

Chapter – 26

'Umer Bin Abdul Aziz

(680 - 720 AD)

His name is 'Umar. His mother, Um Asim, was the granddaughter of Hazrat 'Umar Farooq, therefore his blood was also running in her veins. His father, Abdul Aziz, was the Governor of Egypt for 21 years. So upbringing of 'Umar bin Abdul Aziz was raised in a comfortable and luxurious circumstances. But at the same time, he got an opportunity to get proper education and guidance. He studied under the supervision of famous scholars of that time. He was by nature a brilliant person . Proper education gave more shine and glow in his talents.

When 'Umar bin Abdul Aziz stepped into the practical world then he held various responsible positions. He showed his integrity and sincere output everywhere. Walid had made him Governor of Madinah as well. During this period, his main focus was good governance and to maintain discipline. In this tenure, his major project was the extension of the Prophet's Mosque. After the death of Suleiman bin 'Abdul Malik, he was succeeded as the Caliph in the year 99AH/718AD. He was the eighth ruler of the Umayyad era. His term of Caliphate was about two and a half years.

He was a high grade scholar of his time. If he would not be busy with political activities, he would have been considered as the "*King of knowledge*". Imam Novi says that all of us were agreed on his glory, his knowledge, his wisdom, and his

faithfulness to the Prophet and the adherence of the follow up of the four "*Major Caliphates*".

'Umar bin Abdul Aziz felt that since he was not the elected member of the Shura, he should leave the chair of Caliphate. So in his first public speech, he said: "*People, I have been entrusted with the responsibilities of the Caliphate without my wishes and the opinion of the common Muslims therefore I withdraw from it. Now, choose your Caliph whom you want.*" All the crowd shouted, "*We have chosen you as our Caliph.*" When he realized that people are agreed with him, he agreed to accept the responsibility.

His point of view was completely different from that of his predecessors. His main objective was the revival of the four famous "*Major Caliphates*". But it was not in his control to make the Umayyad government completely democratic. However, he wanted to remove all its evils and bring it closer to the "*Major Caliphates*". It was a revolutionary move and therefore difficult as well. But he started working on it. In this progression, he first made the necessary arrangements for the return of the occupied properties. Even the territory of Fadak, which was purely belonged to the Prophet was occupied by Marwan and later inherited by 'Umer bin Abdul Aziz himself, he returned it. It was an achievement that has no precedence in the history.

The last Umayyad caliphate had made Bait-ul-Maal as their personal treasure. It was filled with legitimate and illegitimate income and was also used with the same dishonesty. 'Umar bin Abdul Aziz seriously attended to it. He suspended all the expenses for royals. He closed all of his family's benefits as well. Even he sold all his personal belongings and the emirate cost deposited in Bait-ul-Maal. He made strict arrangements for the security of the Bait-ul-Maal.

He curtailed down the expenditure costs. He took most of the steps to ensure a good governance in it. He also took necessary measures to protect the public from the brutal attitude of government officials.

'Umar bin Abdul Aziz revived and revised the Islamic Sharia. He strongly prevented for the changes occurred in the belief and morals. He corrected the Zakat matters. Alcohol had become normal in the society and for that he discontinued it with official orders. He focused on religious education. He compiled all the hadiths with the help of Muhadditheen. The previous Umayyad caliphs had gone for an evil innovation that they used to slander Hazrat 'Ali in Friday sermons. 'Umar bin 'Abdul Aziz suspended it and started the following Quranic Verse to read, which is continued to this day.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ
وَالْبَغْيِ يَعِظُكُم لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

{Indeed Allah decrees the commands of justice and kindness, and of giving to relatives, and forbids from the shameful and evil and rebellion; He advises you so that you may pay heed. (16:90)}

It was still undergoing reforms that 'Umar bin Abdul Aziz suffered from serious disease. It is thought that it was the result of poison. Its reason is said that Banu Umaiya realized that if this Caliphate remained for a few days more, then he would strengthen these reforms and it will become difficult for them to return to power. So they poisoned with the help of one of his personal servants.

In a very short time he revived the Caliphate of 'Umer Farooq. Even the senior people used to say that his time was like a second period of 'Umar Farooq. The actions of 'Umar bin Abdul Aziz were undoubtedly revolutionary. That's why some consider him as "*the fifth Major Caliph*".