

# 'Umar's Respect and Love for the Prophet's Family

**'ALI MUHAMMAD AS-SALABI**

*Al-Hafidh* Ibn Kathir stated that: "'Umar (*May Allah be pleased with him*) often used to say, 'What a good interpreter of the *Qur'an* 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas is.' And when he came he would say, 'The young man of the old men has come, the one who asked questions and who understands.' There was a great deal of mutual love and affection between 'Umar and the family of the Messenger of Allah (*Peace be upon him*)."

## **Introduction**

Undoubtedly the family of the Prophet (*Peace be upon him*) enjoy a high status and level of respect from *Ahlus-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'ah*, who honour the rights which Allah has prescribed for *Ahlul-Bayt* (the family of the last Prophet). They love them and regard them as friends, and they the recommendations of the Messenger of Allah (*Peace be upon him*), which he spoke of on the day of *Ghadir Khum*:

*"I remind you of Allah concerning the members of my household."* Muslim, *Kitab Fada'il as-Sahabah*, *hadith* no. 2408

They are the happiest of people to take this advice and follow it; they reject the way of the *Rawafid* who go to extremes concerning members of the Prophet's family, and the way of the *Nawasib* who insult them and hate them. *Ahlus-Sunnah* are unanimously agreed that it is obligatory to love *Ahlul-Bayt* and it is *haram* to offend them or mistreat them in word or deed. [1] 'Umar (*May Allah be pleased with him*)

demonstrated and explained to us the belief of *Ahlus-Sunnah* concerning *Ahlul-Bayt* in the way in which he dealt and interacted with them.

### **His Dealings with the Wives of the Prophet**

'Umar (*May Allah be pleased with him*) used to check on the wives of the Prophet (*Peace be upon him*) and give generously to them. He would not eat of any fine food or fruit without sending some of it to the wives of the Prophet (*Peace be upon him*); the last one to whom he would send anything was Hafsa (his daughter), and if there any shortfall, she would be the one whose share would be affected. [2] He also used to send their stipend to them. The following is the story of an incident which took place with the Mother of the Believers Zaynab bint Jahsh (*May Allah be pleased with her*). When he had worked out the shares of the Muslims, 'Umar sent to the Mother of the Believers Zaynab bin Jahsh (*May Allah be pleased with her*) her share. When it was brought to her, she said, "May Allah forgive 'Umar, my sisters are better able to handle a share like that than me." They said, "This is all for you." She said, "*Subhanallah*." Then she hid herself from him behind a curtain and said, "Put it down and cover it with a cloak." Then she said to Barzah bint Rafi': "Put your hand in and take a handful, and give it to Banu so and so (among her relatives and orphans under her care)." She shared it out until there was little left under the cloak, then Barzah said: "May Allah forgive you, *O Mother of the Believers*, by Allah we have a right to that." She said, "You may have whatever is beneath this cloak." She lifted up the cloak and found eighty-five *dirham*. Then she raised her hands towards heaven and said: "O Allah, do not let me live until the next time 'Umar distributes shares." Then she died, and she was the first of the Prophet's wives to join him - *may Allah be pleased with her*. [3]

Another example of how 'Umar honoured the wives of the Prophet (*Peace be upon him*) was narrated by the Mother of the Believers 'A'ishah (*May Allah be pleased with her*), who said: "'Umar ibn Al-Khattab used to send us our share of heads and feet (of animals, for food)."

When the wives of the Prophet (*Peace be upon him*) asked 'Umar for permission to go for *Hajj*, he refused to give them permission until they insisted. Then he said: "I will give you permission next year, but this is not what I think." He sent 'Uthman ibn 'Affan and 'Abdur-Rahman ibn Awf with them, and told them to travel one in front of them and one behind, and not to walk alongside them. When they wanted to stop, they were to stop in a mountain pass and (the two men) were to stay in the entrances to the pass so that no one would go to or visit them. And he told them that when they circumambulated the *Ka'bah*, no one was to circumambulate with them except other women. [5]

### **'Ali ibn Abi Talib and His Children**

'Umar showed a great deal of respect to the family of the Messenger of Allah (*Peace be upon him*) and preferred them over his own children and family. We will mention some examples of that.

Al-Husayn ibn 'Ali (*May Allah be pleased with him*) mentioned that: "'Umar said to me one day, 'O my son, why don't you come and join us sometimes?' So I came one day but he was alone with Mu'awiyah and Ibn 'Umar was at the door but was not granted admittance, so I went back. He met me after that and said, 'O my son, did I not see you coming to us?' I said, 'I came but you were alone with Mu'awiyah, and I saw Ibn 'Umar come back, so I came back.' He said, 'You have more right to be given permission to enter than 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar, for all the blessings we have, as you

can see, are caused by Allah, then you (i.e., *Ahlul-Bayt*),' and he laid his hand on my head." [6]

Ibn Sa'ad narrated from Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Baqir that his father, 'Ali ibn Al-Husayn, said: "Some suits were brought to 'Umar from Yemen and he distributed them to the people, and they put them on. He was sitting between the (Prophet's) grave and the *minbar*, and the people were coming and greeting him and making *du'a* for him. Then Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn came out of the house of their mother Fatimah (*May Allah be pleased with her*) and passed among the people, and they were not wearing any of those suits. 'Umar frowned, then he said, 'By Allah, I am not happy about what I have given you.' They said, 'O *Amir al-Mu'minin*, you gave clothes to your people and you did well.' He said, 'I am not happy because of two young men who were passing among the people and were not wearing any of these suits because they were too big or too small for them.' Then he wrote to Yemen asking that two suits be sent quickly for Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn. Two suits were sent to him and he gave them to them." [7]

It was narrated from Abu Ja'far that when he wanted to decide how much each Muslim was entitled to after Allah had granted conquests (and wealth started coming in), he gathered some of the Companions of the Prophet (*Peace be upon him*) and 'Abdur-Rahman ibn A'waf (*May Allah be pleased with him*) said: "Start with yourself." He said: "No, by Allah, (I will start) with those who are closest to the Messenger of Allah (*Peace be upon him*) and Banu Hashim, the tribe of the Messenger of Allah (*Peace be upon him*)." So he allocated something to Al-Abbas, then to 'Ali, until he had given to people from five different tribes, ending with Banu 'Adiyy ibn Ka'ab, and he wrote it down: those of Banu Hashim who were present at Badr, those of Banu Umayyah ibn 'Abd-Shams who were present at Badr, then the next closest and then next closest. He allocated their shares to them, then he allocated

shares to Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn, because of their position in relation to the Messenger of Allah (*Peace be upon him*)."

 [8]

The scholar Shibli an-Nu'mani said in his book *Al-Faruq*, under the heading, "*Rights and Etiquette Between the Family and the Companions (of the Prophet)*" that 'Umar did not make any decision about any serious matter without consulting 'Ali, who used to advise him with all sincerity. When he travelled to *Bayt al-Maqdis* (Jerusalem), he appointed 'Ali in charge of matters of caliphate in Madinah. The harmony and solidarity between them was further confirmed when 'Ali gave his daughter Umm Kulthum, who has the daughter of Fatimah (*May Allah be pleased with her*), to 'Umar in marriage [9], and named one of his own children 'Umar, just as he had named another Abu Bakr and a third 'Uthman. [10] No one names his children except after people whom he loves and regards as a good example.

'Ali ibn Abi Talib was the first one whom 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab consulted (*may Allah be pleased with them both*), and 'Umar used to consult him about all matters, both major and minor. He consulted him when the Muslims conquered Jerusalem, and when Al-Mada'in was conquered, and when 'Umar wanted to go to Nahawand and fight the Persians, and when he wanted to go out and fight the Byzantines, and concerning the establishment of the *Hijri* calendar, and other matters.

Throughout the life of 'Umar, 'Ali was a sincere advisor who feared for 'Umar's life. 'Umar loved 'Ali and there was deep affection and mutual trust between them. Yet despite that some people still insist on distorting history and narrating reports that suit them and their whims and desires, so as to give us a picture of the rightly guided Caliphs which suggests they were all plotting against one another and all their affairs were run from behind the scenes. [11]

Dr Al-Buti says: "One of the most obvious things that will be noticed by anyone who studies the caliphate of 'Umar is the distinct and pure-spirited cooperation between

'Umar and 'Ali (*may Allah be pleased with them both*). 'Ali was 'Umar's primary advisor in all issues and problems, and whenever 'Ali offered a suggestion, 'Umar would adopt it out of conviction. It is sufficient for you to know that he said, 'Were it not for 'Ali, 'Umar would be doomed.' As for 'Ali he was very sincere in all his affairs and in all situations. You have seen how 'Umar consulted him about going at the head of the army to fight the Persians. His advice was sincere advice that reflected his love and care for 'Umar, telling him not to go, and to run the war from where he was. He warned him that if he went, then he would leave a vacuum behind him that would be more dangerous than the enemy whom he wanted to confront. Do you think that if the Messenger of Allah (*Peace be upon him*) had declared that 'Ali was to be the caliph after him, that 'Ali would have turned away from the command of the Messenger of Allah (*Peace be upon him*) and supported those who supposedly usurped his right, or rather his duty, to become caliph, in such a sincere and constructive manner? Would the *Sahabah* (*may Allah be pleased with them all*) have ignored the command of the Messenger of Allah (*Peace be upon him*)? Could it even be imagined that they, led by 'Ali, would have unanimously agreed to that? So it is easy to draw the obvious conclusion, that up until this time - the end of 'Umar's reign, and indeed up until the end of 'Ali's reign - the Muslims had been united, and there had not been any confusion in the mind of any Muslim with regards to the caliphate and who was most entitled to it." [12]

### **The Dispute between Al-'Abbas and 'Ali Concerning the Booty of the Messenger of Allah from *Banu an-Nudayr***

Malik ibn Aws said: "Whilst I was sitting with my family before noon, a messenger came to me from 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab, and said, 'Come to the *Amir al-Mu'minin*.' So I went with him to 'Umar, and found him sitting on a bare bed, with no mattress,

leaning on a leather cushion. I greeted him with *salam* and sat down, and he said, 'O Malik, some families from your people have come to us and I have ordered that some shares be allocated to them. Take them and divide among them.' I said, 'O *Amir al-Mu'minin*, would that you told someone else to do that.' He said, 'Take them (and do that).' Whilst I was sitting with him, his doorkeeper Yarfa' came to him and said, 'Will you give 'Uthman, 'Abdur-Rahman ibn 'Awf, Az-Zubayr and Sa'ad ibn Abi Waqqas permission to enter?' He said, 'Yes.' So he let them in, and they came in and sat down. Then Yarfa' sat down for a little while, then he said, 'Will you let 'Ali and 'Abbas come in?' He said, 'Yes.' So he let them in, and they came in and gave the greeting of *salam* and sat down.

"'Abbas said, 'O *Amir al-Mu'minin*, judge between me and this one.' They were disputing about the booty that Allah had granted to His Messenger (*Peace be upon him*) from the wealth of *Banu an-Nudayr*. The group, 'Uthman and his companions, said, 'O *Amir al-Mu'minin*, judge between them and give them a break from one another.' 'Umar said, 'Wait a minute. I ask you by Allah, by Whose permission the heaven and earth exist, do you know that the Messenger of Allah (*Peace be upon him*) said, '*We cannot be inherited from; what we leave behind is charity*', and the Messenger of Allah was referring to himself?' The group said, 'He did say that.' Then 'Umar turned to 'Ali and 'Abbas and asked, 'I ask you by Allah, do you know that the Messenger of Allah (*Peace be upon him*) said that?' They said, 'He did say that.' 'Umar said, 'I will tell you more about this matter. Allah allocated something special in this booty which He did not give to anyone else.' Then he recited, '**And what Allah gave as booty [*fay'*] to His Messenger from them - for this you made no expedition with either cavalry or camelry. But Allah gives power to His Messengers over whomsoever He wills. And Allah is Able to do all things.**' [*Al-Qur'an* 59:6] - (and said:), 'This applies only to the Messenger of Allah (*Peace be*

upon him), but by Allah, he did not keep it for himself and withhold it from you, rather he gave it to you and distributed it among you, until only this wealth was left. The Messenger of Allah (*Peace be upon him*) gave his family what they needed for the whole year from this wealth, then he took what was left and put it in the *bayt al-mal*. The Messenger of Allah (*Peace be upon him*) did that during his lifetime. I ask you by Allah, do you know this?' They said, 'Yes.' Then he said to 'Ali and 'Abbas, 'I ask you by Allah, do you know this?' They said, 'Yes.' 'Umar said, 'Then Allah took the soul of His Prophet (*Peace be upon him*), and Abu Bakr said, 'I am the successor of the Messenger of Allah (*Peace be upon him*).' By Allah, Abu Bakr took it and used it in the same way as the Messenger of Allah (*Peace be upon him*) had done, and Allah knows that he was honest and sincere, and sought to do the right thing. Then Allah took the soul of Abu Bakr, and I am the successor of Abu Bakr. I took it for two years of my reign and I used it as the Messenger of Allah (*Peace be upon him*) and Abu Bakr had done, and Allah knows that I was honest and sincere, and sought to do the right thing. And now you have come to me and spoken to me, when you were both in agreement. You have come to me, O 'Abbas, asking me for your share from your brother's son, and this one (meaning 'Ali) has come to me asking for a share for his wife, from her father. I said you both that the Messenger of Allah (*Peace be upon him*) said, '*We cannot be inherited from; what we leave behind is charity.*' When I thought that I might give it to you, I said, 'If you wish, I will give it to you both, on condition that you make a promise to Allah to use it as the Messenger of Allah (*Peace be upon him*) did and as Abu Bakr did and I did since the beginning of my reign. You said, 'Give it to us on that basis,' so I gave it to you. I ask you by Allah, did I not give it to them on that basis?' The group said, 'Yes.' Then he turned to 'Ali and 'Abbas and said, 'I ask you by Allah, did I not give it to you on that basis?' They said, 'Yes.' He said, 'And now you are seeking a different

judgement from me? If you are not able (to dispose of it properly), then give it to me and I will take care of it.' " [13]

### 'Umar's Respect for Al-'Abbas and His Son 'Abdullah

'Umar demonstrated to the *ummah* the virtue of Al-'Abbas ibn 'Abdul-Muttalib, the paternal uncle of the Messenger of Allah (*Peace be upon him*), and how much he respected him and honoured his rights, when he prayed for rain by virtue of Al-'Abbas in the year of *Ar-Ramadah*, as we will describe below *insha'Allah*. Indeed, 'Umar swore to Al-'Abbas, as we have seen above, that his becoming Muslim was dearer to him than his own father's becoming Muslim would have been, if it had happened, because Al-'Abbas becoming Muslim was dearer to the Messenger of Allah (*Peace be upon him*). [14]

As a sign of the love that 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab had for the cousin of the Messenger of Allah (*Peace be upon him*), 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas (*May Allah be pleased with him*), he used to admit him to the gatherings of the senior *Sahabah*, those who had been present at Badr, although they had sons the same age as him, and no one else shared this privilege. This is indicative of his virtue, knowledge and status with 'Umar. Bukhari narrated with *isnad* going back to Ibn 'Abbas that he said: "'Umar used to admit me with those who had been present at Badr, and some of them asked, 'Why do you include this youngster with us, when we have sons like him?' 'Umar said, 'Because of what you know about him.' He called them one day and called me with them, and I do not think that he invited me that day except to show them my knowledge. He asked, 'What do you say about, **'When there comes the Help of Allah (to you, O Muhammad against your enemies) and the Conquest (of Makkah). And you see the people enter Allah's religion (Islam) in crowds ...**

' [*Al-Qur'an* 110:1-2]?"

"Some of them said, 'We do not know,' and some of them did not say anything. He asked me, 'O son of Al-'Abbas, do you say the same?' I said, 'No.' He then asked, 'Then what do you say?' I said, 'It is foretelling the death of the Messenger of Allah (*Peace be upon him*). Allah is telling him that when the help of Allah came and the conquest of Makkah, that is a sign that your death is approaching, so glorify the praises of your Lord and ask His forgiveness, verily, He is the One Who accepts repentance and Who forgives.' 'Umar said, 'That is exactly how I understand it.' "

[15]

*Al-Hafidh* Ibn Hajar said that Al-Baghawi [16] narrated in *Mu'jam as-Sahabah* via Zayd ibn Aslam, that Ibn 'Umar said:

"'Umar used to call Ibn 'Abbas and draw him close to him and say, 'I saw the Messenger of Allah (*Peace be upon him*) call you one day and wipe your head and say, 'O Allah, give him understanding of Islam and teach him the meaning of the *Qur'an*.' [17]' This action of 'Umar's was an acknowledgement of the virtue, knowledge and understanding of Ibn 'Abbas."

*Al-Hafidh* Ibn Kathir stated that: "'Umar (*May Allah be pleased with him*) often used to say, 'What a good interpreter of the *Qur'an* 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas is.' And when he came he would say, 'The young man of the old men has come, the one who asked questions and who understands.' [18] There was a great deal of mutual love and affection between 'Umar and the family of the Messenger of Allah (*Peace be upon him*)."

**Source:**

**'Umar ibn Al-Khattab - His Life & Times by Dr. 'Ali Muhammad as-Salabi, vol. 1, pp. 254-264, published by International Islamic Publishing House, 2007**

## Footnotes

1. *Al-'Aqidah fi Ahlul-Bayt bayna al-Ifrat wa't-Tafrif*, p. 59
2. *Az-Zuhd*, p. 166, via Malik; its *isnad* is *sahih*
3. A *hasan* report narrated by Ibn Sa'ad, 8/190; *Akhbar 'Umar*, p. 100
4. A *sahih* report, narrated by Ibn Sa'ad, 3/303
5. *Al-Idarah fi 'Ahd 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab*, p. 126; *Al-Fath*, 4/87
6. *Al-Murtada* by An-Nawawi, p. 118; quoting from *Al-Isabah*, 1/133
7. *Op. cit.*, p. 118, quoting from *Al-Isabah*, 1/106
8. *Al-Murtada* by An-Nawawi, p. 119
9. *Op. cit.* p. 119
10. *Al-Bidayah wa'n-Nihayah*, 9/331-332
11. *Op. cit.*, p. 138
12. *Fiqh as-Sirah an-Nabawiyah*, p. 529
13. Muslim, *hadith*, no. 1757. At the end of another report it says: and they gave it back to him
14. *Al-'Aqidah fi Ahlul-Bayt bayna'l-Ifrat wa't-Tafrif*, p. 210
15. Bukhari, *hadith*, no. 4294
16. *Al-'Aqidah fi Ahlul-Bayt bayna'l-Ifrat wa't-Tafrif*, p. 210
17. *Fath al-Bari*, 1/170
18. *Al-Bidayah wa'n-Nihayah*, 8/303