

# Life of omar bin al khatab



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BUSTER**

History is the manifestation of man's will; it changes its course when an ordinary man shows immensely strong will power and that's how an ordinary man becomes a legend. Omar Bin Al-Khatab was one such character. He seems to have changed the course of history with his own will. Omar is regarded as most important figures in history of Islam and the true architect of Islamic Empire. Historical accounts prove him to be one of the greatest conquerors, a wise and just ruler and a man known for his simple lifestyle and love of God.

Omar become the second Muslim ruler after death of Muhammad and ruled for 10 years. He was a leading adviser to the Islamic prophet Muhammad

Omar was a great admirer and companion of the Prophet Mohammed. Omar converted to Islam after 6 years of Mohammed's first revelation and spent 18 years accompanying the Prophet. He succeeded the first caliph Abu Bakr on 23 rd of august 634 as the second caliph and changed the historical edifice of Islamic history. Rising from the rank of a shepherd and a petty merchant he became the true architecture of the Islamic civilization.

(Wikipedia, 2011)

### Early life

His mother's name was Hantammah and father's name was Khattab ibn Nufayl, from the tribe of Banu Makhzum. Omar was born to a middle class family and when he was a child his father put him to the task of grazing camels. His father was a tough taskmaster, and Omar often recalled how his father beaten him up mercilessly whenever there was a mistake on his part.

It seems that Omar grew up as a typical Arab boy -a tall young man with a robust physique and impressive persona.

It is believed that among the Quraish of those days only 17 people were able to read and write and Omar was one of them. He was very intelligent and had a towering personality, intellectually and physically as well. He was a good public speaker. By all available accounts he seemed to be an average Arab youth . At the same time he was gifted with self-respect, a broad-mind and a strong sense of justice. He appeared to be a man of strong convictions, a good friend, and a bad enemy. He was always ready to stand up against the oppressor and advocate the cause of the weak. Later in his youth he took up the traditional profession of a trader. As a trader, he travelled extensively to Syria, Iraq, and Yemen, Rome and Persia and other places as well. He was a good trader; he made good money and developed a good geopolitical understanding of the region as well while travelling. (Islamic Point)

Omar converted to Islam in 616, before that he was the fiercest opponent of Islam. Interestingly, he resolved to kill Prophet Mohammed to finish Islam completely . He believed that the advent of new faith of Islam will break the unity of Quraish. Omar was the most adamant and very cruel in persecuting Muslims.

### Converting to Islam

In the year 616 Umar got converted to Islam. Once he read the verses of Quran, he was so impressed by the divinity of the verses he accepted Islam on that very same day in front of the prophet and his companions. Omar's conversion gave confidence to the Muslims and they felt powered. It was

seen as the victory of Islam, Muslims didn't offer prayers at al-harem mosque until Omar accepted Islam (Abdullah bin Masoud, n. d.). Because of all this the Prophet himself gave him the title of Al-Farooq, one who distinguishes true from falsehood.

Now Islam was gaining popularity; in 622 A. D. because of the increasing popularity of Islam in Medina, Mohammed ordered his followers to migrate to Medina. Omar also went to Medina. Muslims lived peacefully in Medina for approximately a year before Quraish army attacked Medina . Omar played key role in the battles between Quraish and Muslims. (Encyclopedia)

### Caliphate

He succeeded the first caliph Abu Bakr in 634A. D. and played a key role in shaping the history of Islam. Under him the Islamic Empire was expanded at a rate that could only be compared to the great Roman Empire. His ruling abilities, administrative skills and his intelligently coordinated attacks against the Persian Empire resulting in the conquest of the Persian Empire, established him as a great military and political leader of the era.

But it was not very easy for him to get things under control as he was not a popular figure because of his strictness and autocratic nature. Abu Bakr's companions initially discouraged the idea of caliphate of Omar but Abu Bakr had other plans and he assured his high ranking companions that once Omar becomes caliph he would be a changed man. Omar was very clear and did conveyed that he will be soft with them who followed the rules and would be harsh and rude with those who won't follow the same.

He wanted the well being of the poor and underprivileged; because of his populist policies he rapidly gained popularity. (Encyclopedia)

Political and civil administration

Umar's government was a unitary government; Caliph had the supreme political authority. His empire was divided into autonomous and provinces. Provinces were divided into districts. There were 100 districts in the territory of Umar. The Wali (Provincial governors) were the administrator of these provinces, which were recruited by Umar. These were the officer's position at the provincial level which were appointed by Umar or the provincial governors:

Katib (Chief Secretary), Sahib-ul-Kharaj, (Revenue Collector), Sahib-ul-Ahdath, (Police chief), Sahib-Bait-ul-Mal (Treasury Officer) and Qadi (Chief Judge).

In some of the districts there were separate military officers. The Commander of the army in most of the places remained the same and that was the Governor (Wali). Whenever they appointed anyone they used to do that all in writing. Nothing was without paperwork. When they were trying to appoint or appointed Wali the instrument of instructions was made to the regulating conduct of Governors. (Wikipedia, 2010)

## **Military expansion**

Omar was one of the greatest administrators of his era. Omar believed in consolidating his power and political influence. With the proper guidance of Umar, Islamic took a vast change and grew big time as a very fast rate. He

introduced several administrative reforms; he made a Shura (consultative) council and sought advice from them on matters of state affairs. He divided the huge Islamic empire in different provinces and appointed a governor who was answerable to caliph. The Governors were supposed to help in administration and whosoever used their office to get rich was severely punished.

As a Caliph, Omar was ready to accept and adopt what was good in other civilizations as well. Wherever possible, he tried to learn from others and adopted the advanced techniques and administrative practices of the conquered people as well. For example, when Persia was conquered, Windmills were in extensive use in Persia, Omar ordered the construction of windmills in several Arab provinces, including Medina.

For the first time military was organized professionally and made a state department. Finance, accounting, taxation and treasury departments were created for the first time in the Islamic Empire. Police, prisons and postal units were established. (Islamic Point)

## **Reforms**

Agriculture was promoted during his caliphate. Irrigation system was reformed; old canals were excavated and new ones built. Large areas of land were brought under cultivation. Roads were built and were regularly patrolled. A traveler could move with safety on the roads of the huge Islamic Empire.

When Omar became the Caliph of Islam, most of the countries economy was based on slavery. Omar was the one who raised his voice against slavery. He took specific measure to eliminate slavery as far as possible.

The huge territories of Islamic Empire – West Asia and North Africa were transformed into a free trade zone. Business brought prosperity. Omar understood the importance of education; education was encouraged and teachers were paid well. The study of Quran, Hadith, language and literature and calligraphy received patronage from the Empire. Omar was himself a poet and an impressive orator. He constructed Over 4, 000 mosques during his Caliphate.

Technology and new administrative practices such as the construction of windmills, formation of accounting department were encouraged. In the empire new roads were laid out and old ones were repaired. Omar organized a population census in the Empire following the example of the china.

Islamic dominions extended progressively during the caliphate of Umar, almost 4000 mosques were constructed. He provided lights to the mosques and superior cloth to cover the Kaaba.

It happened in the year 638 that Arabia fell into drought which was also been then followed by a famine. To make this change and to make it better Umar tried many things out of which one was hosting dinner every night. It was about more than hundred thousand people who used to come for the dinner every night. Conditions began to improve in early 639. When famine ended then Umar went to see and guide the people. Not only he guided but also

gave good amount, rations and also exempted them from tax (zakat) for that year and the year following it.

Omer went for hajj in Mecca when he was assassinated. He was assassinated in response to the Muslim conquest of Persia, by a Persian in 644.

Assassination of Umar was been assigned by Abu Lulu.

The history of Omar shows and explains many things. He was a man with great powers of mind. He was very rigid in making justice and with inflexible integrity.