

Khalifa Umar bin al-Khattab - Testament and Assessment of Umar

Assessment Of Umar By Oriental Writers

In his book "History of Egypt", Jurji Zaidan, a Christian historian has paid a tribute to Umar in the following words:

"In his time various countries were conquered, spoils were multiplied, the treasures of the Persian and Roman Emperors were poured in streams before his troops, nevertheless he himself manifested a degree of abstemiousness and moderation which was never surpassed. He addressed the people clad in a garment patched with leather. He was himself the first to practise what he preached. He kept a vigilant eye over the Governors and Generals and enquired strictly into their conduct. Even the great Khalid bin Walid was not spared. He was just to all mankind and was kindly even to non-Muslims. Iron discipline was maintained every where during his reign."

In his well known book "History of the Saracens", Justice Syed Amir Ali has rated Umar in the following terms:

"The death of Umar was a real calamity to Islam. Stern, but just, far-sighted, thoroughly versed in the character of his people, he was especially fitted for the leadership of the unruly Arabs. He had held the helm with a strong hand and severely repressed the natural tendency to demoralisation among nomadic tribes and semi-civilised people when coming in contact with the luxury and vices of cities. He had established the Diwan or the Department of Finance, to which was entrusted the administration of the revenues; and had introduced fixed rules for the government of the provinces. He was a man of towering height, strong build, and fair complexion. Of simple habits, austere and frugal, always accessible to the meanest of his subjects, wandering about at night to inquire into the condition of the people, without any guard of court, such was the greatest and the most powerful ruler of the time."

Shah Wali Ullah has described the talents and achievements of Umar graphically in the following terms:

"Imagine the heart of Umar as a house with many gates. At each gate is seated a noble genius. At one gate stands Alexander the Great with all his genius for conquering countries, commanding armies and vanquishing foes. At another gates sits Anushirwan with all his gentleness, magnanimity, justice, and love of his subjects. And yet at another gate sits a spiritual leader like Syed Abdul Qadir Gilani or Khawaja Bahauddin. At another gate sits Hadith specialists like Abu Huraira and Ibn Umar, and yet at another gate sit thinkers of the calibre of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi and Sheikh Fariduddin Attar. And people are standing around this house and every needy one represents his need to the Imam of his branch of knowledge and goes away satisfied."

Put in simpler words, this tribute means that:

- (1) Umar was a great Conqueror, greater than Alexander;
- (2) Umar excelled Anushirwan in justice;
- (3) Umar was a great spiritual leader;
- (4) Umar was a specialist in Hadith;
- (5) Umar was a great thinker;

(6) Umar excelled in all branches of knowledge.

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Source : Alim.org-Umar bin al-Khattab History