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The Biography of

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

*In the Name of Allah,
the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.*



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Volume One

Chapter 1

'Umar رضي الله عنه in Makkah
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Chapter 1

'Umar رضي الله عنه in Makkah

His Name, Lineage, Kunyah, Physical Description, Family,
and His Life During the Pre-Islamic Days of Ignorance

Section One

First: His Name, Lineage, Kunyah, and Title

His full name and lineage is 'Umar ibn ("ibn" means "son of") Al-Khattaab ibn Nufail ibn 'Abdul-'Uzzah ibn Riyaah ibn 'Abdullah ibn Qarut ibn Razaah ibn 'Adee ibn Ka'ab ibn Luaiy⁽¹⁾ ibn Ghaalib Al-Qurashee Al-'Udwee.⁽²⁾ 'Umar's lineage converges with the lineage of the Prophet ﷺ at the point of their common grandfather, Ka'ab ibn Luaiy ibn Ghaalib.⁽³⁾

(1) His lineage up until here is mentioned in *At-Tabaqaat Al-Kubraa*, by Ibn Sa'ad (3/265); and in *Mahd As-Sawaab*, by Ibn 'Abdul-Haadi (1/131).

(2) Refer to *Mahdus-Sawaab Fee Fadaail Ameer Al-Mo'mineen*, 'Umar ibn Al-Khattaab رضي الله عنه (1/131).

(3) Ibid., (1/131).

'Umar ؓ has often been mentioned by his *Kunyah*. A *Kunyah* is a title of sorts, and by it one is ascribed to a son or a daughter; a *Kunyah* is worded thus: "Abu so-and-so." So if one's eldest son is named Muhammad, one might choose to take on the *Kunyah* "Abu Muhammad." A *Kunyah*, however, is sometimes given to someone before he gets married; so a man with the *Kunyah* "Abu Muhammad" does not necessarily have a son named Muhammad. Also, *Kunyahs* are sometimes given with a figurative meaning in mind. Thus if a thing (or an idea or a concept) is closely associated with a person, that person's *Kunyah* might contain the name of that thing. One famous Companion ؓ of the Prophet ﷺ was often seen with little kittens; the word for little kitten in Arabic is "Hurairah"; hence that Companion ؓ took on the *Kunyah*, Abu Hurairah, and until this day he is known by his *Kunyah*, with very few Muslims knowing his actual name. As for 'Umar ؓ, his *Kunyah* was Abu Hafs.(1)

The famous title 'Umar ؓ is known by is *Al-Farooq*, a word that is derived from the root word *Faruqa*, which denotes the meanings of "to divide," "to separate," "to be the distinguishing mark between two or more things." 'Umar ؓ was named *Al-Farooq* because, through him, Allah ﷻ made clear the distinction between disbelief and Faith; and this took place when 'Umar ؓ openly proclaimed his Islam in Makkah.

Second: His Birth and Physical Attributes

'Umar ؓ was born thirteen years after the Year of the Elephant, the year during which Abrahah tried to destroy the *Ka'bah* and was himself destroyed as a result; since that was the year during which the Prophet ﷺ was born, 'Umar ؓ was thirteen years

(1) Refer to *Saheeh At-Tawtheeq Fee Seerah Wa-Hayaat Al-Farooq* 'Umar ibn Al-Khattaab (pg. 15).

younger than him.

'Umar's skin was very white, verging, in fact, on being albinotic; and yet there was redness to parts of his skin. His facial features – particularly his cheeks, nose, and eyes – were well-proportioned, making him look handsome. His feet and hands were rough. And his baldness was sharply contrasted by his massive physique; and he ؓ was exceptionally tall too; so much did he tower above others that when he stood, it seemed as if he were seated on a riding animal. He was, to be sure, strong and fierce.(1)

He ؓ would dye his hair with Henna. And the hair on the sides of his moustache was long. It is related that he would hold on to that hair and twirl it when he would become angry or when he would become sad. When he ؓ walked, he would quicken his pace; when he spoke, his voice was strong, such that those around him could clearly hear what he was saying; and when he hit someone, his stroke was powerful, such that whoever he hit felt pain from the blow.(2)

Third: His Family

'Umar's family background in Makkah was strong: His forefathers were men of high-standing among the Quraish. 'Umar's father was Al-Khattaab ibn Nufail, and 'Umar's grandfather was Nufail ibn 'Abdul-'Uzzah, a man to whom other members of the Quraish would go to in order to settle and judge their disputes.(3) 'Umar's mother was Hantamah bint ("bint" here means "daughter of") Haashim ibn Al-Mugheerah. It has been said that she was

(1) Refer to *Al-Khaleefah Al-Farooq*, 'Umar ibn Al-Khattaab, by Al-'Aanee (pg. 15).

(2) Refer to *Tahdheeb Al-Asmaa* (2/14), by An-Nawawee; and to *Auliyaat Al-Farooq*, by Al-Qurashee (pg. 24)

(3) *Nasab Quraish*, by Az-Zubairee (pg. 347).

Abu Jahl's sister⁽¹⁾, but most historians believe that she was the paternal cousin, and not the sister, of Abu Jahl ibn Hishaam.⁽²⁾

As for 'Umar's wives and children, then that requires a more detailed explanation, for 'Umar was blessed with many wives and even more offspring.

During the pre-Islamic days of ignorance, 'Umar married Zainab bint Madh'oon, the sister of 'Uthmaan ibn Madh'oon. Together they had three children: 'Abdullah, 'Abdur-Rahmaan (the eldest; I say eldest because three of his children were named 'Abdur-Rahmaan), and Hafsa. 'Umar also married Maleekah bint Jarwal, who bore for him his son 'Ubaidullah; 'Umar then later divorced her, after which she married Abul-Jahm ibn Hudhaifah. 'Umar also married Quraibah bint Abu Umayyah Al-Makhzoomee, but then later divorced her as well. Quraibah then went on to marry 'Abdur-Rahmaan ibn Abu Bakr.

And when 'Ikrimah ibn Abu Jahl was killed in Ash-Sham (Ash-Sham refers to Syria and surrounding regions),⁽³⁾ 'Umar married the wife 'Ikrimah left behind: Umm Hakeem bint Al-Haarith ibn Hishaam. Together they had Faatimah. Regarding Umm Hakeem, historians disagree about whether or not 'Umar divorced her before he died.⁽⁴⁾

'Umar also married Jameel bint 'Aasim⁽⁵⁾ ibn Thaabit ibn Abu Al-Aqlah, a woman from the Aus Tribe. Another one of 'Umar's wives was 'Aatikah bint Zaid ibn 'Amr ibn Nufail; prior to their marriage, 'Aatikah had been married to 'Abdullah ibn Abu Bakr

(1) *Auliyaat Al-Farooq As-Siyaasiyyah* (pg. 22).

(2) *Ibid.*, pg. 22.

(3) Refer to *Al-Bidaayah Wan-Nihaayah* (7/144).

(4) *Ibid.*, (7/144).

(5) Refer to *Tarteeb Tahdheeb Al-Bidaayah Wan-Nihaayah, Khilaafah 'Umar*, by As-Sullamee (pg. 7).

(1) And when 'Umar was killed, Az-Zubair ibn Al-'Awwaam married her. It is said that 'Aatikah was the mother of 'Umar's son 'Iyaadh. And Allah knows best.

When Abu Bakr's daughter Umm Kulthoom was still young, 'Umar proposed to her. 'Aa'ishah acted as the go-between for the proposal, but when she brought up the proposal, Umm Kulthoom flat-out refused to marry 'Umar, saying, "I do not need him!" Taken aback by her response, 'Aa'ishah said, "Are you turning down the offer of the Leader of the Believers (for at the time, 'Umar was the *Khaleefah*)?" Umm Kulthoom replied, "Yes, for he leads a hard life [one that I will not be able to endure]."

When 'Aa'ishah then discussed the matter with 'Amr ibn Al-'Aas, he told her to forget about 'Umar marrying Umm Kulthoom; instead, he suggested, a better match would be made with another Umm Kulthoom – this one being the daughter of both 'Ali ibn Abi Taalib and Faatimah bint Rasoolullah. 'Umar was immediately pleased with the idea, and his heart became attached to her because of her close relation to the Messenger of Allah. 'Ali extended the proposal, and the marriage was agreed upon. 'Umar gave her forty-thousand (Deenars or Dirhams) for her dowry. And she bore for him two children: Zaid and Ruqayyah.⁽²⁾

'Umar also married a woman named Lohya, who was from the people of Yemen. She bore for him 'Abdur-Rahmaan – historians disagree about whether this was the middle or the youngest 'Abdur-Rahmaan. And the eminent historian Al-Waaqidee said that Lohya was not 'Umar's wife, but instead was

(1) *Ibid.*, pg. 7.

(2) Refer to *Al-Kaamil Fit-Taareekh* (2/212).

His Islam and Migration to Madeenah

Section Two

First: His Islam

The first rays of Faith to ever touch 'Umar's heart took place on the day 'Umar saw women from the Quraish leave Makkah with the intention of traveling to distant lands, for no reason other than the persecution and torture they faced at the hands of him and men like him. Their departure pained 'Umar, for while he was fighting to uphold the faith of his people, he never believed that he could have been the source of so much pain for women who were so closely related to him by blood. Sure, he wanted them to renounce their faith and return to the religion of their fathers; but he certainly did not want them to leave Makkah, never to return all because of men like him. And so, upon seeing women leave, his heart softened towards them – probably for the very first time – and he began to reproach himself for his fiendish behavior towards them. And to one woman in particular, he spoke such gentle words as she could never have previously imagined hearing from him.

Umm 'Abdullah bint Hantamah said,

"When we (i.e., I and a group of women) were about to leave with the intention of migrating to Abyssinia, 'Umar came

towards us until he stood right above me. Prior to that time, we would be the recipients of his harsh and ruthless treatment. As he stood over me, he said, 'Does this mean you are leaving, O Umm 'Abdullah?' I said, 'Yes. By Allah, because you have harmed and subjugated us, we are going out in the lands of Allah until Allah will make a way for us.' 'Umar said, 'May Allah accompany you [in your journey]. I saw a gentle side of him that I had never seen before. When 'Aamir ibn Rabee'ah then came – and he had been gone taking care of some personal business – I informed him about what had happened.' He then said, 'It is as if you are hoping that 'Umar will embrace Islam?' She replied, 'Yes.' 'Aamir then said, 'Not until the donkey of Al-Khattaab embraces Islam will 'Umar do the same!'"(1)

The encounter with Umm 'Abdullah described above had a profound effect on 'Umar. He felt that his chest was being lightened or squeezed; or in other words, he constantly felt ill at ease, no longer being sure that he was doing the right thing. The adherents of Muhammad's religion had undergone so many hardships, and yet they remained steadfast. 'Umar asked himself how that was possible. He asked himself, what was the secret behind their amazingly powerful inner strength? The more he and others like him used their physical strength to overpower Muslims, the stronger Muslims became on the inside. After Umm 'Abdullah departed from Makkah, 'Umar began to feel sad and confused.(2) The old 'Umar would have tried to stop her from leaving; the new 'Umar did nothing of the sort, and felt sad to boot.

Shortly afterwards 'Umar embraced Islam. Certainly the above-mentioned encounter led to 'Umar's Islam, but it was not the primary cause of his Islam. No, the primary cause of his entry into Islam was the following supplication that the Messenger of Allah had made: "O Allah, honor and strengthen Islam with the

(1) *Seerah Ibn Hisham* (1/216) and *Fadaail As-Sahaabah* (1/341), by Imam Ahmad. The chain of this narration is *Hasan* (good or acceptable).

(2) Refer to