, "If the slave has enough money to buy out the other person's share of him, he must be allowed to do so. But if he does not have the money, he will belong entirely to the other party"(20).

ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar judged himself once. He sold a boy slave and after some days a defect appeared in the slave. The buyer asked Ibn ʿUmar to swear that there were no defects in the boy when he sold the boy. There appeared to be no defect in him, but Ibn ʿUmar felt unable to categorically swear to this(21).

Abū Māʿīz al-Aslamī-ʿAbd allāh b. Sufyān said, "I was with ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar when a woman came to him for a Fatwā. She said, 'I was near the mosque door when blood came to me (i.e. I began to menstruate again although I

20. Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, Istidhkār, M.S.

21. Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, Istidhkār, M.S.

thought I had finished). I went away to my home, and when I was very clean, I came again. Suddenly, at the same place, the blood came again three times. What should I do?' ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar replied: "Bathe yourself and hold a piece of clean garment to yourself and proceed through the mosque"(22).

Sufyān reported on the authority of ʿAmr b. Dīnār and Ḥamīd al-Aʿraj Ḥabīb b. Abī Thābit as saying: "I was with Ibn ʿUmar when a bedouin came and said, 'I have given my son a camel for his lifetime and it gave birth to more camels'. ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar replied, 'They are his in his lifetime and after his death.'"(23)

22. Mālik, Muwattaʿ, II, 214.

23. Al-Shafiʿī, al-Umm, VII, 201; Mālik, Muwattaʿ, III, 241.

Some of Ibn 'Umar's Fatwās

1. Nāfi^c told Mālik: "I have heard from 'Abd-allāh b. 'Umar that his niece (the daughter of 'Ubayd allāh b. 'Umar, her mother being the daughter of Zayd b. al-Khaṭṭāb) was engaged to one of his sons, and that the son died before their wedding; he did not mention the matter of the dowry. However, the girl's mother endeavoured to obtain the dowry for her daughter. But 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar said, 'There is no dowry for her because, if there were a dowry for her, I would have given it to her.' The girl's mother did not accept Ibn 'Umar's judgement and so she went to Zayd b. Thābit and she told him the entire story. However, his judgement was the same as Ibn 'Umar's"(1).

2. Concerning the financial compensation (Alimony) paid to a woman whose marriage contract is dissolved by her partner

Mālik heard the case from Nāfi^c who heard from 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar: "If a divorced woman's dowry is mentioned, she is entitled to receive alimony from her husband. But a woman is only

1. Suyūṭī, Tanwīr, II, 4.

entitled to obtain half of her dowry if she is divorced before the wedding ceremony"(2)

3. ‘Idda - the legal prescribed period during which a woman may not be re-married after being divorced

It was said by Yahya, referring to Mālik who heard it from Nāfi^c, that once Ibn ‘Umar divorced his wife during her period. During the Prophet's time, his father (‘Umar) had asked him about the case. The Prophet said: "Let him take back his wife and keep her until a time when she will be free from her period, and also her second period. After this time, he may either keep her as his wife or divorce her, according to the word of God." ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar therefore arrived at the judgement that if a husband insists on divorcing his wife, his divorce will be regarded as absolute during her third period(3).

4. Mālik heard from Nāfi^c referring to ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar's judgement, that a widow, whose husband had died, and who was pregnant

2. Suyūṭī, Tanwīr, II, 27.

3. Suyūṭī, Tanwīr, II, 29.

at the time, could be remarried after the birth of her child(4).

5. Mālik heard from ʿAbdallāh b. Dīnār when the latter was with ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar at the court-house and he said, "The man asked Ibn ʿUmar about the case of suckling milk. ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar's judgement was that, 'Suckling milk is for a child and not for an adult'"(5)

4. Suyūṭī, Tanwīr, II, 36.

5. Suyūṭī, Tanwīr, II, 44.

Chapter Five

ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar's
Character and Personality

Ibn ʿUmar's Appearance

His Character

His Manner of Worship

His Charity

ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar's
Family and His Death

ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar's Appearance

From the fragments of records left to us, we are hardly able to draw a physical picture of ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar, but we can try to piece together the available information in order to arrive at some idea of his appearance, personality and behaviour.

Al-Barāʾ(1) said: "I saw Ibn ʿUmar between al-Ṣafā and al-Marwa. He was a corpulent, swarthy man with an impediment in his speech, being unable to pronounce rāʾ correctly, and a long beard without a moustache"(2).

According to another reference - that of Abū Ishōq al-Subayʿī - he is described as follows: "He was a tall, corpulent man, bald-headed, with straight hair and a light beard"(3).

1. Al-Barāʾ b. ʿĀzib: one of the Companions. He participated in fifteen raids led by Muḥammad. He was an envoy of ʿAlī b. Abī-Ṭālib to Kufa, and later he was sent on a political mission to the Khawārij. He died in 72-73/692. Cf. al-Baghdādī, Tārīkh, I, 177.
2. Ibn Ḥajar, Iṣāba, IV, 107.
3. Abū Ishōq al-Subayʿī: his name is ʿAmr b. ʿAbdallāh. He heard the discourses of Ibn ʿUmar and others. His reports were very reliable. He died in 126-129/743-746 at the age of 96 years. Cf. Nawawī, Tahdhīb, II, 171-172.

As we can see, there are no marked differences between these various accounts. It seems fair to assume that he was a tall man, especially since his father, ʿUmar, was unusually tall, and he was as tall as his father(4). His complexion was not fair but swarthy, as confirmed by ʿAbdallāh's own report which said: "The swarthy complexion is hereditary from our maternal uncle because my father (God have mercy on him) was very fair in colouring. When he wished to marry a lady, he chose his bride from a noble family in order that he should have a worthy son"(5). This means that he was swarthy of complexion but his father was fair, with a reddish colour (as ʿAbdallāh confirms). He was a bald-headed, tall and corpulent man, with a long beard.

ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar seems also to have been elegant and genteel, for we are told that he used to wear fine clothes of various materials, though not silk(6). He used to attire himself in a turban, and coloured his

4. Ibn Saʿd, al-Ṭabaqāt, III, 324.

5. Ibn Saʿd, al-Ṭabaqāt, III, 325. Ibn ʿUmar's maternal uncles were Banū Mazʿūn b. Jumāh. Cf. Ibn Saʿd, al-Ṭabaqāt, IV, 142.

6. Ibn Saʿd, al-Ṭabaqāt, IV, 172.

beard with saffron or crocus and ground rose petals with musk(7), while his perfume was also musk.

7. Ibn Sa^cd, al-Tabaqāt, IV, 152, 174-180.

His Character

ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar was distinguished by his high moral qualities, compassion and justice. He inherited all his father's characteristics. His father, ʿUmar, was very strict in his religion, as ʿAbdallāh was also. For example, he used to pray five times a day in the mosque with others. If he could not do this, or he missed the appointed time, he spent the whole night praying, the day fasting and he would emancipate one of his slaves(1).

Once, when ʿAbdallāh was ill, he asked for a meal of fish. His wife prepared it for him, but when he began to eat it, a needy man came to the door seeking food. ʿAbdallāh gave him all the fish, not even tasting it himself. His wife said, "You wanted the fish and I hoped you would eat it yourself. I will give the man something else"(2).

There are many stories which bear this out. However, it was told by Abū Salama, one of the Companions, that, "During ʿUmar's time there were many similar pious Muslims, but in the time of ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar, there was no one similar to him"(3).

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1. Al-Ṭanṭāwī, Akhbār ʿUmar, 478.
 2. Ibn Saʿd, al-Ṭabaqāt, IV, 158.
 3. Ibn Ḥajar, al-Iṣāba, IV, 108.

Qur'ah said: "I saw Abū 'Abd al-Rahmān (i.e. 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar) in a very coarse garment and I brought him a finer one, saying, 'Abū 'Abd al-Rahmān, I brought a garment for you made in Khurāsān, and I would be very pleased if I saw it on you'. 'Abdallāh said, 'Let me see it'. Then he touched it with his finger and said, 'Is it silk?' I replied, 'No, it is cotton'. 'Abdallāh replied, 'No, I do not like to wear such things, but thank you'."(4)

There is also the story of one of his clients who came once from Irāq. He insisted on visiting his master, 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar. The client said, "I have brought a present for you." 'Abdallāh said, "What is it?" The client replied, "Jawārish." 'Abdallāh asked, "What is Jawārish?" The client replied, "Something to help you to digest food." 'Abdallāh said, "O, dear me, I have not filled my stomach for forty years, so what shall I do with it?"(5)

'Abdallāh b. 'Umar was not a poor person however. He could eat well and have anything he wished, but he liked to follow the example of his father and the Prophet.

4. Abū Na'īm, al-Hilya, I, 302.

5. Abū Na'īm, al-Hilya, I, 300.

‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar's Manner of Worship

"Little of the night did they
usually slumber,
And in the mornings they
asked forgiveness"(1)

With this idea, ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar spent his life following the Qur’ānic words. These words urged the people to renounce the rewards of the world in favour of a life of prayer and contemplation more intense and all-embracing than that of the rest of the Believers, and to follow the example and inspiration of the Prophet himself down the ages, through many generations of Muslims from the first century onwards.

‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar, however, was a man who had been marked out from his early youth for the pursuit of worship, since he embraced the faith in his childhood. He had the certainty, resolution and veracity of a Believer and he trusted in God constantly in everything he did and was devoted to the recitation of God's Holy Book.

1. Qur’ān, LI, 17-18.

He prayed at night as much as he could(2), as the Prophet had advised him after his dream(3). For example, his client, Nāfi^c, mentioned, "If Ibn ^cUmar missed the last prayer at the mosque, he used to spend all night praying until dawn. Then he used to take his Sahūr (pre-fast meal in Ramaḍān) and begin to pray once again"(4).

2. Ibn Ḥajar, al-Iṣāba, IV, 109.

3. See Chapter II (p.) below.

4. Al-Ṭanṭāwī, Akhbār ^cUmar, 477; Ibn Ḥajar, al-Iṣāba, IV, 109; Abū Na^cim, al-Ḥilya, I, 303.

His Charity

"And in their wealth the beggar
and the outcast had due share"(1)

These Qur'ānic words were Ibn 'Umar's guide in life, as is shown by the way he shared his income with people. There are many stories which bear this out. For example, in one sitting on poor people, he once spent more than one-hundred-thousand dinārs and also gave away a piece of velvet, then he asked someone to lend him some money to buy food for his beast(2).

There are plenty anecdotes and charming touches which serve to illustrate his native wit, his deep piety, his generosity, compassion, justice and sense of fairness. He was also renowned for his kindness, modesty, propriety and continence, and for his determination to detach himself from all that he loved most(3). Some of these stories may have been invented, but Ibn 'Umar's nobility is incontestable.

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1. Qur'ān, LI, 19. Ibn 'Umar paid exaggerated attention to this sūra. Cf. Sayyid Quṭb, Zilāl, VI, 3371.
 2. Ibn al-Jawzī, Ṣafwa, I, 232; Abu Na'īm, al-Ḥilya, I, 296.
 3. Ibn al-Jawzī, Ṣafwa, I, 231; Ibn Ḥajar, al-Iṣāba, IV, 108.

ʿAbdallāh was later a rich man, a merchant, and he also had a good income from the community because he served as a cavalryman. Sometimes, too, he came into money which was presented to him as a gift, but he was always left with nothing because he used to give it away to the needy.

It was mentioned by Maymūn b. Mihrān that, "One day Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (Ibn ʿUmar) received 22,000 dinārs and spent them during the same sitting"(4).

There is yet another story: Nafi said, "We were with Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (Ibn ʿUmar) on a journey. When we sat down to eat, a shepherd passed by, who was a young black slave with his sheep. ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar asked him, 'Will you join in our meal?' He replied, 'I am sorry, I am fasting.' Ibn ʿUmar said, 'Are you sure? How can you fast on such a warm day, when it is not Ramaḍān, and you have to run after the sheep between the hills?' The shepherd said, 'Yes, I am fasting now to secure the days to come.' Ibn ʿUmar was very surprised and he wanted to put his faith to the test. He asked him, 'Will you

4. Ibn al-Jawzī, Ṣafwa, I, 232. Maymūn b. Mihrān: his kunya was Abū Ayyūb. He was a righteous man and related the teaching of Ibn ʿUmar and others. He died in 117/735. Cf. Ibn al-Jawzī, Ṣafwa, IV, 165-167.

sell me one of these sheep? I want to slaughter it and then give you a piece of it to break your fast.' The shepherd boy replied, 'They are not mine, they belong to my master.' Ibn 'Umar said, 'Well, you can tell him a wolf ate it.' He merely wanted to ascertain whether or not the boy was honest. The boy went away raising his index finger and asking, 'Where then is God?' 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar repeated, 'Where then is God?' again and again.

"When Ibn 'Umar returned to Medina he went to the owner of the herd and bought both the slave and the sheep and emancipated the boy and gave him the sheep as recompense for his honesty"(5).

This type of illustration gives us an idea of 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar's kindness and his fear of God. He did not care about money, as is shown by the fact that he spent money on the poor and bought slaves to emancipate. As his bondsmen knew his habit of emancipating those who followed godly ways in worship and prayer, they showed their willingness to follow the faith(6). Ibn 'Umar observed their behaviour and emancipated them. His friend said to him,

5. Ibn al-Athīr, Usd, III, 228; Ṭanṭāwī, Akhbār 'Umar, 488.

6. Ibn Sa'd, al-Ṭabaqāt, IV, 167.

"O, Abū ʿAbd al-Rahmān, they are not so (good), but they are deceiving you." Ibn ʿUmar replied, "If they are deceiving me in the name of God, I will be deceived"(7).

It was said that Ibn ʿUmar emancipated one-thousand(8) slaves during his lifetime. He did so only to please the people, not for personal gain. For example, if he lost his temper and swore at a slave, to show his repentance he would give the slave his freedom(9).

His fear of God was natural. He inherited this from his father and by following the Qurʾānic teaching. He therefore came to follow a life of devotion. The people venerated him because he preserved every aspect of life as it had been in the time of his father and the Prophet.

7. Al-Ṭanṭawī, Akhbār ʿUmar, 488; Ibn Saʿd, al-Ṭabaqāt, IV, 167.

8. Abu Naʿīm, al-Ḥilya, I, 296.

9. Ibn Ḥajar, Isāba, IV, 108.

Chapter Six

Abdallah b. Umar's Family
and His Death

ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar's Family

ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar was the father of twelve sons and four daughters(1). They were by different wives and concubines.

His first wife was Ṣafīyyah bint Abī ʿUbayda al-Thaqafī. This marriage took place in 16/637(2). She gave birth to five boys and two girls. The oldest son was ʿAbdallāh. He was one of his father's executors. He was a noble man educated by his father and Abū Hurayra(3). He, in turn, educated his son, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, and Nāfiʿ al-Zuhrī(4) and others. He was a great authority on the transmitted Ḥadīth. His death occurred in 105/723(5).

The other children were Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, Wāqid and Abū ʿUbayda, and two girls, Sūda and Ḥafṣa.

1. Ibn Saʿd, Ṭabaqāt, IV, 142.

2. Al-Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, IV, 188.

3. Abū Hurayra: his name was ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Dūsī, one of the Companions. He died in 57-58-59/676-677-678. Cf. Al-Dhahabī, Duwal, I, 28.

4. Al-Zuhrī Muḥammad b. Shihāb. Cf. Kaḥḥāla, Muʿjam, XII, 21 and more detail on p. III.

5. Ibn ʿAsākir, Tahdhīb, III, 135.

The second wife was Umm ʿAlqama bint ʿAlqama b. Shaybān b. Muḥārib b. Fihir. Her son was ʿAbd al-Raḥmān.

The third wife was Sahlah(6) bint Mālik b. al-Shahḥāh ... b. Taghlib. She gave birth to a boy whose name was Zayd.

The mother of Sālim(7) was one of the concubines. The mother of ʿĀʾisha, his daughter, was also a slave girl, as was the mother of Bilāl, Abū Salama and Qilāba.

On the other hand, al-Ṭanṭāwī mentioned that ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar was the father of ten sons and one daughter: ʿAbdallāh, Sālim, ʿUbaydallāh, Zayd, ʿĀṣim, Ḥamza, Bilāl, Wāqid and ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz. The girl's name was Sūda.

The difference between the two authors is that al-Ṭanṭāwī mentioned two boys who were not mentioned by Ibn Saʿd: ʿĀṣim and ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz. Again Ibn Saʿd mentioned four girls -

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6. According to Ibn Saʿd, Zayd's mother was a slave girl.
 7. Sālim: his mother was a Persian princess, the daughter of Yazdajrid. Cf. Amīn, Fajr, 91. His father loved him and when he left his estate to his son, ʿAbdallāh, some friends asked him, "Why did you not give it to Sālim?" He said, "Because I did not like to involve him with mundane affairs." Cf. Ibn Ḥajar, Tahdhīb, VI, 52.

Ḥafṣa, Sūda, ʿĀ'isha and Qilāba - while al-
Ṭanṭāwī mentioned only one girl, Sūda(8).

‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar's Death

After many years the life of this man, ‘Abdallāh, who transmitted the Hadīth of the Prophet, whose own doctrines were in time taken over by later scholars throughout the Muslim world, came to a close. His virtues and merits were endless. He died at eighty-four years of age(1) in 74/693. There are different ideas, however, about the year of his death and of the age at which he died(2).

His fanatical adherence to his religious duty hastened his end. He always showed his concern about the time of prayer when al-Ḥajjaj was Governor of Mecca. As the Governor was not a very religious man and was lax in carrying out his duties, Ibn ‘Umar

1. Ibn Sa‘d, al-Ṭabaqāt, IV, 187; Al-Yāfi‘ī, Mir‘āt, I, 155; Ibn al-‘Imād, Shadharāt, I, 81; Ibn Ḥajar, al-Isāba, IV, 109 mentioned that "His death was in 72, 73 or 74"; Khalīf, Tārīkh, 346; Al-Dhahabī, al-‘Ibar, 84; Ibn ‘Asākir, Tahdhīb, III, 229; Al-Baghdādi, Tārīkh, I, 172 mentioned that Ibn ‘Umar's death was in 73 or 74; Ibn Khallikān, Wafiyāt, II, 237 mentioned that his death was in 63/682; Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, al-Istī‘āb, III, 953 gives 73/692; also Ibn al-Athīr, Uṣd, III, 230.
2. Most of the authors mentioned that ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar's life span was eighty-four years. Muḥammad b. ‘Umar Ibn Sa‘d, the author of al-Ṭabaqāt, mentioned that on the authority of Sālīm b. ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar, his father died in 74/693 at eighty-four years of age. This is correct for his death and age.

constantly drew his attention to the prayer time or otherwise reminded him of his duties. Al-Ḥajjaj was not scrupulous about the time for prayer or pilgrimage and therefore, not wishing to be reminded of his religious duties, he did not welcome Ibn ʿUmar's interference, but rather resented it. On the other hand, ʿAbd al-Mālik b. Marwān, the Umayyad Caliph, asked al-Ḥajjaj to follow Ibn ʿUmar's orders about the pilgrimage and this further annoyed al-Ḥajjaj. All our primary authorities agree that al-Ḥajjaj asked one of his soldiers to inject the foot of Ibn ʿUmar with a poisoned spear when the pilgrimage returned to Mecca, and as a result of this, he contracted gangrene in his foot, which was the eventual cause of his death(3). His death took place at Mecca. He was buried in the area of the ḥaram in the place called Fakhkh(4), the emigrants' burial ground/cemetery. The actual

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3. Ibn Saʿd, al-Ṭabaqāt, IV, 187; Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, al-Istīʿāb, III, 952-953; Ibn al-Athīr, Usd, III, 230; Ibn al-Jawzī, Safwa, I, 236; Ibn Khallikān, Wafīyyāt, II, 237; Al-Yāfiʿī, Mirʿāt, I, 155; Al-Diyār Bakrī, Tarīkh, II, 280.
 4. Ibn Saʿd, al-Ṭabaqāt, IV, 188; Al-Baghdādī, Tarīkh, I, 172. But al-Yāfiʿī, Mirʿāt, I, 155, mentioned that Ibn ʿUmar was buried in the place called Dhāt Adkkhār, now called al-Maʿābida; Ibn al-ʿImād, Shadharāt, I, 81, mentioned the same place as above or at al-Maḥṣab.

burial took place against his wishes, because he did not relish the thought that al-Hajjaj should pray for him over his body.

Conclusion

From the foregoing survey of ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar's life, we can conclude that his early life was affected by the land and places in which he lived, and by those with whom he lived. His military and political life, of course, affected his personality and his standing as a scholar.

Human beings are undoubtedly affected by their environment and we know that ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar was born in Mecca, spent his childhood there and spent the rest of his life in Medina, even though he left the Hijaz sometimes for one reason or another, such as to join military expeditions to other places.

When he was born, the Meccan people were in a state of great excitement and confusion over the appearance of Muḥammad's new religion. Muḥammad denigrated their forbears and censured their deities. The people were frightened and did not know what to do for the best. Ibn ʿUmar also saw how the people were suffering from the tortures inflicted on the Muslims - usually the poor people or slaves - by the Quraysh.

‘Abdallāh, being a very sensitive and tender man, was greatly affected by this and subsequently always asked poor people to come to his house and join him in his meal(1).

He was also affected by the nature of his land. It was the Arab custom to send their children, when babies, out into the desert to the nomad life of the Bedouin(2), because they wanted their children to enjoy good health in the fresh air of the desert, and to grow up with a knowledge of true Arab customs.

Naturally the Arabs in ancient times - even the people of Mecca(3) - had the same customs as the Bedouin. They were always invading(4) and capturing from other tribes because that was the nature of their life, and was necessary for many reasons, such as to protect themselves, their possessions and their honour, and their religion in Islāmic times. When the Islāmic religion emerged in

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1. Ibn Sa‘d, al-Ṭabaqāt, IV, 165-166.
 2. I have not found any such reference about Ibn ‘Umar being sent out as a baby.
 3. Ibn Hishām, Sīrat, I, 142-146 (sworn alliance).
 4. Qur’ān, LXXXI, 8.

Mecca amongst the Arabs, the Meccans were still bedouins. Therefore, Muḥammad's invasions were instinctive: he was an Arab and a Bedouin who had grown up in such an environment(5), and to him it was an accepted custom to raid to obtain booty, and to show the Quraysh the strength of the Muslim community, as opposed to the non-Islāmic community(6).

ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar himself, in accordance with Arab tradition, was most anxious to join the army, even though he was under age, for one reason he wanted to be with Muḥammad, and for another, it was instinctive, although he himself might not have appreciated this at the time. Also the waging of religious war - jihad - was one of the pillars of Islām: war is lawful in life.

It is mentioned that Ibn ʿUmar was very clean in his personal attire. He always scented his clothes with incense, except when he went on pilgrimage(7), he covered his head with a black turban and he used musk perfume(8).

5. Ibn Hishām, Sīrat, I, 172.

6. Ibn Hishām, Sīrat, II, 243.

7. Ibn Saʿd, al-Ṭabaqāt, IV, 159.

8. Ibn Saʿd, al-Ṭabaqāt, IV, 180.

He used to shave his moustache but left his beard (as a Sunna) and coloured it with saffron, as Muhammad did(9). He always kept himself very clean, even when he performed ablutions he used to keep his eyes open to let the water go into his eyes(10).

He was a very modest man, who used to go every day to the market, not to buy or to sell but to see the people and greet them, even if he did not know them(11).

It is very natural that a son physically inherits his father's characteristics and it is well-known what a just and righteous person ʿUmar was. When he was a candidate for the Caliphate, someone said, "If Ibn ʿUmar is Caliph, we will return to the values of the late Caliphate ʿUmar's reign"(12). But he was not a hard man like his father, except when it came to the problems of the sharʿ (religious law). In this he resembled the Prophet Muhammad in his humanity.

9. Ibn Saʿd, al-Ṭabaqāt, IV, 179.

10. Though this was not Sunna, al-Zarqāni, al-Muwattaʿ, I, 83.

11. Ibn Saʿd, al-Ṭabaqāt, IV, 156.

12. Ibn Saʿd, al-Ṭabaqāt, IV,

We know that ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar lived a long time; his life was contemporary with the era of the Orthodox Caliph and he also saw the transfer of rule from the Orthodox Caliphs to the Umayyads. Moreover, he lived through two civil wars and he saw the results of these wars and the rise of different parties which appeared at that time, just like the parties in our own time. There were some differences between these parties although they all appeared under the auspices of religion and under different names, such as al-Khawārij, al-Shiʿa, al-Murjiʿa and al-Muʿtazila. In fact they were political parties. Ibn ʿUmar was always neutral and he did not join any one of them. There is no doubt that Ibn Umar was not inclined towards any party, because he was a teacher and legislator and a very straightforward man. Once Muʿāwiyā asked him about a new palace, "What do you think about it?" His reply was: "If it is from the public treasury, you are a thief; if it is from your own money, you are extravagant"(13).

ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar was a most religious man, therefore he had a high standing as a savant amongst the other Companions for many reasons.

13. Al-Yaʿqūbī, Tārīkh, II, 207.

He had embraced the Islāmic faith since his childhood, and he practised no other type of worship(14). He was contemporary with the Prophet Muḥammad, living in Medina, following him, spending all his time with him as a close friend. He decided to follow Muḥammad not only from a religious point of view, but on his high moral guidance and humanity. ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar was also the Prophet's brother-in-law, through his sister, Ḥafṣa(15). Ibn ʿUmar was extremely anxious to learn everything from Muḥammad, therefore he even asked the other Companions about everything that Muḥammad did when he himself was sometimes absent (which, in fact, seldom happened). He therefore knew everything about the Hadīth, where and why the Prophet had said such and such a thing or acted in a particular way. Consequently, his Hadīth was first-hand.

ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar distinguished himself amongst the other Companions by being very devoted to his religion and he left himself free from worldly desire(16) and avoided becoming involved in the civil war between the Companions. He occupied himself exclusively

14. Ibn Saʿd, al-Ṭabaqāt, IV, 159.

15. Ibn-Qutayba, al-Maʿārif, 59.

16. Al-Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, IV, 446.

with serving the people as a legal adviser and devoting himself to studying the Hadīth, so that he could spread knowledge. He was in the habit of going to Mecca very often, several times a year.

Ibn ʿUmar lived much longer than most of the other Companions and a good number of generations fell under the influence of his teaching. He had been in the habit of giving legal advice and Fatwās from the age of twenty, but later in his life he became the principle legal adviser at the time of the Caliphate of ʿUthmān and during the Umayyad reign.

We may conclude that ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar was a real traditionalist throughout all the territory of the Hijaz, and he was the one who preserved the Sunna, as his students did after him.

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